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B5-0184/2000

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Oral Question B5-0011/2000

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

by Mr Souchet

on behalf of the UEN Group

on the consequences of the oil slick from the Erika for saltwater fish-farming, aquaculture and fisheries on the French Atlantic coast, particularly in Brittany and the Vendée

B5-0184/2000**Resolution on the consequences of the oil slick from the Erika for saltwater fish-farming, aquaculture and fisheries on the French Atlantic coast, particularly in Brittany and the Vendée**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2000 on the oil slick disaster caused by the wreck of the Erika¹,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on marine and coastal pollution,
- A. whereas the oceans make a fundamental contribution to the ecological and climatic balance and are the basis for many economic activities,
- B. whereas large quantities of heavy fuel oil have been washed ashore along the Atlantic coast of France following the sinking of the Maltese oil tanker the Erika off Brittany on 12 December 1999, and whereas the coast of Brittany and the Vendée has been particularly badly hit,
- C. whereas the oil spill has proved much more serious than initial estimates predicted and the damage to the environment in the regions affected is extremely serious, even though it is not yet possible to assess its full scale,
- D. whereas oil is continuing to leak from the wreck of the Erika and presents a permanent threat to the coasts, islands and ports of Brittany and the Vendée,
- E. whereas sea-based activities are a key part of the economic and social development of the areas affected,
- F. recalling that the cost of pollution should be borne by those responsible and not by society as a whole, and that, in the case of maritime disasters, application of the concept of negligence should be extended to include the conditions under which vessels are chartered,
- G. noting the initial estimates of the costs caused by the oil spill for people working in the aquaculture and fishing industries, who are faced with the need to rebuild or replace installations and equipment which has been destroyed or damaged,
- H. whereas these sectors have suffered and will continue to suffer losses in terms of markets and consumer confidence as a result of the oil spill,

¹ 'Texts adopted' on that date, Item 2.

- I. noting the consequences which the oil spill can be expected to have for tourist activity along France's entire Atlantic coast, in particular in the three regions of Brittany, Pays de la Loire and Poitou-Charentes,
- J. noting that the funds earmarked within the framework of the IOPCF appear clearly inadequate to provide fair compensation for those affected by oil pollution,
1. Calls on the Commission to look into every possible way of assisting the sectors affected, over and above the appropriations which may be made available under the Structural Funds, the amount of which was fixed before the Erika disaster;
 2. Denounces the effects of excessive liberalisation in the maritime transport sector, which has not been accompanied by a sufficient stepping-up of safety standards for and checks on merchant ships;
 3. Deplores the fact that, unlike in the United States, no lessons have been learned from previous disasters such as the Amoco Cadiz and Tanio with regard to improving such standards and checks and calls for all the appropriate lessons to be drawn from the Erika disaster in the field of maritime safety;
 4. Calls on the Commission to present, as a matter of urgency, specific initiatives designed to improve the safety of maritime transport by stepping up inspections on the basis of existing rules and by proposing new measures aimed at removing the serious loopholes in the current rules;
 5. Calls in particular on the Commission and Council rapidly to set up a mandatory identification system, which does not yet exist and which would apply to all merchant vessels carrying pollutant products entering Community waters;
 6. Calls, likewise, on the Commission and Council to take the necessary steps to ensure that no dangerous cargoes may enter a Member State port without prior authorisation granted in the light of reliable guarantees with regard to insurance, vessel safety and working conditions for the crew;
 7. Hopes that the Commission will draw up as soon as possible a detailed report on the functioning of the various inspection bodies that are approved for the certification of merchant vessels in Europe;
 8. Calls on the Commission and Council to take the necessary initiatives to obtain, within the framework of the IMO, stronger safety rules with which oil tankers would have to comply (double hull, middle deck), together with stricter checks (visit to a dry dock) for vessels more than 15 years old, and systematic supervision of classification societies;
 9. Condemns the flag of convenience system and calls on the Commission, within the framework of accession negotiations with applicant countries that allow such flags, to

ensure that those countries undertake to comply strictly with Community rules on maritime safety;

10. Calls on the Commission to apply Community rules on competition in a flexible and appropriate manner so as to allow public authorities to intervene financially to help the economies of the areas affected by the Erika oil spill to recover;
11. Calls on the Commission to take account of the serious damage suffered by those working in the fishing industry in the areas affected in relation to application of the MAGPs;
12. Welcomes the initiative taken by the local authorities, which had an expert report drawn up on the state of their coasts before the oil slick arrived so as to make it easier to compensate those affected, both individuals and professionals, thus showing it had learnt the lessons from the legal obstacles encountered by victims of previous disasters;
13. Calls on the Commission to support the implementation of a communication plan designed to enable those working in the fishing, saltwater fish-farming, aquaculture and tourism industries, whose activity has been badly hit by the consequences of the oil spill, to win back the markets lost in the wake of the Erika disaster;
14. Calls on the Commission and Council to take the necessary steps to obtain a significant increase in the IOPCF ceiling;
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the French Government and the presidents of the regional councils of the Loire, Brittany and Poitou-Charentes and the presidents of the general councils of the Vendée, Loire Atlantique, Morbihan, Finistère and Charente Maritime.