

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Session document

14 November 2001

B5-0710/2001 }
B5-0718/2001 }
B5-0724/2001 }
B5-0725/2001 }
B5-0734/2001 }
RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 50(5) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Georg Jarzembowski and Giacomo Santini, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Brian Simpson and Hannes Swoboda, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Diana Wallis, Marieke Sanders-ten Holte, Luciano Caveri and Paolo Costa, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Reinhold Messner, Theodorus J.J. Bouwman, Heidi Anneli Hautala and Paul A.A.J.G. Lannoye, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
- Sylviane H. Ainardi and Luigi Vinci, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Cristiana Muscardini, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- ELDR (B5-0710/2001),
- Verts/ALE (B5-0718/2001),
- PSE (B5-0724/2001),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0725/2001),
- UEN (B5-0734/2001),

on the Gotthard tunnel disaster

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PE 312.083}
PE 312.091}
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European Parliament resolution on the Gotthard tunnel disaster

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the tragic accident in the Gotthard tunnel in Switzerland on 24 October 2001,
- A. deeply shocked by the disaster in the Gotthard tunnel, which had hitherto been regarded as the safest tunnel in Europe, making new measures to improve safety in tunnels an even more urgent priority,
- B. whereas the accident brought to light legal and social irregularities which could pose a threat to road safety,
- C. having regard to the need to reinforce safety conditions for road transport and to promote rail and piggy-back transport,
- D. aware of the concerns of the inhabitants of the transalpine region as regards road safety and the environmental impact of road transport,
- E. whereas the Gotthard tunnel provided road mobility for persons and goods between Italy and the rest of Europe, and whereas in 1999 alone it carried five times more heavy goods vehicles than the other three main Swiss routes put together,
- 1. Sends its most sincere condolences to the families of the victims and pays tribute to the courage of the rescue workers;
- 2. Calls for an early conclusion to the in-depth inquiry that is already under way, so that as much light as possible is shed on the conditions under which the events occurred, and the responsibility for them; calls for those responsible to be severely punished;
- 3. Reaffirms the necessity to make safety the top priority in transport policy, and calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States, as well as on Switzerland, to take action to achieve this, learning everything they can from the Gotthard and Mont Blanc tragedies;
- 4. Takes the view that the measures taken thus far to ensure safety of road transport are insufficient, particularly in certain tunnels, and notes that, unfortunately, all too often not even minimum standards are adhered to;
- 5. Calls for priority to be given to rail transport of freight, particularly in mountainous and hazardous areas; reaffirms the urgent need to transfer transalpine traffic from the roads to the railways;
- 6. Calls on the Commission to present at the earliest opportunity the new directive that has already been announced on the harmonisation of minimum safety standards for road and rail tunnels, and undertakes to cooperate fully with the Council and Commission to ensure its

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rapid adoption and implementation; calls on the Commission to give serious consideration to the recent report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which proposes banding of tunnels according to their level of safety for the transportation of dangerous substances;

7. Considers that the accident in the Gotthard tunnel and the ensuing traffic congestion have again underlined the need for the development of an integrated transport policy for the entire Alpine region; recalls its request of 5 September 2001 for the Commission to initiate a plan of action in this area;
8. Considers it necessary to maintain the prohibitions placed on heavy goods traffic and to harmonise these measures on the basis of the most wide-ranging prohibitions currently implemented in the EU; calls for the implementation of specific and more restrictive measures for vehicles transporting hazardous, or potentially hazardous, materials;
9. Takes the view that strict controls on maximum driving times are another way of achieving road safety; calls on the Council and Commission to bring the conciliation on working time to a prompt and positive conclusion, and asks the Member States for rapid implementation and control;
10. Considers that the circumstances surrounding the Gotthard accident have underlined the importance of the Commission's proposal to establish a uniform driver attestation; calls on Member States to make every effort to ensure that, once adopted, the proposed regulation is properly enforced, in order to ensure a level playing field throughout the single market in heavy goods transport in terms of employment of drivers of heavy goods vehicles;
11. Supports the approach of sustainable freight transport, as provided for in the Protocol on the Implementation of the Alpine Convention in the field of Transport ('Transport Protocol') and the agreement between Switzerland and the EU, underlining that this is a good basis for the development of an environmentally sustainable transport policy throughout the sensitive transalpine area;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give priority to measures ensuring safety in all tunnels which link the north and the south of Europe (Alps and Pyrenees) with the aim of reestablishing mobility of persons and goods as soon as possible;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Council to present without delay an efficient and integrated spatial planning proposal for Europe, linked with the development of the European Transport Networks and with regional and environmental policy;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States and of Switzerland.