

ORAL QUESTION H-0767/03

for Question Time at the part-session in December 2003

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Jan Dhaene

to the Commission

Subject: Use of pure vegetable oil as fuel for ships

Shipping disasters confront us with the dangers of oil pollution at sea. Without wishing to minimise the consequences of such disasters, I should like to point out that there is also a serious problem due to diffuse pollution of freshwater systems with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PACs) from inland shipping and pleasure craft. This is caused, inter alia, by leaks, spillage and precipitation of combustion gases. Directive 2003/30/EC<sup>1</sup> of the EP and of the Council of 8 May 2003 has the aim of promoting the use of biofuels in transport. If the first problem mentioned here is viewed in conjunction with the EU's biofuel objectives, some interesting opportunities come to mind. An increase in the use of pure vegetable oil in inland shipping and by pleasure craft could reduce diffuse pollution of freshwater systems with PACs.

Can the Commission encourage the use of pure vegetable oil specifically by ships? If so, have any steps already been taken in this regard?

Can the Commission initiate a research project to study ways of converting ordinary diesel engines on ships simply and cheaply into engines which can run on pure vegetable oil? If so, have any steps already been taken in this regard?

Tabled: 02.12.2003

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 123, 17.5.2003, p. 42.