

**Question for written answer E-007941/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)

Subject: MSC Flaminia: accommodation of vessels in need of assistance

In Europe, by virtue of its thousands of kilometres of coastline, maritime safety and the prevention of marine pollution are particularly sensitive issues. The memory of past environmental emergencies is still very fresh in people's minds and Europeans quite rightly do not want to see any repeat of disasters such as that caused by the *Erika*, which had a profound impact on public opinion.

On 14 July 2012 the *MSC Flaminia*, a container ship almost 300 metres long, suffered a serious accident – two explosions which caused a fire and destroyed part of the ship's cargo – off Brittany. Despite the progress which has been made in the area of maritime safety in recent years, the *MSC Flaminia* had to wait for more than a month before a port would agree to take it in. Although the vessel is now en route for Germany, the length of the procedure has re-awakened serious concerns regarding safety and pollution prevention, since the *MSC Flaminia* is transporting hazardous substances (PCB waste in particular), creating a serious risk of pollution.

1. What conclusions does the Commission draw from this affair? What view does it take of the time it took to provide the *MSC Flaminia* with assistance, given the importance of maritime safety and pollution prevention?
2. Does the Commission think that Directive 2009/17/EC and, more specifically, the provisions concerning accommodation for vessels in need of assistance were correctly applied in this case? Are they adequate to ensure that risks to the safety of people and the environment can be addressed quickly and effectively?
3. If not, does the Commission plan to take further action to remedy the persistent shortcomings in international cooperation and in the application of the rules on the accommodation of vessels in need of assistance?