

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

17 February 2000

B5-0182/2000

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Oral Question O-0017/00

pursuant to Rule 42(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Mrs Langenhagen

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the effects of the *Erika* oil slick on the French fisheries and aquaculture sectors

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B5-0182/2000**Resolution on the effects of the *Erika* oil slick on the French fisheries and aquaculture sectors**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its earlier resolutions on related subjects, in particular those of 21 January 1993 on the *Braer* tanker disaster¹, 27 October 1994 on the oil slick in northern Portugal following the accident which occurred to the tanker *Cercal*², and 27 March 1996 on the *Sea Empress* tanker disaster³,
 - having regard to the international Convention of 18 December 1971 on the establishment of an International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPFC) and the additional Protocol thereto of 27 November 1992,
 - having regard to Council Directive 76/464/EEC on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community,
 - having regard to Council Directive 95/21/EC concerning the enforcement of international standards for ship safety, pollution prevention, and shipboard living and working conditions,
 - having regard to the proposal for a European Parliament and Council decision setting up a Community framework for cooperation in the field of accidental marine pollution and its position of 16 September 1999⁴,
 - having regard to European Parliament and Council Decision 2179/98 of 24 September 1998 on the review of the European Community programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development 'Towards sustainability', and in particular Article 2(4)(d) thereof concerning the White Paper on environmental liability to be submitted by the Commission,
 - having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2000 on the oil slick disaster caused by the wreck of the *Erika*⁵,
- A. whereas the seas help to maintain an ecological and climatic balance and are the mainstay of numerous economic activities,

¹ OJ C 42, 15.2.1993, p. 155.

² OJ C 323, 21.11.1994, p. 170.

³ OJ C 117, 22.4.1996, p. 18.

⁴ 'Texts adopted' on that date, Item 8.

⁵ 'Texts adopted' on that date, Item 2.

- B. whereas the *Erika* sank on 12 December 1999 within range of the Breton and Vendée coasts and whereas, regrettably, the accident was not an isolated occurrence in Europe,
 - C. whereas oil is continuing to leak from the wreck of the *Erika* and posing a threat of lasting damage to the Breton and Vendée coasts,
 - D. whereas vessels have taken advantage of the disastrous pollution in the wake of the accident involving the *Erika* to empty massive quantities of material from their tanks, even though such operations are prohibited under Directive 76/464/EEC,
 - E. whereas Breton and Vendée coasts have been hit by five serious pollution incidents in the past 25 years,
 - F. whereas sea-based activities are vital to the economic and social development of the affected areas,
 - G. whereas this environmental disaster is severely harming the marine ecosystem, biodiversity, bird-life, and fish stocks in areas of great ecological importance and will gravely undermine economic activities in the coastal regions concerned,
 - H. having regard to the damage sustained by the aquaculture, sea-based fish farming, and fisheries sectors in terms of lost earnings, lost markets, and the loss of consumer confidence,
 - I. whereas the culprits, and not the community as a whole, must be made to pay the costs of pollution and whereas, as far as shipping disasters are concerned, the concept of fault must be broadened to encompass the conditions under which a vessel was chartered,
 - J. whereas, to avert tragedies of this kind, the Union must pursue a policy based on prevention extending to all fisheries sectors,
 - K. whereas the Union must implement a prevention-oriented information and education policy aimed at the public at large and the fisheries sectors concerned with a view to fostering Europe-wide awareness of all the problems involved,
1. Calls on the Commission to study every means of assisting the sectors affected;
 2. Calls for port inspection procedures and the mandatory Community safety rules to be tightened up swiftly and appreciably; and calls on the Union Member States, working in cooperation with the International Maritime Organisation, to take steps with a view to tightening up international safety and surveillance regulations in general;
 3. Calls for the above-mentioned European Parliament and Council Decision setting up a Community framework for cooperation in the field of accidental marine pollution (COM(1998) 769) to be adopted as quickly as possible;

4. Condemns the flag of convenience system and calls on the Commission, when dealing with applications for accession from countries providing this type of flag, to ensure that the applicant countries in question undertake to abide strictly by Community rules;
5. Calls on the Union to draw up and rapidly introduce a control system to prevent vessels flying flags of convenience from circumventing stringent rules and inspections regarding both safety at sea and environmental protection, bearing in mind that compliance will make for a high degree of protection;
6. Calls for European funds to be mobilised as a matter of urgency, not least by Member States pursuing exchanges or working in partnership, with a view to:
 - supporting damaged regional businesses,
 - aiding fishery, aquaculture, and fish farming products in the regions affected;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the governments of the Member States and the applicant countries, and all maritime authorities concerned.