

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0126/05  
by Willi Piecyk (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Problems for shipowners and seafarers at European ports in connection with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code

In July 2004, under the ISPS Code, more stringent security rules on board vessels and in ports came into force. Since then, shipowners and seafarers have been increasingly complaining about major problems and degrading conditions, in some cases, at European ports.

To some extent, crew changeover and shore leave for seafarers are being hindered by bureaucratic procedures and security demands; for some seafarers, particularly from Islamic countries, shore leave has even been completely stopped in some ports. In many instances, visitors are no longer allowed on board, and nor are staff working for seamen's missions and trade unions, who have considerable hurdles to overcome in order to board vessels and have contact with seafarers.

The ILO convention adopted in mid-2003 which supplements the ISPS Code is intended to strike a balance between Member States' security interests and seafarers' individual rights, but has not yet come into force.

1. Is the Commission aware of these problems?
2. What action has the Commission taken, or what action does it intend to take, to create decent working and living conditions for seafarers at European ports?