

(2003/C 268 E/100)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0413/03
by Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(17 February 2003)

Subject: Adequacy of oil clean-up capacities in the EU's maritime regions

In the light of the enquiries which I have made to the appropriate authorities of all the countries bordering the Baltic Sea (including current and future Member States as well as Russia), it appears to be the case that every Baltic coastal state has equipment of some description to clean up oil but the actual clean-up capacity in the Baltic region is in practice impossible to gauge, given the wind, ice, and other conditions prevailing at sea. For example, when routine damage occurs an attempt can be made to remove oil-covered ice mechanically, by means of dredgers, but the capacity to carry out even that operation is insufficient when a tanker breaks up. The overall picture which has emerged from my enquiries seems to suggest that, even if conditions were relatively good, oil would not start to be cleared until it had been washed ashore, because there would in fact not be enough equipment available for any other option, even under favourable circumstances.

The situation is presumably similar in other EU maritime regions.

Has the Commission considered whether it might catalogue oil clean-up capacities in the EU's maritime regions, using standard assessment procedures, and, if necessary, lay down or recommend minimum capacities for the different regions, taking into account the specific conditions and traffic volumes in the areas concerned?

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(3 April 2003)

In the context of the Community framework for cooperation in the field of accidental or deliberate marine pollution (Decision No 2850/2000/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2000⁽¹⁾), a Community Information System (CIS) for the purpose of exchanging data on the preparedness for and response to marine pollution has been established. The Commission, in collaboration with Member States, has defined the format of the national pages of the CIS. The CIS is open to national competent authorities and to public at the following website: <http://europa.eu.int/marpol-cis>

In case of accidents, Member States and Candidate Countries can activate the Community Mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in Civil Protection assistance interventions. In this way, any affected country can have immediate access, through the European Response Centre, to all specialised equipment available in Europe.

Moreover, concerning the preparedness and response to marine pollution in the different regional seas around Europe, the Commission closely follows the works of the competent working groups. In particular, for the Baltic Sea, the Commission participates to the works of the working groups of the Helsinki Commission (Helcom), which are set up by the Helsinki Convention.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 332, 28.12.2000.

(2003/C 268 E/101)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0418/03
by Mary Banotti (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(17 February 2003)

Subject: EU bottle size legislation

Is the Commission considering the deregulation of packaging legislation, and what measures will the Commission take regarding the present mandatory spirit bottle size, given the concerns of the European spirits industry should such deregulation apply to the mandatory spirit bottle range?