



## MEPs close deal with Council on safer, greener watercraft

Committees Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection [08-05-2013 - 17:44]

**A provisional deal on updated watercraft rules to make them safer and greener was struck by MEPs and Irish EU presidency negotiators on Wednesday. It also scraps the misleading names of boat design categories in order to give consumers clearer information.**

"This new directive is an example of what clear, streamlined EU regulation on product safety is about. Furthermore, this proposal simplifies the rules by aligning with international standards, making it easier for EU manufacturers to sell globally," said rapporteur Malcolm Harbour (ECR, UK) after the agreement was reached.

The updated EU rules on the safety and environmental performance of recreational craft and personal watercraft cover vessels between 2.5 and 24 meters in length, such as motor boats, sailing yachts and water scooters.

### Design categories

MEPs succeeded in eliminating the titles of boat-design categories ("ocean", "offshore", "inshore" and "sheltered waters") on the grounds that they are misleading for users. The only appropriate criteria for defining watercraft are the essential environmental conditions for navigation, namely wind force and wave height, rather than the area or type of navigation, the deal stipulates. Accordingly, the four letters A, B, C and D will from now on define the boat-design resistance level to environmental conditions.

### Greener boats

EP negotiators supported the Commission proposal to make watercraft greener and to apply stricter exhaust emission limits, focusing on reducing nitrogen oxide. The deal gives the industry three years from the date of entry into force of the new rules to comply with these exhaust emission limits. Certain types of engine (equal to or less than 15 k ) manufactured by small and medium-sized enterprises will have a four-year transition period.

MEPs secured a provision ensuring that the Commission will review the emission limits four years after their adoption in the member states to see if they can be further reduced.

### Safer boats

Watercraft, their components and their propulsion engines will have to bear a CE marking to make it easier for potential buyers to be sure that they were manufactured according to minimum safety requirements.

Given the high risk associated with operating tiller-controlled outboard engines, MEPs added a further safety requirement stipulating that these engines must be equipped with an emergency stopping device, possibly linked to the helmsman.

### Next steps

# Press release

The provisionally agreed text still needs be formally approved by the Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives and Parliament's Internal Market Committee. The committee will probably vote on the deal in June, paving the way for a plenary vote, probably in September.

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