



European Maritime Safety Agency

Workshop Report

3rd Joint Workshop between DG ECHO and EMSA on coordinated at-sea and shoreline pollution response, addressing:

- a) Occupational Safety and Health during response operations
- b) National training standards for pollution responders and volunteers
- c) International exchange of experts

12-13 February 2013, Lisbon

Background

On 12-13 February 2013, EMSA hosted the 3rd Joint Workshop on coordinated at-sea and shoreline pollution response, organised within the framework of the Agency's Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR). The CTG MPPR provides a platform at EU-level for Member States' experts to discuss and contribute to the improvement in preparedness for and response to accidental or deliberate pollution from ships. At-sea and shoreline pollution response coordination is one of the on-going items of interest under the CTG MPPR Work Programme and two such Joint Workshops have been held to date, co-organised by the European Commission (DG ECHO) and EMSA.

As was agreed following the previous Joint Workshop, this third workshop would be co-facilitated by four countries (France, Germany, Norway and Spain), who offered to do so. The workshop took place in Lisbon over two days in accordance with its Agenda (Annex 1). It was well attended with 50 participants from marine pollution, shoreline pollution and civil protection authorities from the EU, EEA/EFTA coastal states, EU Candidate Countries and the Regional Agreements, as well as relevant industry and other representatives from Europe and the U.S (the participants' list is attached in Annex 2).



Participants of the 3rd Joint Workshop on coordinated at-sea and shoreline pollution response

Workshop Objectives

The workshop addressed the following main topics:

- o Occupational Safety and Health during pollution response operations;
- o National training standards for pollution responders and volunteers;
- o International exchange of experts during major pollution incidents.

The workshop's main objective was to bring together the different authorities involved in pollution response (marine pollution, civil protection and industry experts) enabling the exchange of experience and expertise among them in regard to the three topics of common interest addressed in the agenda. The workshop aimed to share best practices, and identify gaps and proposed ways forward in regard to these topics through interactive discussion groups facilitated by Member States' and industry experts.

Workshop Programme

The workshop was chaired by:

- o Day 1 - Mr Bernd Bluhm (EMSA Head of Unit for Pollution Preparedness and Response) focusing on Occupational Safety and Health during response operations.
- o Day 2 - Mr Peter Billing (European Commission - DG ECHO Deputy Head of Emergency Response Unit) addressing in more detail the national training standards for pollution responders and volunteers, as well as issues related to the international exchange of experts during major pollution incidents.

Day 1 – Occupational Safety and Health during Response Operations

Day 1 – Plenary Session

During the morning's plenary session, best practices regarding the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) systems in place for at-sea and shoreline pollution response in Norway and for shoreline pollution response in Germany were presented. The presentations highlighted the importance of clearly documenting an OSH system based on experience gained from past incidents.

- o The Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA) presented the national OSH Manual for Responders, which was initially developed through close cooperation between the various relevant authorities and has since been improved and revised from the experiences made during real incidents. Among the main elements of the Norwegian OSH system are a set of OSH requirements (reflecting the most important and relevant rules and regulations), guidelines on how to implement these, clearly defined roles and responsibilities and supporting checklists and forms, which provide guidance and help document the procedures. The Manual is divided into different target groups and working areas and is considered a very good basis for the developments of a Health and Safety Plan. The Manual is complemented by a small and practical OSH Handbook to be used in the field.
- o The NCA continued with presenting the progress made on a national project assessing the exposure of responders to possible toxic gases during shoreline clean-up operations; this project focuses on health assessment and aims to develop plans for assessing the exposure to toxic gases of clean-up personnel (both offshore and on the shoreline), for the health surveillance of exposed personnel (defining the scope,

purpose and content of these examinations, as well as any follow-up surveys) and for publicly disseminating information regarding possible health effects of such exposures. The logistical challenges of such health assessment procedures when dealing with a large number of responders and the difficulty of measuring the total concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) with a direct device at-sea were highlighted. The project's results are expected early next year and will be incorporated in the national OSH Manual for Responders.

