

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0841/07

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to the Commission

Subject: Pollution in Algeciras Bay

The tax regime in Gibraltar is a continual cause of infringements of Community law governing both fuel supply for vessels and the environment. As a result, there continues to be a substantial increase in the volume of pollutants discharged in Algeciras Bay, which has suffered years of permanent damage to its marine environment and to its tourist resorts and towns.

This issue has been raised with the Commission on numerous occasions, but it was not until the unfortunate Prestige spill that the desire to stop the discharge of pollutant waste was awakened.

Nevertheless, more than four years later, Gibraltar continues to serve as a location for bunkering.

On 28 January 2007, another vessel, the Sierra Nava, ran aground in Punta San García, off the coast of the port of Algeciras (Cádiz), causing another spill, this time of its own fuel. It is not known how much fuel was spilt, but, once again, the Cádiz coastline is suffering the consequences.

How and when does the Commission intend definitively to tackle the potential risks associated with refuelling in Algeciras Bay, which is already known as the 'service station of the Strait'?

What steps are being taken to prevent further pollution resulting both from accidents and from the cleaning of vessels in the Strait?

What checks are being carried out on the constant discharges in Algeciras Bay?

Can the Commission state whether the United Kingdom has transposed Directive 2000/59/EC¹ on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues?

¹ OJ L 332, 28.12.2000, p. 81.