BLUE BELT PILOT ENTERS OPERATIONAL PHASE

A promising pilot: the Blue Belt received early praise in Member State feedback to the Commission’s white paper ‘Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area’: ‘can be very helpful’ (Lithuania); ‘a positive step’ (Denmark), one of the ‘top ten’ initiatives (Sweden).

The Blue Belt Pilot Project, involving 250 voluntarily participating vessels, known as ‘Blue Ships’, entered its operational phase on 5 May. The movements of the ‘Blue Ships’ are monitored via the EMSA-operated SafeSeaNet System, resulting in pre-arrival reports for port customs authorities. The final aim of the project is to support the European Commission’s (DG TAXUD and DG MOVE) policies to streamline administrative procedures related to intra-EU shipping. An assessment of the pilot project will start at the end of 2011 and if successful, the findings may be used to review existing procedures and legislation.

MARINE CASUALTY INVESTIGATION: DEADLINE KICKS IN ON 17 JUNE

Learning lessons from accidents: EMCIP enables marine accidents to be categorised according to an agreed taxonomy, enabling sharing of intelligence about the various factors involved in marine accidents (photo: Lisco Gloria fire, 2010; source: Havariecommando).

The countdown has begun to a day that safety-conscious European seafarers have been waiting for: 17 June 2011. This is the date of the Europe-wide transposition of Directive 2009/18/EC on marine accident investigation, when Member States are obliged to have in place independent safety investigative bodies, to investigate very serious marine casualties, to publish investigation reports within 12 months, and to notify marine casualties and incidents via the European Maritime Casualty Information Platform (EMCIP). EMCIP is a database that is used to store and analyse accident related data about marine casualties and incidents. So far, EMCIP has been running on a voluntary basis for a couple of years, with mandatory population starting on 17 June. Ahead of this important deadline, on 4-6 and 25-27 May, EMSA played host in Lisbon to 23 delegates from Member States. At these meetings the new database functions were presented to EMCIP users, enabling them to compare the new and old versions, and test-run new features.