

PRESS RELEASE

10 December 2020

Annual European Coast Guard Event 2020 - “The new normal for EU Coast Guard cooperation”

The Annual European Coast Guard Event for 2020 under the theme of “The new normal for EU Coast Guard cooperation” was held virtually on 10 December, having been postponed from earlier in the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event offered a dynamic virtual platform for the participants to reflect on the work accomplished so far, and particularly for the representatives of national authorities handling coast guard responsibilities to put forward priorities for cooperation in the future.

As chair for 2020, EMSA hosted this event which took place within the framework of European coast guard cooperation between EMSA, and its sister agencies in this field EFCA and Frontex. In attendance were the Executive Directors of EMSA, Ms Maja Markovčić Kostelac, EFCA, Mr Pascal Savouret, and Frontex, Mr Fabrice Leggeri, alongside several high level speakers including: European Commissioner for Transport, Ms Adina Vălean; Director-General for Mobility and Transport, Mr Henrik Hololei; and Portuguese Minister of the Sea, Mr Ricardo Serrão Santos.

Ms Maja Markovčić Kostelac, Executive Director of EMSA, welcomed the participants and underlined the value of interagency cooperation as evidenced in the first four years of action. The key, she said, is to continue to shape cooperation in line with the needs of the national authorities, assisting them in the practical implementation of their coast guard duties. Concrete examples include combining data for an enhanced maritime awareness picture and providing remotely piloted aircraft systems to extend operational capacities.

The first morning session on ‘EU coast guard cooperation in perspective’ was the opportunity for each of the three heads of agency to give their overview of the year’s activities in light of the pandemic and their views on the future of the cooperation.

During the event, EMSA also presented the Annual Strategic Plan for 2021, endorsed by the three agencies’ administrative and management boards, which focusses on projects with measurable deliverables in the areas of: information sharing; surveillance services; capacity building; risk analysis; and capacity sharing. Throughout, there will be an emphasis on promoting and strengthening cooperation with member states at EU level.

This presentation was followed by a panel discussion with member state representatives on their priorities for EU coast guard cooperation. The event also gave the floor to the current chair of the European and regional forum for coast guard cooperation (ECGFF), RADM Jean-François Quérat, to present the achievements of the forum as well as their plan for future activities.

The working arrangement between the three agencies will continue indefinitely as endorsed earlier in the year by the three respective administrative and management boards.