- o The Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME) presented the German Health and Safety system for shoreline response operations, starting with some basic principles regarding determining and assessing the associated risks and hazards, and noting some measures that can be taken to minimise these, and describing the general OSH requirements in place for the response team members (such as occupational health screening, personal protective equipment, training and experience). The importance of taking concrete safety precautions at the operations site was highlighted, as were the challenges posed to international cooperation by different OSH requirements in place in different countries. This OSH system is detailed in the German OSH Manual produced by an expert working group.

These presentations of national OSH systems were followed by presentations from International Association of Oil and Gas Producers (OGP) and of the Global Oil and Gas Industry Association for Environmental and Social issues (IPIECA) on the industry's perspective on this issue, and from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (U.S. OSHA) on their health and safety role in regard to oil spill response and clean-up operations.

- o A representative of OGP/IPIECA presented their newly published 'Oil Spill Responder Health and Safety Guide', which identifies principle issues to consider when an oil spill occurs, addresses possible risks from all sources and provides practical guidance and assistance in developing or updating health and safety regimes. This guidance document covers seven main broad categories to be considered in regard to OSH, including management control, risk assessment, chemical safety issues, working environment, safety and health during operations, personal protective equipment and the management of volunteers; the main points to be considered under each of these categories were presented and discussed in more detail. The importance of management control, risk assessment, communication, planning, training and record keeping were in particular highlighted.
- o The U.S. OSHA presented the OSH requirements in the U.S., where employers are fully responsible for ensuring a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. OSHA's role in assuring the health and safety of workers is achieved by setting and enforcing standards, providing training and education and establishing partnerships. During emergency response operations, OSHA has a dual role: to provide technical assistance and support, by working within the Unified Area Command (UAC) structure

and to enforce federal OSH standards. OSHA's role and close cooperation with the Federal On-Scene Coordinator in the UAC during the response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill was in particular referred to as a positive example of a well-coordinated federal response to ensure the highest possible protection for the large amount of workers involved in the response operations. OSHA was active in visiting work sites, providing technical support, assessing exposures, offering and overseeing training, developing guidance and publications, and reporting illness and injury (heat stress was the number one health problem reported during the DWH oil spill response). OSHA also developed a detailed matrix of required personal protective equipment, based on the type of activity performed by the worker. It is worth noting that OSHA has a clearly defined role in both the U.S. National Contingency Plan (dealing with the response to pollution from oil and other hazardous and noxious substances) and the U.S. National Response Framework (dealing with the response to other hazards, such as natural disasters).

Day 1 – Facilitated Discussion Groups

During the afternoon session, the workshop participants were divided in three groups and on a rotational basis attended and contributed to three different facilitated discussions, each addressing a different aspect of Occupational Health and Safety during pollution response operations at-sea and on the shoreline. These interactive group discussions aimed to address each topic within a smaller group of experts in more detail and to identify best practices, challenges and gaps in each field, as well as to propose possible ways forward in addressing these gaps. Following the discussions, the main outcome from the three discussion groups was presented in plenary as summarised below.

Discussion Group 1:

Particular health hazards and considerations for responders at-sea

Discussions on this topic were facilitated and guided by experts from the Norwegian Coastal Administration, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) and EMSA. Among the main points addressed was the lack in most European countries of specific OSH standards during marine pollution response operations and of a national 'U.S. OSHA type' authority able to provide technical support and assistance in this regard. It was recognised that the OSH risk evaluation and assessment is usually done by the responders or on-scene command centres during response operations and there is no dedicated OSH authority to enforce OSH standards for pollution response operations at sea.

