

Maritime safety: establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system

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The Council reached, pending the European Parliament first-reading opinion, a general approach on a proposal for a Directive amending directive 2002/59/EC1 on the Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system. However, it has to be noted that one delegation indicated that,

waiting for the opinion of the European Parliament, it could not take a position on the general approach.

The general approach adopted by the Council on the basis of a Presidency compromise proposal concerns in particular the following issues:

- the introduction of automatic identification systems (AIS) in fishing vessels with a length of more than 15 metres overall, ensuring that financial assistance for fitting them on board could be provided in the framework of the European Fisheries Fund;
- the following implementation timetable for the different categories of fishing vessels according to their overall length:
 - fishing vessel of overall length 24 metres and upwards but less than 45 metres: not later than 3 years after the entry into force of the Directive;
 - fishing vessel of overall length 18 metres and upwards but less than 24 metres: not later than 4 years after the entry into force of the Directive;
 - fishing vessel of overall length 15 metres and upwards but less than 18 metres: not later than 5 years after the entry into force of the Directive;
 - newly built fishing vessel of more than 15 metres overall: not later than 18 months after the entry into force of the directive;
- the acceptance or refusal of a ship in need of assistance in a place of refuge will depend on the decision of the competent authority.