



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Maritime Safety: Commission requests nine Member States to comply with EU vessel traffic monitoring and information system regime

Brussels, 16 June 2011 - The European Commission has requested Belgium, Estonia, France, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Finland and the United Kingdom to adopt national legislation to implement EU rules setting up a vessel traffic monitoring and information system. The rules in question, an important measure to prevent loss of life and environmental damage from shipping accidents, were due to be implemented by Member States no later than 30 November 2010. The Commission's request takes the form of a reasoned opinion under EU infringement procedures. If these Member States fail to inform the Commission within two months of what measures they have taken to ensure full compliance with the law, the Commission could refer the case to the EU Court of Justice.

The EU rules

Directive [2009/17/EC](#) – amending Directive 2002/59/EC establishing a Community vessel traffic monitoring and information system – was adopted in 2009 as a part of the third maritime safety package following the "Erika" and "Prestige" accidents off the European coast. The Directive aims to ensure that Member States are better equipped to assist ships in distress, and defines a clear legal framework on refuge zones. It also aims to guarantee that all Member States are interconnected via SafeSeaNet, which is a data exchange platform between the national maritime administrations, in order to obtain a complete overview of the movements of dangerous or polluting cargoes on ships sailing in European waters. It foresees that a system of automatic identification be extended to fishing vessels over 15 meters in length, in order to reduce the risk of collisions at sea.

The reason for today's action

Estonia, Hungary, Austria Portugal and Finland have failed to notify the Commission of any measures taken to implement the Directive .Belgium; France, Poland and the United Kingdom have notified measures that partially implement the Directive.

The practical effect of non-implementation

The Directive brings major improvements to the monitoring of ship movements in European waters and to the management of risk in cases of ships in distress. To be fully effective, it requires joint efforts from all Member States. Non-implementation by some Member States prevents the full benefits of the new regime from being realised. Examples of such benefits are: faster and more effective decision making when a maritime accident occurs; better ability to identify ships likely to present a safety or environmental risk; automatic identification and positioning systems to reduce the risk of fishing vessels being accidentally rammed by merchant ships; better ability to track the movements of ships with dangerous or polluting cargo.

For more information on EU infringement procedures, see [MEMO/11/408](#).

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