Discussion Group 2:

Particular health hazards and considerations for responders on shoreline, including the management of volunteers

This topic was facilitated and guided by experts from Norway, OGP/IPIECA and U.S. OSHA. The group discussions recognised that although some countries have developed OSH plans and guidelines for shoreline pollution response and clean-up operations, there is no EU-wide

common approach regarding this issue. Furthermore, the definition, use and management of volunteers in shoreline clean-up operations vastly differ within Europe.

Discussion Group 3:

Other OSH considerations

Discussions on this topic were facilitated and guided by experts from Germany's CCME and EMSA. Among the main points addressed in this group was how different OSH standards affect the international cooperation and the exchange of expert teams within Europe, as well as the planning, organisation and availability of decontamination facilities for major pollution incidents.

The discussions on the way forward and the conclusions of the workshop's first day are presented below in pages 8 to 10 of this report.

Day 2 – National Training Standards for Pollution Responders and Volunteers, and International Exchange of Experts during Major Incidents

Day 2 – Plenary Session

The morning's plenary session included presentations of European practices and national training standards for pollution response personnel and volunteers by France, Italy, Norway and Spain, as well as presentation of the U.S. OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training standard. More specifically:

- o The Centre d'expertises pratiques de lutte antipollution (CEPPOL) described its training programme for fishermen/fishing vessels for oil spill recovery operations, conducted by CEPPOL based on France's experience from the use of vessels of opportunity during the response to the Prestige oil spill. The advantages, challenges and a few examples of the French training approach were presented in more detail.
- o The Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (Cedre) presented France's extensive training system for oil and HNS pollution response which involves various administrations, actors and levels, as well as the extensive types of training courses conducted by Cedre for the French Administration.
- o The Italian Coast Guard presented the role and organisation of Civil Protection volunteers in shoreline clean-up in Italy, as well as the national training system applicable for these volunteers on the basis of the Technical Manual developed for this purposes. This Technical Manual aims to clarify the role of the volunteers in shoreline clean-up operations, ensure their safety and facilitate their efficient involvement in the operations. This extensive training programme is complemented by practical field exercises, making available a large pool of specialised and trained civil protection volunteers to be mobilised in a module configuration.

- o The NCA presented the process of developing and implementing a common national training curriculum in Norway for personnel participating in the response to acute pollution. Many authorities and actors participated in this project with the aim of achieving a high quality and uniform training programme. The curriculum's main concept is to provide the national training framework and to be used for developing actual training courses for different target groups. It is based on identifying different subject areas and modules according to the desired operation (e.g. planning, organisation of operations, etc.) and defining the main corresponding elements and learning objectives which should be included in and met by the participants of each module. The importance of practical exercises and time for reflection during the individual courses were emphasised and examples of such courses were presented.
- o A representative from the Grupo TRAGSA presented the Spanish on-line training system developed for personnel involved in marine pollution response. This user-friendly system is based on a modular structure (four modules are currently offered, including OSH), and is available on-line for three categories of workers: (full-time) professional workers, part-time workers and volunteers, providing quick access to relevant technical guidance and supporting information and documentation.
- o U.S. OSHA presented its 'Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard' (HAZWOPER), according to which employers must develop and implement a written safety and health programme, which includes a site-specific health and safety plan, a safety and health training programme and medical surveillance. In regard to the HAZWOPER safety and health training, the different levels (five levels for emergency response operations and three levels for post-emergency response), target groups and requirements of the training course were presented. The importance of providing a hands-on practical and site-specific training and of the need to refresh the training on regular intervals was in particular highlighted. Reference was made to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response, during which the Responsible Party (British Petroleum) launched a multi-tiered training programme based on each required job's duties and hazards, which was supported, monitored and audited by U.S. OSHA.

Presentations from France and Spain on their experiences regarding the international exchange of experts during a major pollution incident concluded the morning's plenary session. In particular:

- o Cedre shared its experience in regard to international cooperation from sending French experts abroad through the European Commission's Task Force and from receiving foreign experts in the ERIKA, IEVOLI SUN and PRESTIGE incidents. It was highlighted that prior training and common exercises facilitate the international exchange of experts, as do dedicated projects such as EUMAREX and EMPOLLEX. Among the main challenges identified linked to such international exchanges were the management and integration of the foreign experts in the team of the requesting country, as well as the host nation support.

