

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by the following Members: Le Pen, de Gaulle, Gollnisch, Lang and Martinez

on behalf of the TDI Group

on the devastating storms in France

B5-0045/2000**Resolution on the devastating storms in France***The European Parliament,*

- A. whereas the storms which raged through France during the night of 26 and 27 December 1999 claimed 90 lives and caused considerable material damage,
 - B. whereas the political and economic authorities estimate the material damage caused by these storms at over FF 75 billion,
 - C. whereas at the present time, almost three weeks after the disaster, several thousand people are still without electricity and telephone connections, particularly in Gironde, Dordogne and Haute-Vienne,
 - D. whereas the French forests, in particular, have suffered the effects of these storms (100 million square metres of woodland devastated or the equivalent of three years of production and more than 500 000 hectares laid waste),
 - E. whereas the historical heritage has suffered greatly and whereas numerous parks and gardens have been devastated, among them the park of the Château de Versailles which has lost 10 000 trees,
 - F. whereas France and Europe should act in solidarity with the French regions affected and the firms and people who have suffered most,
- 1. Condemns the irresponsible attitude of the European Parliament and the Commission in abolishing the budget heading providing emergency aid in the European Union when the Union, moreover, has allocated 500 million euro for the reconstruction of Kosovo and considerable sums in response to earthquakes in Turkey;
 - 2. Intends to reinstate a specific budget heading for emergency aid within the European Union by way of a supplementary and amending budget and, pending its reinstatement, to release an appropriate amount from the budget reserves;
 - 3. Calls for the release, under the rural development programme adopted at the Berlin Summit (Regulation 1257/99 of 17 May 1999), of aid intended to compensate for damage to agricultural production or means of production caused by natural disasters, which may cover up to 100% of the damage suffered;
 - 4. Considers that the FF 4 billion in aid and FF 12 billion in subsidised loans released by the French Government can only be regarded as the barest emergency measures which do nothing to resolve the root problems;
 - 5. Calls for special aid for French forests of some FF 10 billion over 10 years in order to restore the forest-based industry as a whole which has lost 500 000 hectares and represents a considerable asset in both economic and ecological terms;

6. Deplores the planting policy of the National Forestry Office which has destabilised French forest as whole and facilitated the economic and ecological disaster of recent weeks by concentrating on planting conifers for short-term profit;
7. Intends to maintain timber prices against the glut of felled timber by stockpiling wood fit for storage, exporting undamaged logs and by cutting up the remainder for firewood and wood pulp if unsuitable for use as industrial timber;
8. Calls for consideration in the future of a policy of burying medium and low-voltage electricity lines which would have the two-fold advantage of preventing power-cuts for industry and private individuals and of not marring sites of natural beauty and the countryside;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the French Government.