

EU port measures

Ports, airports set new security measures

The European Union unveiled proposals for tougher EU-wide security measures in its ports as security experts warned of a growing Al Qaeda threat to the maritime industry.

European Transport Commissioner Loyola de Palacio said an EU-wide security regime would enhance protection against terrorist acts in ports that are "particularly vulnerable parts of the logistics chain."

The European Commission, the EU's

executive arm, wants ports to carry out a security assessment, establish a security plan and appoint a security officer to coordinate protection measures.

The commission also called for the establishment of an authority to supervise security across the EU to avoid different approaches between ports and to provide a link between political initiatives and security measures on the waterfront.

Publication of the proposals coincided with warnings that the maritime

industry is increasingly vulnerable to seaborne attacks by al Qaeda terrorists.

"We believe al Qaeda and its associates may be planning a maritime 'spectacular,'" said Dominik Donald, an analyst with Aegis Defence Services, a London-based risk and security consulting firm. "We think there are enough indications now that al Qaeda would like to do this, is thinking hard about it, and is probably beginning to prepare for it," Donald told an oil and transport security conference in London. 