

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1682/03

by Enrico Ferri (PPE-DE)

to the Commission

Subject: Monitoring the safety of maritime traffic and the environmental impact of the project to dredge the Gulf of La Spezia (Italy)

The Port Authority of La Spezia has launched a project to dredge the approach channel to the Port of La Spezia at a depth of 15 m by removing 40 000 m<sup>3</sup> of sediment with a view to allowing huge container ships of 6500/6800 TEU to enter the port. This project would involve a substantial extension of the port and an increase in maritime traffic. The Regional Administrative Court of Genoa has ordered that the project be put on hold. The project has the dual effect of having a negative impact on the environment and on the health of citizens living in the area around the port, given that the area has already been reclaimed (leading to the dispersal of the pollutant substances on the sea bed). The second effect of the project would be a considerable increase in traffic in the Port of La Spezia, which would have an adverse impact on shipping safety.

Does the Commission not consider that this plan could have disastrous consequences from the point of view of its impact on the environment, given that the intention is to excavate a sea bed which has already been excavated for a long time?

The project would also concern areas adjacent to the port which are considered Sites of Community Interest (SCIs) (even though not all of the port has been recognised as an SCI - see reply to previous Question H-0849/02<sup>1</sup>).

Does the Commission not consider that this work would involve a further accumulation and dispersal of the harmful substances already present in those areas and would ruin the international image of the so-called Gulf of the Poets?

Does the Commission not think that the extension of the port (as explicitly stated in the dredging project) and the ensuing increase in maritime traffic would have a negative impact on safety at sea?

- Having regard to Articles 174, 175 and 176 of the Treaty,
- having regard to EU legislation on maritime safety and traffic, most recently the Commission Communication on improving safety at sea in response to the Prestige accident,
- having regard to Council Directive 92/43/EEC<sup>2</sup> of 21 May 1992,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002<sup>3</sup> of 27 June 2002 establishing a European Maritime Safety Agency,
- having regard to the proposal for a European Parliament and Council directive concerning pollution from ships and the introduction of penalties, including criminal penalties, for pollution-related offences,
- whereas Directive 85/337/EEC<sup>4</sup> provides for environmental impact assessments (EIAs) of certain public and private projects, including, as specifically stated in Annex 1(8) and Annex 2(13) projects concerning port installations and involving an increase in maritime traffic, which is the declared objective of the dredging project,

1. 1. Can the Commission conduct an investigation into the current situation and check what impact this project would have on maritime safety and traffic standards?

---

<sup>1</sup> Written reply of 1 April 2003

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 206 of 22.7.1992, p. 7

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 208 of 5.8.2002, p. 1

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 175 of 5.7.1985, p. 40

2. Can the Commission conduct an investigation into the compatibility of this project with the environment?