

the Commission take to make good this vital component in the fight against the disastrous consequences of accidents of this type? What measures will it introduce, specifically, for a particularly sensitive area such as Galicia?

Answer given by Mrs de Palacio on behalf of the Commission

(6 February 2003)

With regard to the clean-up operation, the assistance arrangements agreed between the Commission and the national structures responsible for handling this type of disaster ensured immediate access to the resources available around the Community.

The authorities in the affected areas were able to make rapid use of the available assistance, including vessels and other special clean-up equipment.

In addition, there are plans to invest the European Maritime Safety Agency with the authority and the means to tackle pollution. A proposal to amend the Regulation which established the Agency is to be put forward for that purpose.

(2003/C 242 E/065)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3597/02

by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(13 December 2002)

Subject: EU funding to deal with the economic, social and ecological consequences of the 'Prestige' disaster for the Galician coastline

What specific and additional EU financial resources will be allocated to dealing with the economic, social and ecological consequences of the 'Prestige' disaster? Will recourse be had to the Solidarity Fund which was created following the natural disasters in Germany and Austria? Will an additional fund be created if necessary? Will there be full and swift compensation for the economic losses suffered, not only by the activities directly affected but also by all the other economic operators related to those activities?

(2003/C 242 E/066)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3598/02

by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(13 December 2002)

Subject: Estimated cost of the 'Exxon Valdez' disaster to the economy of the Alaskan coastline and expected costs of the 'Prestige' disaster for the Galician coastal areas

The cost of the 'Exxon Valdez' disaster to the economy of the Alaskan coastline, in accordance with the US authorities' determination of Exxon's liability, is estimated at USD 1 billion in damage to the natural environment, plus a further USD 2 billion in depollution measures and other necessary action. Given that the impact of the 'Prestige' disaster on Galicia's coastal areas exceeds that caused by the 'Exxon Valdez', what is the Commission's estimate for Galicia? What mechanisms and legal procedures will the Commission employ to demand the necessary compensation?