

P5_TA-PROV(2003)0400

Safety at sea

Motion for a European Parliament resolution on improving safety at sea in response to the Prestige accident (2003/2066(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Erika I and II packages;
- having regard to its resolution of 21 November 2002 on the Prestige oil tanker disaster off the coast of Galicia¹, and to its earlier resolutions on safety at sea,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 December 2002 on safety at sea and measures to alleviate the effects of the Prestige accident²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 December 2002 on improving safety at sea in response to the Prestige accident (COM(2002) 681),
- having regard to the conclusions of the Transport Council of 6 December 2002,
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council of 12 and 13 December 2002,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2003 on action to deal with the effects of the Prestige disaster (COM(2003) 105),
- having regard to the report of the Spanish Ministry of Transport of 7 March 2003 on maritime safety and the Prestige accident,
- having regard to the Commission staff working paper of 17 March 2003 on the loss of the tanker Prestige (SEC(2003) 351),
- having regard to the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) report on the ad hoc audit of American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) related to the loss of the Prestige,
- having regard to the ABS technical analyses related to the Prestige Casualty of 28 February 2003,
- having regard to the written statement of Captain Apostolos Mangouras, Master of the Prestige, to the European Parliament (Public Hearing of 19 and 20 March 2003),

¹ P5_TA(2002)0575.

² P5_TA(2002)0629.

- having regard to the statements of Mr Serafin Diaz Regueiro, Harbourmaster of La Coruña and of Mr. H. van Rooij, managing director of Smit Salvage, to the European Parliament (Public Hearing of 19 and 20 March 2003),
 - having regard to the report of the manager of the Prestige, Universe Maritime LTD,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Spring European Council of 20 and 21 March 2003,
 - having regard to the decision of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) International Conference (12-16 May 2003) on the Establishment of a Supplementary Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage,
 - having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism and the opinions of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy , the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy and the Committee on Fisheries (A5-0278/2003),
- A. Considers that this parliamentary report represents an important step towards clarifying the causes of the Prestige accident. However, in the light of the numerous developments which have occurred recently, such as the new estimations as to the amount of fuel lost by the wreck, and the need to identify all responsibilities, parliamentary work should be updated and pursued in order to have a full picture of the causes and consequences of the accident.
 - B. whereas the sinking of the Prestige caused serious damage to the marine environment and to the coastal areas of Spain and France and to Galicia in particular as well as to those living in those areas and to their way of life,
 - C. whereas the steps taken by the Spanish local authorities, combined with the extraordinary efforts in the months following the disaster by the local population and thousands of volunteers belonging to environmentalist and other organisations, have saved the coastal areas affected from even more severe damage,
 - D. whereas heavy fuel from the Prestige continues to reach the coasts of Galicia, the northern Iberian peninsula and the French Atlantic coast, moving past Brittany and even threatening the English coastline,
 - E. whereas the first priority must be to regulate adequately for arrangements to accommodate vessels in distress and the availability and accessibility of safe havens and harbours,
 - F. whereas the real cause of the damage caused to the Prestige will be very difficult to determine because the vessel sank in very deep water and cannot be salvaged,
 - G. whereas a large part of the cargo remains submerged with the vessel, and may present a further hazard in the longer term,

