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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

by Christine de Veyrac

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the explosion in Toulouse in an industrial establishment

European Parliament resolution on the explosion in Toulouse in an industrial establishment

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 174 and 308 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to Council Directive 96/82/EC of 9 December 1996 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances and in particular Article 11 on emergency plans and Article 12 on land-use planning,
 - having regard to Commission Decision 1999/314/EC of 9 April 1999 imposing an obligation on the Member States to draw up a report covering the period 2000 to 2002, and having regard to the previous reports on the application of Directive 96/82/EC,
 - having regard to the Council Resolution of 16 October 1989 on guidelines to reduce technological and natural hazards,
 - having regard to the Council Resolution of 8 July 1991 on improving mutual aid between Member States in the event of natural or technological disaster,
 - having regard to the Council Decision of 9 December 1999 establishing a Community action programme in the field of civil protection for the period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2004,
 - having regard to the Council's proposal for a Council decision establishing a Community mechanism for the coordination of Civil Protection intervention in the event of emergencies and having regard to its opinion of 14 June 2001,
- A. whereas the European Union should display solidarity towards those affected by natural, technological or environmental disasters, with a view to helping to bring Europe closer to its citizens,
- B. whereas a series of natural, technological and environmental disasters has caused severe damage in a number of Member States and neighbouring countries: earthquakes, storms and floods, pollution and fireworks have killed a large number of people,
- C. whereas the explosion of the AZF factory in Toulouse, which was Seveso classified, has caused considerable damage to individuals, the environment and property,
- D. whereas prevention is the best means of protection against natural, technological and environmental disasters,
- E. whereas the consequences of the Toulouse disaster were made more dramatic because the factory was close to residential areas; whereas its proximity to other at-risk industrial sites

could have set off a domino effect,

- F. whereas the aim of Directive 96/82/EC, known as Seveso II, is to protect residential areas, areas of substantial public use and areas of particular natural interest from establishments presenting a major industrial risk,
- G. whereas the Seveso II Directive is currently being revised in order to benefit at a Community level from the lessons of the accidents in Baia Mare (Romania), Aznalcóllar (Spain) and Enschede (the Netherlands),
- H. whereas after the Toulouse disaster, the overloading of communication lines made it difficult to exchange the information which is so vital in such circumstances,
 - 1. Pays its respects to the victims of the Toulouse disaster and expresses its sympathy and support for the injured, their families and all who have suffered;
 - 2. Calls for the reintroduction of an emergency budget heading permitting European Union financial aid when natural, technological and environmental disasters occur;
 - 3. Calls for great efforts to be made at the European Union level to step up European coordination of civil protection measures, so that in emergencies there is information on the resources in the Member States that can be mobilised, in order to allow rapid intervention, facilitate the work of experts from different Member States and improve communications and notification of the public; to this end calls for sufficient financial and human resources to be allocated;
 - 4. Stresses that consultation with the public, associations and all the relevant authorities in at-risk areas must be improved; insists that they must be better informed, aware and trained in rapid reaction; would like to see this need taken into account when the proposal for a directive on public access to environmental information is next considered;
 - 5. Calls on the Commission, as part of the revision of the Seveso II Directive, to learn from the experience of the Toulouse explosion, particularly by strengthening safety rules and introducing stricter rules for the siting and proximity of classified establishments in residential areas and areas of substantial public use; a safety area remains to be defined depending on the degree of danger of their activities;
 - 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.