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8. Calls on the European Union to draw up and introduce as soon as possible rules to prevent vessels flying flags of convenience from evading strict rules and inspections regarding not only maritime safety and environmental protection but also social protection standards, compliance with which also helps guarantee an increased level of safety;
9. Calls upon the Commission to give priority to Community action to secure the effective and uniform implementation of standards for classification societies and calls upon the Commission and the Council to ensure that the on-going consideration of the proposed directive on ports reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues (COM(1998) 452) results in a swift and satisfactory conclusion which will really deter dumping at sea and penalise offenders;
10. Believes that the European Union should also be very worried about the quantities of oil and other wastes pumped deliberately from ships' bilges, a practice which causes considerably more maritime and coastal pollution than *Erika*-type spillages;
11. Calls upon the Commission and the Council to once again consider the implications of an European register for shipping to work alongside port state control;
12. Welcomes any efforts by the Commission to bring forward the date by which oil tankers will all be obliged to have double-hull construction, and to ensure that there is a focus on safety at sea and maritime pollution in its work programme for 2000;
13. Calls for the international rules on the training of crews and working conditions on board ship to be strictly applied, and for these rules to be revised to give a higher level of protection;
14. Notes and deplores the inadequacy of the techniques available to combat the consequences of the wreck of the *Erika*, and calls for the development of industrial research in this area;
15. Hopes that the inquiry will cast light on all the factors contributing to the accident and will permit fair reparation to be made for the environmental, economic and social damage caused by this massive oil slick;
16. Calls for the funds of the European Union to be mobilised, as a matter of urgency, in the context of partnership exchanges between the Member States, in order to help:
 - clean up the beaches,
 - assist the businesses affected in the region,
 - increase storage capacity for the waste oil recovered,
 - provide treatment or recycling facilities for such waste;
17. Calls for aid to be released as quickly as possible pursuant to Article 83(2)(b) of the EC Treaty to remedy the damage caused by this disaster;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the governments of the Member States and candidate states, and to all the relevant marine authorities.

3. Storms across Europe

B5-0029, 0031, 0040, 0042, 0051 and 0058/2000

European Parliament resolution on the recent storms in Europe

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the exceptional weather conditions and the unusually violent storms which swept across various parts of Europe, crossing the southern United Kingdom, France, Germany and Austria between 24 and 27 December 1999, and which also affected Switzerland, Spain, Italy and Ireland,
- B. whereas the conditions caused the deaths of more than 90 people,