- H. whereas it has been established that the Prestige was damaged on 13 November 2002 in the very area of the ballast tanks where major repairs had been made in Guanzhou (China) in 2001, only 18 months earlier; whereas, in the most recent inspection carried out in Dubai in May 2002, the insides of the above-mentioned ballast tanks were not examined by the inspectors from the classification society ABS,
- I. whereas the Prestige had been used for about one year as a floating reservoir, which meant that other vessels were constantly being docked and undocked at the same point against the vessel's side; whereas it is essential for any such hazardous use to be reported to the classification society so that it can step up its monitoring or concentrate it on any such specific risk,
- J. whereas the assessment by the Spanish authorities of the vessel's condition, the expertise of its crew and the quality of the inspections the vessel had already undergone do not tally with the testimony of, in particular, the Smit salvage company, the insurers and the classification society; whereas the presence of a 'black box' could have helped to clarify the situation,
- K. whereas the time factor is always crucial in such disasters; whereas it was not possible to reach the emergency towing machinery at the back of the vessel because of the condition the vessel was in at the time, and whereas, partly because of a shortage of manpower, it took nearly twenty four hours for the Prestige to be taken in tow by tugs,
- L. whereas all concerned parties considered from the outset that the Prestige was so badly damaged that it would not survive in a storm,
- M. whereas the vessel had lost only between 1000 and 3000 tonnes of oil when it could have been brought into a safe haven, as stated by experts at Parliament's hearing,
- N. whereas further spills could have been prevented in a safe haven and the means of extracting the oil spilt could have been concentrated, thereby preventing widespread pollution and the sinking of the vessel,
- O. whereas the Spanish authorities gave instructions for the battered vessel to be towed out into open waters because they were convinced that they would then have more time to combat pollution; whereas that decision in fact resulted in the eventual pollution being spread over a much wider geographical area; whereas, according to the information known, the Spanish government authorities, before deciding what to do with the Prestige, failed to carry out the inspections necessary to gauge the extent of the damage to the vessel's hull,
- P. whereas the decision to tow away the vessel was supported by the majority of people living in the area close to the site of the accident and by local institutions,
- Q. whereas, on the other hand, the salvage operators and captain repeatedly asked for the vessel to be brought into a safe haven or harbour, because they were convinced that they would then be in a position to contain the pollution and try to save the vessel, and whereas the Spanish authorities consistently refused to grant this request,

- R. whereas the analysis of what happened shows that all parties concerned in any emergency are forced, while working under severe pressure of time, faced with the risks which such situations entail for people, property and the environment and in arduous circumstances, to take decisions that can have a far-reaching economic and ecological impact; whereas, consequently, it is essential for the authorities responsible to have at their disposal a protocol for joint action, clear chains of command, contingency plans and well-equipped safe havens,
- S. whereas the production losses incurred by the Galician fishing industry (according to official statistics) in the first 15 weeks of 2003 stood at EUR 32 million compared with the same period in 2002, and in some ports these losses represent up to 50% of the previous year's production; whereas, moreover, catches in the whole of Galicia stand at no more than 50-60% of the previous year's catches for the same period; whereas from a biological point of view a decline has been noted in some species and in the marine habitat (algae) in which they live,
- T. whereas, according to Spanish government sources, almost 400 soldiers who took part in work to clean up the oil spilt by the Prestige were affected by various health problems up to March 2003, while effects on the health of the population and volunteers are still under investigation and the number of cases may turn out to be still higher,
- U. whereas the captain of the Prestige is required by a court decision to remain at the disposal of the Spanish judicial authorities, with the result that he was, to the European Parliament's regret, unavailable to attend the open hearing in person; whereas the IMO, regrettably, went likewise unrepresented on that occasion,
1. Calls on the Conference of Presidents to give favourable consideration to any request for the setting-up of a temporary committee that, after a detailed analysis, will deepen the examination of the causes and consequences of the Prestige disaster, assess maritime safety standards more generally and compliance with EU law, seek to ensure implementation of the recommendations contained in this resolution and propose any additional measures which are found to be necessary, to avoid a repeat of the Prestige disaster and its consequences;
 2. Urges the Commission to inform Parliament and the general public of the latest outcome of the investigations into the causes and circumstances of the Prestige disaster, of the plans which the Member States have adopted and put into operation in order to recover the oil contained in the wreck and put an end to the constant polluting spills, and of the financial compensation made to all injured parties, of the resumption of all economic activities adversely affected and the containment of and repair to environmental damage in the regions affected;
 3. Expresses its admiration for the extraordinary work done in Galicia and the other countries affected by seafarers and their representative organisations and by volunteers, which was instrumental in preventing the fuel oil from entering river estuaries and in enabling the huge cleaning operation needed in the sands and rocks to be successfully completed;
 4. Welcomes the fact that there was no loss of human life involved in this accident since the primary objective of the rules governing safety at sea is to safeguard human lives;

