

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4246/07  
by Barbara Kudrycka (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Agreement between Poland and the Russian Federation on navigation in the Vistula Lagoon

Last year, the Russian Federation unilaterally withdrew from the agreement concluded with Poland on navigation in the Vistula Lagoon. Russia banned Polish vessels from sailing on its side of the Lagoon and demanded the conclusion of a new agreement, stating that the old one – signed in 1946 – ceased to apply once Poland joined the European Union. For the last year, Poland has been involved in negotiations with the Russian Federation for a new agreement.

In autumn 2006, Russia presented Poland with two draft agreements on the Vistula Lagoon. However, both were rejected by the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Poland considers that Russia should allow not only Russian and Polish vessels but also third-country vessels to sail on the Lagoon, which Russia is refusing to do. The Vistula Lagoon leads to the port of Elbląg, which is used for the transport of passengers and goods.

It should be pointed out that the Polish authorities are demanding the opening of the Lagoon to third-country vessels chiefly in the aim of allowing ships and sailing boats belonging to European Union citizens to enter Polish ports. If this access is denied and only vessels sailing under a Polish flag are allowed to enter the port, it could result in considerable distortions of competition on the market. It appears that such an arrangement could be incompatible with Community law.

The closure of the port is causing many firms and the region as a whole to suffer losses.

Has the Polish Government asked the Commission for assistance in the negotiations with Russia and has any such assistance been granted?

Has the Commission raised this issue in the context of its bilateral relations with the Russian Federation or does it intend to do so in the near future?