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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 PPE-DE Group

on the accident involving the oil tanker 'Prestige'

European Parliament resolution on the accident involving the oil tanker 'Prestige'

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 70, 80 and 174 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to its earlier resolutions, and in particular those of 21 January 1993 on the 'Braer' tanker disaster, 27 October 1994 on the oil slick in northern Portugal following the accident involving the tanker 'Cercal', 27 October 1994 and February 1996 on safety at sea, 27 March 1996 on the 'Sea Empress' tanker disaster, and 20 January 2000 on the 'Erika' tanker disaster and on maritime insurance,
 - having regard to the International Convention of 18 December 1971 on the establishment of an International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPCF) and its additional protocol of 27 November 1992,
 - having regard to Council Directive 76/464/EEC on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community,
 - having regard to the Commission proposal of 23 January 2002 for a Council directive on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage,
- A. whereas the oil tanker 'Prestige' carrying 77 000 tonnes of fuel oil, part of which has already spilt into the sea, reaching the coast of Galicia and, probably, the north coast of Portugal, represents a serious risk of further pollution,
- B. whereas Galicia is an Objective 1 region highly dependent on fishing activities, with the result that it is particularly vulnerable to the impact of ecological disasters causing damage to its marine ecosystem and, by extension, its fish and shellfish resources,
- C. whereas this environmental disaster is causing serious harm to the marine ecosystem, biodiversity, in particular birdlife, and fish stocks in an area of major ecological interest, and whereas it will make considerable inroads into the economy and tourist activities in this coastal region,
- D. whereas this disaster will directly affect more than 5 000 people whose livelihoods depend on marine products and will indirectly affect an as yet unknown number of people,
- E. whereas the 'Prestige' was last inspected in 1999,
1. Expresses its solidarity with and its support for the victims of this disaster and applauds the prompt response by many EU Member States which made vessels and technical

equipment available with a view to recovering the crude oil spilt on the open sea;

2. Calls on the Commission to conduct an inquiry to determine who was responsible for this accident and into the application of the standards governing the internal market, including the nature of the goods transported, the principles of free competition and the tax implications;
3. Hopes that the inquiry will cast light on all the factors contributing to the accident and will enable fair reparation to be made for the environmental, economic and social damage caused by this massive oil slick; notes that, according to the forecasts, it will be at least four years before the ecological balance in the area affected is re-established;
4. Deplores the fact that the 'Prestige' had not been inspected since 1999 and calls on the Member States to comply fully with and to apply the provisions on the minimum number of inspections laid down by the directive on port state control;
5. Reiterates its conviction that the adoption of the Erika I and II packages will substantially improve maritime safety, in particular through the tightening-up of checks in ports, closer monitoring of the activities of classification societies and the stipulation that oil tankers must have double hulls;
6. Calls for the Commission proposal establishing an additional European compensation fund of EUR 1 billion for oil pollution damage to be implemented immediately;
7. Calls for aid to be released as quickly as possible with a view to remedying the damage caused by this disaster and for the IOPCF to be mobilised;
8. Calls for the polluter-pays principle to be applied in accordance with international maritime law;
9. Calls on the Commission, in agreement with the Member States, to draw up a list of European maritime and/or fisheries areas which warrant special protection by virtue of the nature of their marine ecosystems, their rich fish and shellfish resources and their high level of dependency on fisheries;
10. Calls for the existing corridors for the maritime transport of oil and hazardous substances in Community waters to be rerouted as far away as possible from coastlines and, in particular, areas declared vulnerable;
11. Calls, further, for assistance to be provided under other appropriate instruments (Solidarity Fund, Structural Funds) with a view to assisting the people and economic sectors affected by the oil pollution;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the governments of the Member States and applicant countries, the Galician authorities and all the competent maritime authorities.