5. Takes the view that the priorities are, firstly, to protect the safety of people at sea since, in the event of a serious accident at sea, it must always be possible to locate and save the crew and, secondly, to safeguard their economic activity and ensure that the resource is protected;
6. Calls for the recovery of the starboard ballast tank plate lost at sea before the accident in order to analyse the quality of the steel and the welding;
7. Regrets that, almost a year after the accident, the wreckage - which still contains more than 14,000 tonnes of fuel - is still leaking; is alarmed in this respect at the lack of transparency associated with the decisions and the procedure adopted to date, which have not prevented the repeated occurrence of oil spills along the Atlantic coastline; calls upon the Council, the Commission and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to assist the Spanish authorities with all available technical resources to stop the leakage and to recover the wreck; calls on the Commission to provide regular updates on the treatment of the wreck; asks for the recovered oil to be processed and stored in a suitable protected place; in this connection, calls for a list of the places in which pollutants from previous oil spills along the EU's shores are stored, for information to be requested from the authorities concerned on the treatment of waste and the treatment systems used, and for a timetable to be drawn up for the disposal or processing of such substances, permitting incineration as a processing method only if it is done in accordance with Community legislation;

Improving maritime safety at European level

8. Stresses that, with the two Erika packages in particular, all important measures have been taken to make shipping in European waters safer, and that the rapid and complete introduction, and above all strict implementation, by Member States of the rules and regulations concerned must be the first priority; welcomes the Commission proposals to shorten the implementation deadlines;
9. Notes that the Prestige disaster has clearly shown that arrangements to accommodate vessels in distress are inadequately regulated; calls on Member States to cooperate with EMSA in ensuring timely and full compliance with national emergency planning arrangements and the designation of safe havens, with Member States in particular specifying under what circumstances they will make the use of safe havens compulsory and providing them with the resources needed to implement their respective emergency plans;
10. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals not later than February 2004 for financial compensation for safe havens and to study the possibility of establishing a financial liability regime for ports refusing to give access to ships in distress;
11. Insists that each Member State must have at its disposal a clear decision-making structure and chain of command for maritime emergencies, together with an independent authority that in turn has at its disposal the necessary judicial, financial and technical say in taking decisions having binding effect in emergencies within territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone;

12. Calls on the Commission to arrange for EMSA to take an inventory of the different command structures and authorities responsible in maritime emergencies (cf. the French 'Préfecture maritime' and the British Secretary of State's Representative), and to submit recommendations for exchanging best practice, promoting cooperation between Member States and introducing European guidelines or minimum requirements in that connection;
13. Considers it necessary to draw up specific emergency plans in areas where there is a large volume of shipping traffic and that the authorities of the regions concerned should have the autonomy they need to take action in the event of serious accidents;
14. Calls on the European Union to establish, through the offices of the Commission, a coordination and intervention structure that enables it to respond to emergencies by channelling European assistance as soon as they arise;
15. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to provide EMSA with anti-pollution vessels and associated technical equipment;
16. Calls upon the Council and the Commission to initiate within the IMO the establishment of compulsory routes and traffic separation zones in ecologically sensitive and navigationally difficult areas using existing experience in the Member States, and to report back to the Parliament;
17. Calls upon the Commission to submit a proposal to the Council and Parliament as soon as possible to ensure that bunker oil for engine fuel in new ships is also stored in safer, double hull tanks since freight or container ships often contain heavy fuel as engine fuel in their bunkers, the quantity of which may considerably exceed the cargoes of smaller oil tankers;
18. Is aware that defence matters are exclusively the competence of the individual Member States, but nevertheless urges them to eliminate from their naval fleets single-hull tankers and tankers which should be withdrawn from European waters under Community legislation;
19. Calls on the Member States to monitor effectively the illegal cleaning of ships' bilges at sea, the discharges from which are one of the principal causes of pollution;
20. Welcomes the initiative by the sector to require oil tankers to have 24-hour cover under an Emergency Response System which, in an emergency, is able to provide assistance in assessing the condition of the vessel and will ensure that the condition of the vessel is stabilised; proposes that this initiative be extended to all vessels carrying dangerous or polluting goods;
21. Notes that double-hull tankers are associated with specific safety hazards (corrosion, metal fatigue, danger of explosion, strength of walls, risks on collision); calls on the Commission to arrange for EMSA to investigate further as a matter of urgency and propose measures to minimise the risks;
22. Requests, likewise, that the EU promote the building of double-hull vessels in European shipyards, especially, if possible and as a compensatory measure, in those regions most affected by accidents caused by the transport of dangerous cargo by sea;

