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## The right to a healthy environment demands a new energy model

### Declaration by the committee

The Parliamentary Assembly Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs deplores the tragic consequences of the accident that befell the *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig on 20 April off the Louisiana coast, causing the installation to explode then collapse.

The committee members share the grief of the families and loved ones of the eleven victims swept away in this tragedy and are anxious about its economic, social and environmental consequences.

The leak caused at the wellhead is spilling the equivalent of some tens of thousand barrels of crude oil per day into the ocean, recoverable only in part; it will not be possible to stop the leak until the end of summer on completion of the operations commenced by BP to sink another well. Meanwhile the damage is mounting. The ecological disaster now already affects the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico and the coastal areas and beaches located there, in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, and its spread to Europe via the Atlantic ocean currents cannot be ruled out. It also affects the fishing and tourist economy of these regions.

The Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs recalls that that Europe is not safe from a disaster of the same type, as offshore oil wells are also operated there, like the Norwegian platform partly evacuated on 21 May after a serious mishap.

It advocates stringent official formulation and supervision of standards of caution and safety to be observed for offshore oil drilling, application of the polluter pays principle where the realisation of the hazard causes pollution, and enforcement of civil, possibly criminal, sanctions in the event of proven infringement of aforementioned rules.

It calls upon the Council of Europe member states to hasten their transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, necessary not only because of depletion of resources and prevention of global warming, but also to avert accidents of this kind. It reaffirms the human right to a healthy and sustainable environment, imperilled by such assaults on the environment.