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Oil industry activities

Offshore activities: missed opportunity to prevent any "Deepwater Horizon" disasters in Europe

The European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy committee (ITRE) today voted on an initiative report on the security of offshore oil and gas activities. After the vote, shadow draftsman and Green MEP Michèle Rivasi, member of the parliamentary committees on Industry, Research and Energy and Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) said:

"Today's vote is a missed opportunity to provide European citizens with the assurance that industrial disasters, such as the one that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico, can be avoided in Europe.

Firstly, the report does not focus enough on exploration and drilling in sensitive areas such as national parks or the Arctic region.

Moreover, even if the members of the ITRE Committee recognize that the consequences of such an accident would involve several EU countries and that it is impossible to ensure safety of high-risk activities without an effective control mechanism, the majority of MEPs voted against an independent monitoring mechanism at European level. Verification by a third party via a structure that is independent of industry and Member States' power relation is essential and could be done by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). This control at European level should be complemented by an obligation on industry to invest more money in researching and developing solutions for accident prevention and remediation.

Finally, liability, that guarantees full coverage for damage in case of accidents, must be ensured - this is not clearly expressed in the report."

Before the vote on the report in plenary in September 2011, the Greens will table amendments to persuade other political groups that a strong report is necessary to ensure safety of these high-risk activities in the EU and to avoid disasters like the "Deepwater Horizon" oil rig explosion in the United States.

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Responsible MEPs



Michèle Rivasi

Member

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