23. Calls on Member States to control and monitor closely the traffic of vessels carrying dangerous and polluting goods, within 200 miles of their coastline; is, however, concerned at decisions by a number of Member States to ban such vessels from the 200-mile zone off their coasts; fears that such vessels would then be forced to navigate at too great a distance off the coasts, thereby creating unacceptable risks for their crews and for the environment if the vessels were to get into difficulties (storm or damage); also calls on the Member States to ensure that in the event of this happening they have the requisite technical rescue resources at their disposal to guarantee assistance to the crew and preservation of the marine environment;
24. Requests that the ban on the entry into EU ports or anchorages of single-hull vessels carrying heavy fuel oil or dangerous cargo in general be extended, by the creation of a specific Union law, to ships in transit through Community waters;
25. Supports the Commission's proposal to launch coordinated action by Member States to study and examine various formulae enabling measures to be taken to protect their coastal waters, in particular territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone, from vessels posing a threat to the marine environment, by requiring coastal states to refuse access to their coastal waters to vessels posing a clear threat to the environment and failing to observe basic safety rules;
26. Calls on the Commission to promote the use in maritime traffic-guidance and routing systems of the latest satellite and transponder technologies enabling ships' courses to be monitored accurately and at great distances, taking advantage of the development of the Galileo project and Global Monitoring for Environmental and Security (GMES) services;
27. Urges the Commission and the Member States, within the IMO, to look into the usefulness of additional technical requirements for all vessels carrying hazardous cargoes so as to improve safety, in particular the compulsory provision of emergency towing machinery, or of means to tackle small-scale pollution immediately, as well as the usefulness of an internal inspection of all ballast tanks, on an annual basis, for ships over 15 years of age;
28. Welcomes the Commission's favourable position on the fiscal measures adopted by certain Member States to encourage a return to flying European flags; urges Member States to make every effort to ensure full administrative capacity to enable such re-flagging and to introduce stringent monitoring of flag-issuing states; calls on the Commission and Member States to give renewed consideration to establishing a European register of shipping;
29. Calls on the Commission to submit as soon as possible a proposal to strengthen port state control by reducing the intervals between the inspection of vessels of greater risk, by expanding the reporting requirements of pilots also to include vessels in transit off the coast of Europe and by applying the 25% target (percentage of ships inspected) to each port that has 'significant maritime traffic' instead of to the country as a whole; considers that the definition of 'significant maritime traffic' should relate to the volume of the traffic as well as to the quantity of dangerous and polluting cargo being carried; calls on the Member States to provide the necessary resources for such port state control and hence to

increase the number of inspectors as well as taking the necessary steps regarding their working conditions and equipment;

