

**Question for written answer E-6059/2010
to the Council**
Rule 117
Christophe Béchu (PPE)

Subject: EU precautions against an offshore oil disaster

The explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig on 20 April 2010 in the Gulf of Mexico and the resulting oil spill have deeply affected the American community which is faced with the worst environmental disaster in its history.

The European Union shares the USA's deep concern at the scale of the pollution which is still pouring into the ocean and washing up on land, particularly since no solution has yet been found to sealing the break and stopping the leak.

In addition to the irreparable damage to the coasts of the southern US, a whole marine ecosystem, and an economy based on fishing and tourism, has vanished.

One is inevitably led to fear the effects a comparable incident would have on oil drilling off the EU's shores.

That being so, what EU procedures exist which can guarantee access to sufficient funding to clean the coasts or compensate the victims in the event of an oil disaster of this nature?

Does the Council consider that the checks to which European oil rig operators are subject are sufficient?

More generally, is the European Union prepared to respond to an ecological disaster of this scale?