

Safety rules and standards for passenger ships: simplification; Commission delegated and implementing powers

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report by Daniela AIUTO (EFDD, IT) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2009/45/EC on safety rules and standards for passenger ships.

The committee recommended that the European Parliaments position adopted at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Ship-carried tenders: these are used to ferry passengers from passenger ships (primarily cruise ships) directly to shore and back, undertaking the shortest sea route. Members considered that they are not appropriate, and should not be used, for other types of services such as coastal sightseeing excursions. Such excursions should be undertaken by ships that meet the requirements for passenger ships of the coastal State.

The Commission should assess the need for common European requirements, including mandatory provisions, for ship carried tenders and should issue specific guidelines before 2020, in order to inter alia facilitate the harmonisation of rules and standards between Member States.

Sailing ships: in order to maintain harmonised safety levels for sailing ships in Europe, Members suggested that the Commission assess and issue common requirements for this category, publishing specific guidelines by 2020.

Off-shore service ships: according to Members, Member States should actively support the International Maritime Organisations (IMO) work as regards the definition of adequate safety standards for offshore vessels.

These vessels which carry workers require different and specific rules on safety.

Smaller ships below 24 metres: in determining the specific standards for smaller ships, Member States should act in accordance with guidelines to be published by the Commission. In doing so, they should take into consideration other international agreements and conventions by the IMO, and should avoid introducing additional requirements that go beyond existing international rules.

Aluminium: Members considered that aluminium should be regarded as an equivalent material to steel in all Member States. Given that the national rules in place for aluminium ships ensure a high level of safety for passengers sailing domestically, Member States should be allowed to keep their current stricter fire prevention methods.

The amended text provides that a Member State that has more than 60 passenger ships made from aluminium alloy flying its flag may exempt, until 8 years after the transposition date, passenger ships of Classes B, C and D which are made from aluminium alloy from the provisions of this Directive, provided there is no reduction in the level of safety.

Transparency: any exemption, equivalency or additional safety measure taken by the Member States should be published on a publically accessible website. The general modalities of access to and use of the respective database should be specified in due time by the Commission, through an appropriate delegated act.

Safety standards and ship crew: in order to maintain a high level of safety throughout a passenger ships voyage, Members suggested that account be taken of not only the vessels physical structure and equipment but also the link between safety, shipboard living, working conditions and training of the crew. The Directive should spell out that the EU needs to take a proactive approach in this role, including in the international framework, in order to monitor and improve the social dimension of workers on the ships.

Greece: Greece should be allowed to derogate from the requirement of establishing sea areas. In particular, it should be allowed to classify passenger ships according to the specific sea route that they operate, while maintaining the same criteria for classes of passenger ships and the same safety standards.