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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

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

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on the sinking of the oil tanker *Prestige*

European Parliament resolution on the sinking of the oil tanker *Prestige*

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on maritime safety,
 - having regard to the implementation of the Erika I and II packages,
 - having regard to the International Convention of 18 December 1971 on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (IOPCF), the additional protocol thereto of 27 November 1992 and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) of 20 November 1973,
- A. whereas the oil tanker *Prestige*, which is registered in the Bahamas and which was chartered by a Swiss company, sank on 19 November near the coast of Galicia, and whereas thousands of tonnes of crude oil have spilled into the sea and are continuing to pollute the coastline,
- B. whereas fisheries, marine aquaculture and tourism are fundamental to the economic and social development of the areas affected, and whereas the oil slick will mean high costs for those who make their living from the sea, who will be forced to rebuild or replace means of production that have been destroyed or damaged,
- C. whereas very serious damage has been caused to fauna and to the environment of the region, and whereas the fisheries and aquaculture industry has been severely hit,
- D. whereas years of effort will be needed to repair the damage caused, to replace what has been destroyed and to win back consumer confidence,
- E. whereas maritime safety has not been sufficiently improved in recent years, and whereas not all of the lessons from previous accidents have been drawn at the Community and international levels,
- F. whereas the 25-year old oil tanker *Prestige* was clearly not seaworthy,
- G. whereas vessels flying flags of convenience account for a significant proportion of the total number of shipwrecks recorded,
- H. whereas this disaster once again reveals a desire on the part of some shipowners and oil companies to save on costs, a desire which is geared solely to generating profits to the detriment of safety, and which is reflected in particular in the use of flags of convenience, leading to a lowering of safety and social protection standards,
- I. whereas the task of the IOPCF is to provide funds in order to finance swift palliative measures to reduce damage to the coastline and compensate the victims of pollution;

whereas the IOPCF is underfunded, with the result that damage cannot be made good and insufficient money is available to cover the costs of compensation,

1. Expresses its solidarity with, and support for, all of the victims of the oil pollution;
2. Stresses the need to do everything possible to complete the pumping of fuel oil from the *Prestige's* tanks;
3. Condemns the results of the overly lax attitude adopted by the maritime transport industry, a sector in which safety standards and checks applying to merchant vessels and flags of convenience have not been adequately strengthened;
4. Calls for Solidarity Fund resources to be made immediately available with a view to cleaning up the polluted coastline, restoring the environment of the regions concerned and compensating people affected;
5. Calls on the IOPCF to significantly raise its compensation ceilings;
6. Calls for implementation of the Erika I and II packages to be speeded up, for new measures designed to strengthen safety standards in the maritime transport sector to be adopted and for effective measures to be taken against flags of convenience;
7. Calls on the Member States to speed up the ratification of IMO conventions which are still pending and to ensure that IMO resolutions are incorporated into the conventions in such a way as to make them binding;
8. Calls on the IMO to:
 - strengthen international rules on maritime safety,
 - lay down genuinely deterrent penalties for shipowners and charterers who fail to comply with safety standards or who carry out unauthorised emptying of tanks,
 - take steps against flags of convenience;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States and the applicant countries.