

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0945/08  
by Gerardo Galeote (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: The sinking of the New Flame

The scrap metal ship New Flame has been stranded on a reef half a mile offshore at Algeciras (Cadiz) and Gibraltar since 12 August 2007, after a collision with an oil tanker. The vessel's prow was damaged, leading to the flooding of the hold, which left the vessel half-sunk. Over the last seven months, various specialised salvage companies have attempted to re-float the ship, without success.

Throughout this time, the vessel has been leaking fuel, and these leaks have increased in the last few days due to the bad weather conditions, which has led to the vessel's sinking almost completely.

Apart from the oil slicks which have been reaching the various beaches in the area, there is the far from negligible question of the environmental impact of the 42 000 tonnes of scrap the vessel is carrying.

The Spanish Ministry of the Environment has asked that the joint surveillance and monitoring mechanism between Spain and the United Kingdom be activated.

Does the Commission think that if this mechanism had been activated earlier, the harmful consequences of the sinking of the vessel a few days ago could have been avoided or, at least, minimised?