30. Insists that the problem of a common language for marine operators must also be addressed, and that the 'standardised vocabulary' developed by the IMO needs to be improved, for example through the IMO taking responsibility for the circulation on board vessels of on-the-job training videos, something which some shipowners already do;
31. Welcomes the proposal for a directive on ship-source pollution and on the introduction of sanctions, including criminal sanctions, for pollution offences (COM(2003) 92), since unlawful dumping at sea is the cause of most marine pollution;
32. Is concerned at the increasing criminalisation of seafarers and the damage done thereby to the image of a seafaring career;
33. Regrets the fact that Captain Mangouras has been treated as a criminal although he is not responsible for the damage sustained by his vessel; calls on the Spanish judicial authorities to lift the conditions under which the captain of the Prestige has been placed under house arrest;
34. Calls for the establishment of a European coastguard equipped with the requisite powers and instruments which, together with stringent surveillance, the prosecution of illegal discharging from vessels and enforcement of specific shipping routes, should ensure, in particular, the swiftest possible coordination of the necessary measures to be taken in the event of an accident, including the allocation of emergency moorings and ports;
35. Notes that investigations into accidents and incidents at sea are at present conducted by the flag state of the vessel concerned and the coastal state; considers it necessary, with a view to preventing further accidents and incidents, that clear guidelines be drawn up within the EU for the carrying out of an independent investigation into accidents and incidents at sea; considers that this should be the task of an independent investigative body at Member State level or, if appropriate, at European level;

Improving maritime safety on a global level

36. Calls on Member States to arrange for the Union to accede to the IMO and to give the Commission a mandate to negotiate with the IMO on behalf of the Union;
37. Calls on the Commission and on Member States to make their best efforts to reach agreement with the IMO on phasing out single-hulled tankers worldwide by way of an amendment to the Marpol Convention;
38. Calls on the Commission and on Member States to make their best efforts to reach an agreement within the IMO on an international public law convention on places of refuge;
39. Urges the Commission and Member States to review the IMO shipping classification scheme, and to lay down more stringent requirements for the reporting by shipowners to the classification societies of changes in the use to which vessels are put;

40. Reiterates the need to devise, at both international and Community level, exhaustive technical inspection mechanisms to provide reliable information about the actual condition of vessels;
41. Calls for adaptations to be made to the interpretation and application of the paragraphs relating to the freedom of navigation in the exclusive economic zone and on the high seas in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, in order to allow coastal states to take action against ships that pose a threat to the environment and maritime safety;
42. Calls on the Commission and on Member States to seek the introduction by the IMO of compulsory shipping routes and restrictions on sailing in particularly sensitive areas in order to protect coasts, as well as a compulsory flag-state audit procedure to combat flags of convenience, and more stringent port state control requirements;
43. Draws attention to the importance of effective communications, not least in emergencies, between ships, salvage teams and the onshore authorities; advocates, consequently, a satisfactory knowledge of English in shipping;

Economic aspects

44. Advocates stepping up shipowners' shares in financial liability by way of an internal IMO amendment to the provisions concerning international rules on damages and liability; should that prove ineffective, calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a damages and liability scheme for the wider European Union;
45. Calls for the 'polluter pays' principle to be fully enforced at sea by means of a criminal-liability scheme enabling those responsible for incidents to be penalised and by further developing an international compensation fund system, based on the 'polluter pays' principle, intended to compensate coastal communities and finance the cleaning-up of the environment; believes that the financing of the fund should be spread over the entire transport chain (flag states, charterers, the owners of the cargo and the owners of the vessel); in addition, believes that the fund should consist of two parts: one relating to the carriage of hydrocarbons and the other to the carriage of other hazardous substances;
46. Welcomes the IMO decision on raising the IOPC Fund (International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund) ceiling to a maximum of approximately EUR 1 billion in damages per accident; calls on Member States to ratify the relevant protocol without delay; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the victims of the Prestige accident are fully compensated as swiftly as possible;
47. Calls on the European Union to agree promptly to raise the insurance ceiling for the chain of operators in sea transport, drawing the relevant conclusions from the legislative experience of the United States following the Exxon Valdez accident; believes that any EU decision to the above effect should seek to bring about the necessary change to the current International Maritime Organisation rules for the benefit of all seas and countries, in particular developing countries;
48. Calls on the Commission to adopt the necessary measures in the short and long term to address the problems in the various sectors of the economy that have been economically and socially affected - which, apart from the tourism, fisheries and shellfish sectors, also

includes other business sectors such as canning, commerce, transport, repairs and maintenance, catering etc.; believes that this aid should include incentives for the recovery of private initiative and promotional campaigns, once the environmental damage has been fully rectified;

