

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to Oral Question B5-0011/2000

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

by the following Members: McKenna, Piétrasanta and Hudghton

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on the damage inflicted on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors as a result of the Erika disaster

**B5-0183/2000****European Parliament resolution on the damage inflicted on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors as a result of the Erika disaster**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2000 on the oil slick disaster caused by the wreck of the *Erika*<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolutions on a number of oil slick disasters in recent years,
  - having regard to the international convention of 18 December 1971 on the establishment of the international oil pollution compensation fund
- A. having regard to the fragile nature of the marine environment and its importance to the local economy, in particular the fishing and aquaculture industries,
- B. whereas the accident on 12 December 1999 off the coast of Brittany involving the *Erika*, which was flying the Maltese flag and carrying a cargo of oil for the Total Fina company, has caused irreparable damage to the coastline,
- C. whereas this is only the latest in a multitude of serious maritime pollution incidents which have taken place over the last twenty five years in several places throughout the European Union,
- D. whereas 14,000 tonnes of oil have leaked from the ship and the oil that has come ashore along 400 kilometres of the French coast is responsible for a massive ecological disaster,
- E. whereas inshore fishing, already feeling the adverse effects of the difficulties in this sector, faces a bleak future because of this accident, and whereas other small-scale businesses that depend on the sea, such as oyster and other shellfish farms could lose several years worth of harvests,
- F. whereas the exposure of shellfish and certain fish to hydrocarbons poses food safety risks and the French Agency for Food Safety (AFSSA) has issued an opinion recommending that fishing from the shore be banned along sections of the coastline affected by the spill from the *Erika*,
- G. whereas the international oil pollution compensation fund (IOPC) is designed to provide funds for rapid mitigation measures so that the coastal damage is minimised and to provide compensation for those affected by the pollution; whereas the IOPC is underfunded, which hinders damage limitation and fails to provide adequate compensation,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts Adopted of that Sitting, Item 2.

1. Demands that the European Union takes into account the exceptionally serious nature of this oil spill and hence puts in place an emergency plan to restore and preserve the affected coastline;
2. Points out that the “polluter pays” principle enshrined in the Treaty on European Union must be applied in full so as to ensure that the short- and long-term damage done to the environment is made good and also that those who make their living from the sea and/or tourism are adequately compensated without delay for the losses they suffer;
3. Calls for the European Union to ensure that the IOPC fulfils its aims and ensures that money is rapidly available to those in need, and to consider also the long-term damage caused by the spill when assessing the financial implications of the disaster;
4. Calls on the European Union to amend the current Community legal framework so as to create a clear system for establishing responsibility, which would chiefly lie with the owner of the cargo, in this case Total Fina, but also with the ship owner, the certification body and the country providing the flag of convenience;
5. Notes the shortcomings in the current system by which oil tankers and other bulk carriers are certified by independent bodies and which allowed the Erika to put to sea despite the deplorable state of its hull;
6. Calls for a reform of IMO rules under which the decision-making powers of IMO Members are currently weighted according to the tonnage of their fleets and therefore rest with countries whose laws allow the use of flags of convenience;
7. Calls on the European Commission, in cooperation with the IMO, to establish a system for regular and stringent inspections of all vessels in Community waters, in particular those flying flags of convenience, inspecting the cargo and the condition of the vessel;
8. Condemns the fact that a number of European Union ship owners are also taking advantage of flags of convenience for their fishing vessels;
9. Points out that the European Union must urgently reconsider its energy policy and promote sustainable modes of inland transport, such as rail, so as to reduce the need for oil and its transport over long distances;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States.