- o The Spanish Maritime Safety Agency (SASEMAR) focused its presentation on the experiences made during the response to the 2002 PRESTIGE oil spill which resulted in large amounts of oil pollution at sea and on the shoreline and involved a large number of international resources and experts, as well as the usage of many volunteers. The management of three categories of personnel was in particular addressed in the presentation: the management of the sea professionals from the fishing vessels who helped with the oil recovery at-sea; the volunteers used for the shoreline clean-up operations and the various types of international experts who came to Spain either on the request of the national authorities or on their own initiative. The numerous advantages and some of the challenges of receiving international experts during the response to a major incident such as the PRESTIGE were highlighted, including their support, management and integration by the host nation during an emergency. The role and conduct of international experts in assisting the host country were also discussed. The importance of an effective coordination and of having plans and procedures regarding the integration of international experts in place prior to an emergency were highlighted as main lessons learnt in this regard.

Day 2 – Facilitated Discussion Groups

Similarly to the first day discussion session, the workshop participants were divided again in three different groups and on a rotational basis attended and contributed to three facilitated discussions, each addressing different aspects of the day's two main topics. These interactive group discussions aimed to address each topic within a smaller group of experts in more detail and to identify best practices, challenges and gaps in each field, as well as to propose possible ways forward in addressing these gaps. Following the discussions, the main outcome from the three discussion groups was again presented in plenary as summarised below.

Discussion Group 1:

Training standards for responders

Discussions on this topic were facilitated and guided by experts from the Norwegian Coastal Administration and the U.S. OSHA. Among the main points addressed were the types of national training material and methods currently available in Europe, including training handbooks, training curricula, exercises, training guidelines and related guidance documentation, as well as the type of training(s) material which should still be developed, such as for chemical marine pollution response.

Discussion Group 2:

Minimum training requirements for volunteers in a major pollution incident (including shoreline volunteers and fishermen)

This topic was facilitated and guided by experts from Norway and Cedre, France. The group discussions addressed the use of volunteers and the national training requirements and practices for fishermen and for volunteers involved in shoreline clean-up, as well as the training of trainers. The discussions recognised that the use of volunteers varies widely within Europe; however, the majority agreed that if fishermen are used in pollution response

operations they should be trained and remunerated and volunteers for shoreline clean-up should be trained based on their use (generic tasks or pollution response related tasks). The use of E-learning for training purposes was identified as positive, as was the possibility to have training modules at EU level for professional trainers.

Discussion Group 3:

Sharing/exchange of experts during a major pollution incident

Discussions on this topic were facilitated and guided by experts from Spain (SASEMAR) and the European Commission's DG ECHO. Among the main points addressed in the discussions were the mechanisms for requesting and offering international experts, the role and 'conduct' of international experts, as well as the management of these experts by the host country. The procedures and practices (e.g. EU self-sufficient modules including experts; CECIS database of experts; EU training courses) in place within the MIC/CECIS and the Civil Protection community were recognised as useful and the possibility to apply these also for marine pollution experts was discussed. The importance of managing and integrating international experts in emergency procedures and plans during response operations was highlighted. The need to have effective methods to manage observers was also discussed. It was also conveyed that marine pollution experts did not always feel they had access to EU CP Mechanism training courses in the same way as Civil Protection representatives.