49. Takes the view that powerful emergency drive systems clearly increase the manoeuvrability of large tankers in dangerous situations and may help to avoid imminent accidents; points to already existing emergency drive designs in European shipbuilding technology and calls on the Commission in this context to support and promote the fitting of vessels with powerful emergency drive systems;
50. Calls on the Council and the Commission to ensure that the use of aid for individuals and businesses in the Spanish fisheries, seafood and fish-farming sectors can be maintained under Council Regulation (EC) No 2372/2002 of 20 December 2002¹ for all those who are still suffering from the effects of the shipwreck, especially the people and enterprises most directly affected; calls also on the Commission to put forward a proposal for French regions similar to that presented in the case of the Spanish coastal areas affected;
51. Calls for the mobilisation of all relevant Community funds and technical resources and for the creation of a network for the exchange of experience on how to deal with hydrocarbon pollution; asks the Commission to inform Parliament about any possible reprogramming of the structural funds and the cohesion fund for 2000-2006, which may be necessary in order to allocate aid to the areas affected by the Prestige accident; recommends that this reprogramming should be carried out swiftly, and should target both the environmental regeneration of the coastline and the economic recovery of the sectors affected;
52. Considers that major marine disasters such as the one caused by the Prestige should be covered by the European Solidarity Fund for natural disasters or a specific aid fund for serious environmental damage;
53. Calls on the Commission to include, in the working programme for 2004 of the Sixth Framework Programme for research and technological development, research on the establishment of emergency action plans for all Community coasts, making it possible to deal with any kind of risk or disaster, research on the design and construction of new, technologically-advanced vessels for recovering and cleaning up polluting spillages at sea, and on the promotion of new environmental recovery and waste treatment technologies;
54. Calls on the Commission, one year after the Prestige disaster, to draw up an assessment report on the impact of the Community measures designed to alleviate the effects of the disaster, with particular reference to the recovery of the environment and aid to the various fishing sectors and industries affected;

Environmental aspects

¹ OJ L 358, 31.12.2002, p. 81.

55. Draws attention to the need to salvage hazardous shipwrecks in European waters with a view to maritime safety and the environment; calls on the Commission to encourage investment to that end;
56. Notes that the accelerated phasing-out of single hull vessels will lead to a significant increase in the number of vessels for scrapping; calls, in the interest of safeguarding human health and the environment, for mandatory IMO guidelines addressing, inter alia, the preparation of ships for recycling, the reduction of waste and of the use of hazardous materials and the promotion of international cooperation on this issue;
57. Calls on the Commission, in parallel with the development of IMO guidelines, and subject to a cost-benefit analysis, to come forward with a proposal establishing minimum environmental and health requirements for the recycling of end-of-life vessels, supported by a certification scheme;
58. Notes that, from the public health angle, no data have been published on internal contamination levels among people who may have been directly or indirectly affected by pollution from the Prestige, and regrets that crucial time is being lost in obtaining data on the consequences of the spill among the population;
59. Calls upon the Commission to amend the EU directives relating to sulphured heavy fuel No 2, which is banned from use within the EU but which is nonetheless produced in, and transported through, Europe and its ports and is exported to other countries as an energy source; calls, therefore, for the production of this type of hydrocarbon to be banned;
60. Insists that the harmful environmental effects suffered by the proposed Natura 2000 sites and by the ecologically valuable areas located within the region affected by the oil spill be assessed and that action be taken in order to repair the damage caused; calls for the proposed Natura 2000 sites to be adopted as such immediately;
61. Calls for urgent enforcement of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (the Habitats Directive)¹ in the ecologically valuable areas located within the appropriate maritime regions of the EU and for their immediate inclusion in the Natura 2000 Network;
62. Recalls that many Community ports lack equipment and installations to receive and treat waste; calls, therefore, for the requisite infrastructure for degassing and cleaning vessels to be installed at all Community ports by means of a European plan; considers that these ports must be able to cope with several major difficulties simultaneously;
63. Calls for the EU to join the IMO, for the Member States to ratify the 1996 International Convention Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous Substances (HNS Convention), and for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay Convention) to be strengthened in the areas of safety at sea and protection of the marine environment, particularly in Part XII thereof;
64. Calls for EU research to be carried out into the evolution and the restoration of ecosystems, and for the carrying-out of an epidemiological study of people exposed to fuel, so that data can be obtained on the effects on health in the short term (conjunctivitis,

