

Maritime safety: registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships

1996/0281(SYN) - 18/06/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: To enhance the safety and possibilities of rescue of passengers and crew on board passenger ships and to ensure that search and rescue and the aftermath of any accident can be dealt with more effectively. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council Directive 98/41/EC on the registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships operating to or from a port of the Member States to the Community. **SUBSTANCE:** The directive applies to all passenger ships and high speed craft carrying more than 12 passengers departing from a port located in a Member State or travelling from a third country to a Community port. It requires that all persons on board be counted before the ship departs. Before departure, the number of persons on board must be communicated to the master of the ship and to the company's passenger registrar or to a shore-based company performing the same function. The master must ensure that the number of persons on board a ship departing from a port located in a Member State does not exceed the number that the ship is permitted to carry. If the ship is undertaking a voyage of more than 20 miles, information must be recorded regarding the name, sex and age of all persons on board and any requests for special care in emergency situations. Personal information on passengers must be communicated not later than 30 minutes after departure to the passenger registrar. The number of passengers and personal information must at all times be readily available for transmission to the designated authority for search and rescue purposes. Member States may however lower the 20-mile threshold. They may also exempt ships sailing exclusively in protected sea areas from their requirement to record passengers, or request authorisation from the Commission to exempt regular services where the voyage does not exceed about 30 miles or regular services to isolated communities in areas where waves have a low average height and which have shore based navigational systems, reliable weather forecasts and adequate search and rescue facilities. The Member States may also exempt passenger ships providing regular services of less than one hour in protected sea areas from the requirement to communicate the number of persons on board to the passenger registrar. Registration systems must meet the functional criteria of readability, availability, facilitation and security. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** The counting system is to come into a force by 01/01/1999 at the latest. The passenger registration system is applicable by 01/01/2000 at the latest.