

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

1 October 2001

B5-0612/2001

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Charles Pasqua

on behalf of the UEN Group

on the explosion at a plant in Toulouse (France)

European Parliament resolution on the explosion at a plant in Toulouse (France)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 1982 Seveso directive requiring industrial operators to assess the risks of their plants and reduce these risks through technical and organisational measures,
 - whereas that directive was updated in December 1996, at European level, by Directive 90/82/EC (Seveso II) of 9 December 1996 on the control of major-accidents hazards involving dangerous substances,
 - having regard to the IPPC directive of 1996,
- A. whereas on 21 September a plant in Toulouse specialising in the production of fertilisers located within the urban area of the city exploded killing some 30 people and injuring hundreds of others,
 - B. whereas the explosion devastated an area within a radius of several kilometres, destroying houses, shops and factories and resulting in the closure of schools and traumatising thousands of inhabitants,
 - C. whereas this plant, which was built in 1924, had been listed as being located in a 'Seveso ' area since 1982,
 - D. whereas the plant was originally located in the countryside, but has since being surrounded by urban development,
 - E. whereas the factory produced ammonium nitrogen fertilisers made from nitric acid which comes from ammonia, a fairly standard manufacturing process but which involves the presence of large quantities of hazardous substances or preparations,
 - F. whereas all the, less immediate, consequences are not yet known, such as those linked, for example, to the proximity of the River Garonne, which is a source of water supply, which might ultimately cause problems with the supply of drinking water,
 - G. whereas this accident must serve as an example with regard to the future of hazardous sites in urban areas and provide a response to the expectations and issues now facing local and regional elected representatives in the cities, as many have plants classified as hazardous within their areas,
 - H. whereas in many countries the legal texts and frameworks are in place, in particularly the Seveso II directive on major risks, but not the resources required properly to enforce the law and monitor compliance;
1. Expresses its solidarity with the victims of this disaster and their families;

2. Reaffirms vigorously the danger of siting such plants near major community facilities such as schools, shops and houses;
3. Points out that Directive 96/82/EC was not effectively transposed in France until 2000 and that it requires the establishments concerned to provide the authorities with an inventory of dangerous substances and introduces the requirement that industrial operators should put in place safety management systems, and in particular a risk assessment comprising possible accident scenarios;
4. Considers that risk evaluation plays a key role in preventing major accidents and that basic work on informing the public about the risks of industrial accidents and the action to be taken in the event of an accident is a priority in order to limit the consequences of major accidents;
5. Considers that although factories must be sited as far as possible outside urban areas, at the same time measures must be taken to ensure that the expansion of cities takes account of the need for a safety zone;
6. Expresses its firm determination to make the issue of industrial risk a priority and calls on the Member States to examine, in cooperation with the operators concerned, the most appropriate way of relocating such dangerous plants in order to reassure the population, while paying attention to the need for such new sites to be sufficiently attractive in terms of the economic development of the firms concerned and bearing in mind the risks of transporting the materials necessary for the operation of such plants;
7. Calls on the directors of firms and national and local elected representatives to implement the provisions of the directive and to take the preventive and monitoring measures required without delay;
8. Calls on the Commission to submit as soon as possible a proposal to revise the Seveso II directive, as the consultation process was launched in April 2001, together with a proposal on environmental liability;
9. Calls on the national governments facing this type of disaster to ensure full transparency with regard to the criminal or accidental causes of such appalling damage to people and property;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.