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- C. having regard to the particularly difficult situation which affected thousands of homes which were without electricity, telephones and heating, were cut off from roads and basic infrastructure and had no access to public services,
 - D. having regard to the destruction of homes and of certain production facilities and equipment, the damage caused to the agricultural, forestry and oyster-farming sectors, and to SMEs, the job losses and the economic and social consequences thereof,
 - E. having regard to the indelible impact on our architectural heritage, forests, countryside, protected areas and fauna and flora,
 - F. whereas the extent of the damage to the electricity grid is in large measure due to policies which favour conveying electricity over long distances by means of high-voltage lines,
 - G. having regard to the unparalleled scale of the disaster, the European solidarity and the massive financial resources to be deployed to rehabilitate the devastated areas and to restore people's normal living conditions, having regard to the emergency measures needed to prevent the risk of plant disease and water pollution and the risk of fire associated with storage,
 - H. whereas a substantial proportion of the affected areas is eligible for support from the Community Structural Funds, and in particular the ERDF, the EAGGF-Guarantee Section and the FIFG,
 - I. whereas it is to be feared that, as a result of emerging climate change, natural disasters on this scale are likely to re-occur,
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- 1. Expresses its sympathy to and heartfelt solidarity with the families of those killed and those who have suffered damage;
 - 2. Calls on the Commission and on those Member States not affected by the bad weather to plan practical measures to demonstrate Community solidarity, as soon as possible, by mobilising professional and technical resources under the five-year plan establishing a Community action programme in the field of civil protection which was adopted by the Council on 9 December 1999 (Decision 1999/847/EC);
 - 3. Calls on the Commission to put together emergency funding to help the victims of this natural disaster, and to supplement the financial mechanisms set up by national and local authorities, in the context of the possibilities provided by the economic and social cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy, in particular by means of a major mobilisation of the resources allocated to rural development in accordance with the provisions of Article 33 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 of 17 May 1999 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and amending and repealing certain Regulations, which lay down measures for cases of natural disaster;
 - 4. Calls on the Member States, once the Commission has adopted the schedule of areas eligible under Objective 2, to draw up their development and conversion plans as speedily as possible, so that there is no delay in the process of awarding Structural Fund resources to the affected regions;
 - 5. Calls on the Commission to apply Article 83(2) of the Treaty with a view to granting appropriate financial aid to all the sectors affected;
 - 6. Calls on the Commission to give special consideration to the damage caused to French, German and Austrian forests, in particular by envisaging a significant redeployment of the resources allocated to rural development, in accordance with the provisions of Article 30 of the abovementioned Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999, in the forestry sector, and by envisaging the specific mobilisation of professional and technical resources in the European forestry sector, so as to provide swift and substantial support for the requisite logging and clearing operations, in the context of the abovementioned five-year plan;
 - 7. Calls for the policy of reforestation to respect local species, the diversity of ecosystems and the quality of rural landscapes, and to diversify outlets for the forest-based industries;

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8. Calls on the Commission to devote particular attention to projects designed to restore a high-quality environment in sensitive areas which will be submitted to it under the LIFE programme;
9. Calls on the Commission to take all the requisite steps to ensure that those affected are informed promptly about the European Funds assistance available and that such assistance is granted speedily; calls on the Commission to submit practical proposals to the European Parliament and the Council if it finds that the funding available for such assistance is inadequate;
10. Expects the Commission and the European Union to implement measures linked to an overall strategy of combating the greenhouse effect;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the parliaments of the Member States.

4. Peace process in Middle East

B5-0024, 0025, 0027, 0033, 0035 and 0075/2000

European Parliament resolution on the Middle East peace process

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Middle East peace process,
 - having regard to its resolution of 6 October 1999 ⁽¹⁾ on the Sharm-el-Sheikh agreement and relaunching the Middle East peace process,
 - having regard to the Syrian-Israeli peace talks held in Shepherdstown, USA, from 3 to 10 January 2000,
 - having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 425 and 520,
- A. whereas the peace process has been given fresh impetus by the decision of the Israeli and Syrian Governments to resume the negotiations interrupted in March 1996,
- B. whereas these negotiations are dealing with the key issues, such as the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, security arrangements, water, the normalisation of relations between the two countries and the timetable for the implementation of any agreement,
- C. considering the positive impact of the Sharm-el-Sheikh agreements on the peace process,
- D. whereas the European Union fully supports these talks and is ready to help the negotiators should they so wish,
- E. considering the forthcoming visit of the President of the European Parliament to the region,
1. Welcomes the Sharm el-Sheikh agreements; requests that the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians move forward in accordance with the deadlines laid down in the agreements;
 2. Praises the major boost in favour of peace given by all the parties; reaffirms the necessity of achieving a fair, global and lasting peace in the area which guarantees the legitimate security aspirations of all the countries of the region, especially Israel, underlining that a future Palestinian State must be viable to completely ensure Israel's security;
 3. Recalls that many difficult issues still stand in the way of a permanent peace, such as the creation of the Palestinian State, the final drawing of borders, the status of Jerusalem, the return of Palestinian refugees, the distribution of water and the Israeli settlements; and hopes that the political will expressed up to now by both parties will overcome these obstacles and that the international community will give its full support to help and assist both parties; undertakes for its part to give every support to both parties in the peace process;

⁽¹⁾ 'Texts Adopted' of that date, Item 19.