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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Frédérique Ries, Chris Davies and Karl Erik Olsson

on behalf of the ELDR Group

on the recent disaster at a chemical plant in Toulouse

European Parliament resolution on the recent disaster at a chemical plant in Toulouse

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Directive 82/501/EEC (Seveso I), concerning the prevention of major industrial accidents, and the subsequent Directive 96/82/EC (Seveso II), concerning the management of risks associated with major accidents involving hazardous substances,
- having regard to the Commission publication 'Guidance on land-use planning as required by Council Directive 96/82',
- A. whereas the 21 September explosion at the AZF fertiliser factory in Toulouse resulted in 29 deaths and left over 700 people injured, some of whom remain in a critical condition, while many nearby homes and shops were also destroyed,
- B. whereas the explosion is one of the worst industrial disasters in France in over 50 years, as well as one of Europe's most lethal industrial accidents ever,
- C. whereas the AZF facility had, among other things, some 6300 tonnes of liquid ammoniac, 100 tonnes of liquid chlorine, 1500 tonnes of oxidising substances and 6000 tonnes of solid ammonium nitrate, and was therefore classed as a major accident hazard under the Seveso II Directive,
- D. whereas the Seveso II Directive requires Member States to ensure that plant operators take all necessary measures to prevent major accidents and limit the consequences for the public and the environment where they occur,
- E. whereas the aforementioned directive should have been transposed into national law by the Member States by 3 February 1999,
- 1. Expresses its solidarity with, and support for, the victims of this disaster;
- 2. Notes that, while the exact cause of the accident remains to be established, there is considerable concern as regards the poor chemical storage procedures at the plant (a recent safety inspection did not include the storage warehouses where the explosion took place);
- 3. Notes that the advice provided by the plant authorities to local residents and schools on how to react in an emergency was clearly insufficient, as there was a clear lack of public awareness of emergency procedures;
- 4. Recalls that Articles 9 and 11 of the Seveso II Directive require the relevant authorities to be provided with both a safety report drafted by plant operators, outlining policy for the prevention of major accidents, on the one hand, and draft

emergency plans in the event of an accident, on the other;

5. Is greatly concerned by the fact that not one of the 15 Member States had fully complied with the provisions of the Seveso II Directive by its transposition date and notes in this respect that the Commission has initiated 6 infringement proceedings against Member States (including France) for non-compliance;
6. Calls on the Commission to encourage compliance with the directive by publishing, within three months, a list of sites throughout the European Union which are of concern or which, in the event of an accident, have the potential to cause damage on a scale similar to that brought about by the explosion in Toulouse;
7. Is of the opinion that the Seveso II Directive must be revised to address the issue of specific separation distances between dangerous installations and residential and other public areas and, in particular, the key problem of urban development around existing plants;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Mayor of Toulouse, the Commission, Council and the governments of the Member States and candidate countries.