¹ OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

headaches, respiratory problems) and in the medium and long term (effects which may appear in the future owing to chronic exposure to potentially toxic compounds);

65. Calls on the Commission to propose measures to prevent any pollution of quays, which seriously aggravates the degradation of the marine environment and damages the health of the personnel concerned;
66. Calls for better, more effective and swifter coordination of measures to remedy the situation of wild fauna when maritime disasters occur; considers that infrastructure for the rehabilitation of animals, high standards and structured networks of experienced organisations should be established;
67. Calls for bodies with experience in cleaning up animals and birds which have been soiled by pollutants to be granted adequate financial resources for their task;
68. Proposes the setting-up of a Community archive on oil spills (historical data, studies, measurements taken), which would comprise an up-to-date database readily accessible for all institutions and all sections of the public;

Social aspects

69. Draws attention to the importance of qualified seafarers, and calls on Member States to conduct, in particular, checks during harbour inspections to ensure that crew members have the necessary qualifications and experience; at the same time calls for an improvement in their training and in their living and working conditions, which would pay dividends in terms of maritime safety; urges the Commission to promote the harmonisation and enhance the status of this profession at European level;
70. Calls on the Commission, when drawing up rules on maritime safety, to take into account the safety of crews with regard to possible salvage operations in the event of accidents;
71. Points out that training in health and safety at work must be accompanied by continuous efforts to promote a culture of prevention, taking into account the specific risks associated with this activity, the demographic structure of the maritime professions and the fact that a seafarer's ship is his 'home'; considers that all this should be done in the spirit of the European strategy on health and safety at work 2002-2006;
72. Submits, for the consideration of the Commission and the Member States within their sphere of competence and via international organisations, the need for a thorough overhaul of international maritime law in response to the requirements of modern maritime transport as regards the health and safety of workers;
73. Welcomes the initiative by private companies to encourage employment in the zones concerned, such as the Costa da Morte, one of the worst affected parts of the Galician coastline;

Fisheries aspects

74. Notes that fishers and aquaculturists are most directly concerned since, as their resource is directly affected, they suffer a considerable loss of income;

75. Points out, and pays tribute to, the great involvement and motivation shown by fishers and aquaculturists in the fight against pollution by setting up, on their own initiative and using their own tools, remarkably effective anti-pollution fishing fleets; warmly congratulates the many volunteers from all over Europe for their cleaning efforts;
76. Calls on the Commission to finance a programme to facilitate the involvement of fishers and aquaculturists in the conservation of the marine environment in the event of possible disasters, so that they may be equipped with the most suitable means of doing so, on the basis of past experience;
77. Reiterates, therefore, the requests adopted by Parliament in its resolutions of 21 November 2002 and 19 December 2002 on the 'Prestige' oil tanker disaster, to create European sea fishing areas designated as sensitive because of the richness of their fish and shellfish resources and the population's heavy dependence on these resources, as seen in the case of Galicia;
78. Calls for the areas of activity of fishers and aquaculturists to be taken into account when places of refuge are being established;
79. Requests that anti-pollution fishing fleets should from now on constitute part of the emergency plans, so that fishermen may be fully involved in combating pollution and be recognised as effective and motivated participants;

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80. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.