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Ana Miranda Urges immediate EU Action on Galician Coast Pollution from Pellet Dumping

Brussels, 9 January 2024.

Ana Miranda, EFA MEP, condemned today in the European Parliament the environmental disaster of plastic pellets dumping on the coast of Galicia and the lack of action by the Galician government of the PP.

On the 8th of December, a ship named 'Tocano' lost part of its shipment, including plastic pellets, off the coast of Galicia and Portugal. Currently, the pellets have reached Portugal, Spain, and France, with some also reaching the Netherlands.

In light of this ecological disaster affecting the entire Galician coast, from A Guarda to A Mariña in Lugo, and posing a significant threat to the natural environment, marine fauna, inshore fishing, and environmental conservation, the EFA MEP emphasized the critical need for urgent measures to be taken by various institutions.

Furthermore, in her role as the rapporteur for the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee on flags of convenience, Ana Miranda highlighted that the pellet spill involves a vessel with a Liberian flag of convenience. This raises questions regarding the ongoing review of the regulation and supervision of maritime transport activities.

She explained that she had already sought an urgent meeting with the Commissioner for Transport and the Commissioner for the Environment and Fisheries to assess the situation. Additionally, she urged for prompt attention to this issue in the European Parliament's Fisheries, Environment, and Transport Committees.

Ana Miranda emphasised that she has called for a debate to be scheduled during next week's plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Additionally, she has reached out to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the European Maritime Safety Agency to obtain precise information on when the accident was reported.

Ana Miranda, EFA MEP said:

"We express our concern and dismay at the environmental disaster that is taking place on the Galician coast due to the arrival of millions of pellets for the manufacture of plastics from the container ship

Toconao, a Liberian flag of convenience vessel, which was sailing in the Atlantic Corridor off the coast of Portugal. This white tide is a European problem," Miranda said.

"The choice of flags of convenience is often associated with less stringent practices and lax safety controls, which could have contributed to the scale of this environmental disaster"

“We also call for the urgent approval and entry into force of the revision of the EU maritime safety package and the revision of the IMO's MARPOL 73/78 Convention, including the elimination of microplastic pollution from containers.”

"The lack of initial information on the accident and its consequences is terribly worrying, as well as the delay in the communication of information by the Galician government regarding this environmental accident to the affected localities, with a total lack of transparency,that information must be provided and action taken immediately".

"As well as being worrying, it is irresponsible that since the accident became known on 8 December, the government has not activated the anti-pollution plan required by European regulations, approved after the Prestige accident and currently under review by the European Parliament and the Council",

"As 21 years ago in the Prestige accident, the mobilisation of citizen volunteers, environmental groups with their own means and resources are saving our coasts.”

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Ana Miranda

Member

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