Workshop Conclusions

The main workshop conclusions included:

- o There is a lack of clear guidance and technical support in regard to OSH during marine pollution response operations in Europe; very often, the organisation in charge of response operations is also in charge for the risk assessment/evaluation and for the implementation of the OSH rules and standards, if such are defined at national level.
- o The importance of defining an OSH authority being able to provide technical assistance during marine pollution response operations, as well as (but not only) ensuring the enforcement of OSH standards during response operations was highlighted.
- o Logistics can be very challenging when dealing with OSH assessment of large numbers of responders/volunteers during major pollution incidents, especially when different national authorities are involved.
- o Best practices at national level both in Europe and the U.S. (e.g. U.S. OSHA role and OSH standards), as well as relevant documents and procedures developed by the industry (e.g. OGP/IIPECA guides) in the field of OSH should be considered when developing any future work in this field.
- o The definition, use, training requirements and management of volunteers for marine/shoreline pollution response varies widely within European countries; some countries do not use volunteers at all during response operations, other use untrained and unpaid volunteers, whereas others train, remunerate and use volunteers on a more structured and modular basis.

- Training materials, standards and requirements for marine pollution responders do not exist in all countries in Europe and when they do, they vary in scope. However, several countries have or are planning to develop national training curricula and procedures dedicated to pollution response personnel. In this regard, the importance of practical hands-on training, of having the training certified and of refreshing the training on regular intervals was emphasised.
- The advantage of developing self-sufficient teams /modules including experts for marine pollution response, similarly to those existing for civil protection operations, was recognised.
- The importance of effectively managing and integrating international experts in the response operations of the host country, as well as the requirement of the foreign experts to support and respect the host country and its procedures were highlighted.
- Existing work and best practices at regional (e.g. POSOW project), EU (e.g. the Commission's Host Nation Support Guidelines) and international (e.g. International Offers of Assistance Guidelines) levels in regard to the management and training of volunteers, as well as to the international exchange of experts were recognised as important and useful in not duplicating work in the future.

Way Forward

As discussed at the workshop and subject to the decision of the Civil Protection Committee (CPC), administered under DG ECHO, and the Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR), administered by EMSA, possible ways forward in addressing the identified gaps and challenges include the following:

- The development of EU-wide Guidelines for OSH of responders at-sea and on the shoreline on the basis of existing best-practices and with the involvement of the competent national and EU authorities (Member States, EU-OSHA, DG ECHO, EMSA), subject to further discussion among the competent authorities.
- Building on existing practices and procedures in place in DG ECHO for the MIC/CECIS Civil Protection community and applying these also for marine pollution experts would be of added value. Concrete actions and needs can be defined jointly by the Member States and DG ECHO with the support of EMSA as appropriate.
- The facilitation of the dissemination of information regarding national training courses and standards for marine pollution preparedness and response through the CTG MPPR, for example by updating the 2009 Inventory of MPPR Training Centres in Europe and/or by developing a training curriculum for chemical marine pollution response for the Member States experts by the Member States experts.
- National training materials could also be shared in a more centralised way, e.g. online portals and e-learning courses and courses given EU-wide recognition where appropriate.
- The facilitation of access to EU CP Mechanism training courses for marine pollution experts.

The workshop discussions and main outcomes were noted by DG ECHO and EMSA and are reflected in this workshop report. These will be presented to the EU Member States' relevant authorities at the next meetings of the CPC and the CTG MPPR, for discussion and decision on the desired way forward. In parallel, DG ECHO, EMSA and, for the part of the Occupational Safety and Health also EU-OSHA, will coordinate among them for addressing possible future actions as appropriate.

While recognising the benefit of bringing together civil protection/shoreline and marine pollution authorities dealing with at-sea and shoreline pollution response in facilitating the dissemination of information and exchange of best practices between the different actors involved, the future continuation of these 'joint' workshops will be decided upon and facilitated by the EU Member States' national competent authorities under the CPC and the CTG MPPR.

This workshop report including its Annexes is published on the EMSA website (<http://www.emsa.europa.eu>), on the restricted CTG MPPR/Inter-Secretariat area of EMSA's extranet.

Attachments

- (1) Workshop Agenda
- (2) List of participants
- (3) Presentations
- (4) List of OSH relevant documents