

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3398/02

by Carlos Ripoll y Martínez de Bedoya (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: The 'Prestige' incidence off the Galician coast

On Wednesday, 13 November, the oil tanker 'Prestige' on route from Latvia to Gibraltar was damaged and destabilised, apparently by the heavy seas caused by the storm off Finisterre. The Spanish authorities were as a result forced to activate appropriate rescue and safety procedures, thus preventing an ecological and environmental disaster of unforeseeable dimensions, whose consequences could have been far worse than was actually the case

Given that the available information indicates that the 'Prestige' underwent compulsory inspection in Rotterdam Harbour in 1999, during which anomalies were detected, and that there is no news of the vessel's being re-inspected, despite the fact that it has called at Community ports, does the Commission believe that there has been a dereliction of duty on the part of some authority or body responsible for inspecting and checking vessels of this kind?