

Lisbon, 5 May 2010

MEDIA FACT SHEET 01/2010

EMSA AND PREPAREDNESS FOR MAJOR OILSPILL EVENTS IN THE EU

(05/05/2010) In the light of media interest linked to the Deepwater oilspill off the coast of Louisiana, EMSA would like to communicate information about its pollution preparedness and response services in Europe. While EMSA underlines that it has no direct involvement in response to the United States oilspill, the information below is being provided for journalists seeking further information on Europe's preparedness for major oilspill events of this nature.

Basic facts

EMSA was created in 2003 in the aftermath of the *Erika* (1999) and *Prestige* (2002) oil disasters. Marine pollution and preparedness activities, together with pollution prevention, are a core part of EMSA's activities, with anti-pollution measures budgeted at 20.5 million euros for 2010 (within EMSA's overall budget of 53.79 million euros).

The Agency's Action Plan for Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response of 2004, updated through the Agency's work programme every year, provided the initial framework and identified activities to strengthen preparedness and response structures in co-operation with Member States. Since the agency was founded, EMSA has overseen a global investment since 2004 of over 120 million euros in improving the EU's preparedness for a major oilspill event.

A video detailing oilspill response services is available on the EMSA website:

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/plugins/content/jw_allvideos/includes/download.php?file=images/stories/video/OPR.flv

Stand-by oilspill response vessel network

The *Prestige* and *Erika* disasters illustrated a need for cross-border cooperation, and resources at the European level, in the event of a major oilspill. Regulation 724/2004/EC gives EMSA the task of assisting EU/EEA Member States in their response to ship-sourced pollution within the Community. EMSA has built a network of stand-by oil pollution response vessels that covers the whole of the European coastline, and serve to 'top up' the existing pollution response capacity of Member States. The network is based on 13 contracted vessels which are equipped with oilspill response equipment as per EMSA requirements. The vessels carry out their 'normal' commercial operations on a day-to-day basis, yet when needed can be adapted at short notice to serve as oilspill response vessels. With state-of-the art equipment, such as oil slick detection radars, sweeping arms, booms and skimmers, the vessels can be scrambled into action at the command of the Member State. The vessels

are required to participate in a continuous cycle of international oil pollution response exercises, typically involving resources from different Member States. Recently contracted vessels include the *Kontio* in Finland, the *Sara* in the Channel and the *GSP Orion* in the Black Sea.

A brochure is available about the Oil Pollution Response Vessel Network.

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=doc_download&gid=608&Itemid=100005

Information sheets about all the EMSA-contracted vessels and their equipment are available on the EMSA website.

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=297&Itemid=100005

Map of EMSA-contracted Stand-by Oil Pollution Response Vessels



Other relevant services

Inventories

In addition to training and cooperation in the area of oilspill response, EMSA publishes a number of **inventories** of resources for oil pollution response at the Member State level in Europe . This is important information for resource planning and deployment in the event of a major oilspill event.

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=300&Itemid=100005

CleanSeaNet

EMSA's *CleanSeaNet* satellite-enabled pollution detection service delivers images of marine pollution to Member States. The *CleanSeaNet* satellite service offers 24 Coastal States a near real time marine oilspill detection service by using radar satellite imagery. The service aims at strengthening operational response for accidental and deliberate spills from ships as well as assisting Coastal States to locate and identify polluters in areas under their jurisdiction. The CleanSeaNet service detects over 2100 possible spills a year, which are then analysed and sent to the Member States for follow-up. The alert contains satellite images; the oilspill detection analysis results and, if visible, the identity of the likely polluter.

A video about the CleanSeaNet service is available at:

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/plugins/content/jw_allvideos/includes/download.php?file=images/stories/video/CSN.flv

MAR-ICE

Recent years have seen the Agency work on improving Europe's preparedness for a marine accident involving hazardous materials. The MAR-ICE service enables EMSA to provide specialised technical info to Member State authorities about hazardous chemicals involved a marine incident. A recent use of the MAR-ICE network occurred in January, when the Irish coastguard requested information on a washed-up container housing sodium bromate, that had been lost off the coast by the vessel *BG Dublin* during a storm.

MAR-ICE brochure:

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=191&Itemid=193

More information

The EMSA website offers a wealth of information about the Agency's activities. In particular, current and recent activities of the Agency are described in detail in the Agency's annual Work Programmes and Annual Reports. An Annual report of the Agency's anti-pollution activities, entitled 'The Pollution Preparedness & Response activities of the European Maritime Safety Agency' is published each year.

Work programmes

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=269&Itemid=100005

Annual reports

https://extranet.emsa.europa.eu/index.php?option=com_joomdoc&task=cat_view&gid=272&Itemid=100005

Annual activity reports for '*The Pollution Preparedness & Response activities of the European Maritime Safety Agency*'

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