

ORAL QUESTION H-0213/03

for Question Time at the part-session in April 2003  
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Carlos Bautista Ojeda  
to the Council

Subject: Oil prospecting in the Western Sahara

The natural resources of the Western Sahara stand in need of special protection by reason of the conflictual situation which has characterised that territory for more than 25 years. It is stated in the conclusions of the UN's Legal Service of 29 January 2002 (document S/2002/161) on Moroccan oil prospecting in the Sahara that such activities should not be carried out. The Norwegian government has, in statements made by the deputy foreign minister Mr Vidar Helgesen, questioned the legality of the operations being conducted by the Norwegian company TGS-Nopec and forming part of the Moroccan-led activities on the continental shelf off the Western Sahara, on the grounds that they are in violation of the inalienable rights of the Saharan people to the resources existing on its territory.

What is the Council's position concerning Community oil and mining companies operating without international legal cover in the Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara? Does the Council intend to take specific action on the matter?

Tabled: 27.03.2003  
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