

EU plans to hammer oil giants for coastal pollution: source

April 19 2011



Workers clean oil leftover from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in March 2011 in Pensacola, Florida. On the eve of the first anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, EU energy commissioner Guenther Oettinger is preparing legislation to force oil-drilling companies to pay for pollution caused up to 200 nautical miles off European coastlines, a source said Tuesday.

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On the eve of the first anniversary of the [Gulf of Mexico](#) Deepwater Horizon disaster off the United States, Germany's Oettinger will present his proposed bill in July, a source close to his offices told AFP.

The move comes after he was forced to abandon in October a bid to

impose a moratorium on all deepwater drilling in [European Union](#) waters, after falling foul of Scottish licensing and planning laws under pressure from the North Sea [oil industry](#).

The current EU 'polluter pays' principle only applies to spills within a radius of 12 nautical miles.

The April 20, 2010 blast killed 11 people and sent some 4.9 million barrels of oil gushing into the Gulf over a three-month period, [wreaking havoc](#) on the region's environment and economy. It took BP fully 85 days to stem the flow from its leased rig.

Europe's worst oil disaster was the 1988 destruction in a fire of the Piper Alpha rig off Scotland in July 1988, which killed 167 men. The rig was later judged to have been ill-maintained and overcrowded.

Of 1,000 platforms in the EU, 486 are in waters off Scotland and the northeast of England, 181 in the Netherlands, 123 in Italy and 61 in Denmark with a handful each in Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Romania and Spain.

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