


# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">2003/2235(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
Improving safety at sea		
Subject 3.20.03.01 Maritime safety		

Key players	
European Parliament	

Key events			
06/11/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/04/2004	Vote in committee		Summary
05/04/2004	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A5-0257/2004</a>	
20/04/2004	Debate in Parliament		
21/04/2004	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T5-0350/2004</a>	Summary
21/04/2004	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2003/2235(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Special committee/Committee of inquiry
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 207
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	MARE/5/20388

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE339.038	02/03/2004	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A5-0257/2004</a>	05/04/2004	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T5-0350/2004</a> <a href="#">OJ C 104 30.04.2004, p. 0427-0730 E</a>	21/04/2004	EP	Summary

## Improving safety at sea

The Temporary Committee on Improving Safety at Sea adopted the report by Dirk STERCKX (ELDR, B) setting out its final conclusions. The Committee was set up in the wake of the disaster of the oil tanker Prestige, which sank off the Galician coast on 19 November 2002, to investigate this incident and other disasters at sea, including the wreck of the Erika off the coast of Brittany on 12 December 1999. It held three public hearings with maritime experts as well as talks with the European Commission, the Irish Presidency, Spanish government

representatives and the Spanish government commissioner responsible for the Prestige case. MEPs also conducted an interview with Prestige captain Apostoulos Mangouras, who was not being allowed to leave Spain pending his trial. In its conclusions, the committee condemned the decision to tow the vessel away from the coast and the Spanish authorities' statement that they would take the same action again. Although the sealing operation to stop oil leaking from the wreck of the Prestige and the specific plans for making the wreck safe were welcomed, the committee called on the competent authorities to continue their efforts to tackle the problem of the oil still present in the sea and the thousands of tonnes of waste in landfills. MEPs said the authorities should put forward a detailed calendar for the extraction and the treatment of the waste. They also urged that the expertise gained in the process be made widely available and used in tackling any further accidents. And they queried the amount of heavy oil still left in Galician waters after the disaster. The committee called on the Spanish judicial authorities to allow Captain Mangouras to return to his country pending his trial, to relax the requirement that he report daily to the authorities and to clarify as soon as possible the starting date and timetable for the legal case against him. Among other recommendations, the committee called on Member States to set up a European coastguard service with the powers to ensure: - maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment (including fisheries, piracy, maritime crime and terrorism); - the strict monitoring of adherence to certain shipping routes and the prosecution of the illegal entry of vessels; - swift coordination of measures in the event of an accident at sea, including the assignment of emergency moorings and ports. Further recommendations by the committee included a call for more powers for the European Agency for Maritime Safety, improved working conditions and safety for seafarers and better protection of the Baltic waters, given that many Russian oil tankers do not meet EU safety standards. MEPs also proposed equipping dangerous goods containers with electronic transponders, as these containers could then be easily found in a sunken vessel.?

## Improving safety at sea

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Dirk STERCKX (ELDR, B) on improving safety at sea. (Please see the document of 05/04/04). Parliament called for a comprehensive and cohesive European maritime policy, which would have as its objective the creation of a European maritime safety area. This policy should be based on the following measures: - the banning of substandard vessels; - the drawing-up of joint protocols on prevention, action and reparation in the event of disasters; - the introduction of a system of liability covering the entire maritime transport chain and the public authorities responsible for safety at sea; - the improvement of living and working conditions and training for seafarers. Parliament also asked the Commission to investigate the scope for introducing mandatory insurance for vessels in European waters so that damages and costs of places of refuge as well as social and environmental costs in the event of an accident can also be recovered from the owners of vessels. There should also be a proposal on the introduction of an EU-wide common method for disaster assessment, with a view to facilitating, as in the US, compensation for social or collective damage to the natural heritage, including the deterioration of commercially non-viable marine and land biodiversity. Considers that the insurance system to be established must cover not only the value of the cargo but also risks of potential environmental damage in the light of the nature of the cargo. Parliament was concerned the limited progress made by certain new Member States in implementing European and world rules on maritime safety. There is particular concern about the following new Member States: the Baltic States, Malta and Cyprus. It called for the establishment of special zones within environmentally sensitive and navigationally difficult areas of the Baltic Sea, particularly the Kadet Trench, the Skagerrak/Kattegat, the Great Belt and the Sound, which ocean-going vessels, in particular oil tankers, may no longer negotiate without a pilot. There is a need for radical changes at the level of structure and responsibilities to the complex nexus of businesses (vessel and ship owners, freight contractors, oil companies, classification societies, insurers, etc) that controls international maritime traffic, as well as its relations with flag-of-convenience states. This nexus is an obstacle to the efficient inspection of the condition of vessels, the introduction of the necessary safety measures, vocational training, action to secure adequate working and living conditions and wages for crews, and compliance with fiscal obligations. The Commission is asked to make a full analysis of this crucial problem and to submit a report to Parliament and the Council. This report should, in particular, deal with the relations between EU businesses and flag-of-convenience states.?