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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Luís Queiró and José Ribeiro e Castro

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

on the drought in Portugal

European Parliament resolution on the drought in Portugal

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the severe drought which for a number of months now has been having a devastating effect on mainland Portugal,
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 15 March 2005 almost 88% of mainland Portugal was experiencing severe or even extreme drought and whereas a few days of light rainfall have not been sufficient to alter the situation to an adequate extent,
- B. whereas the effects of the water shortage are being felt in agriculture, in livestock rearing, in forestry, in human consumption, in the environment, in health care and hence in tourism, which is a major Portuguese industry,
- C. whereas the rainfall levels recorded in Portugal between September and December are the lowest for 15 years - a fact which illustrates the scale of the problem and the effect which the situation is having in terms of material cost,
- D. whereas the people who are most directly affected are those who have the lowest levels of financial resources,
- E. whereas the direct effects are compounded by the increased risk of summer fires, which already occur on a disastrous scale (this was particularly the case in 2003),
- F. whereas the Member States (especially the cohesion countries) find it difficult to cope on their own with natural disasters on such a scale, for which reason they require support and assistance,
- 1. Expresses its concern at the situation currently affecting Portuguese farmers and livestock breeders and also the regions which are experiencing a water shortage - the situation in the central and southern parts of the country being particularly serious;
- 2. Considers that Community intervention is called for, though not solely in order to provide support for the victims; efforts must also be made to limit the damage and to prevent identical situations in the future from once again having such devastating effects;
- 3. Proposes that, on the basis of the information which has already been supplied by the Portuguese authorities, the Commission should carry out an immediate assessment of current and foreseeable future damage, that it should make the necessary resources available in sufficient quantities and that it should authorise possible state aid;
- 4. Alerts the Commission and the Council to the immediate need for funding to be made available and resources to be marshalled in order to enable action to be taken in good time

to prevent a higher number of forest fires from occurring next summer on account of the drought;

5. Calls on the Council and the Commission to reconsider the possibility of drawing upon the Solidarity Fund and in particular of ensuring that the fund can also be used in response to situations of this kind;
6. Urges the Commission to submit to the Council and the European Parliament a proposal for revision of the legal instruments with a view to adapting the existing legislation so that it can be used to help prevent such serious effects from recurring in any subsequent years of repeated drought;
7. Urges the Commission to carry out an in-depth study into the occurrence of such phenomena in order to determine whether they are cyclical or occasional in nature, or whether they are a further indicator of long-term climate change;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Portuguese Parliament and government and the local authorities in the areas affected.