

PRESS RELEASE

4 October 2019

Stress test assesses large-scale oil spill European response capabilities in the Atlantic

Several European country representatives and EMSA and French experts joined together this week, from 2 to 4 October, at the French Maritime Prefecture for the Atlantic to engage in a large-scale joint simulation exercise to put to the test their collective response capabilities in the event of a large-scale oil spill in the Atlantic. This is the very first time that this kind of stress test is run in the Atlantic.

The simulation exercise taking place this week was coordinated by the French Maritime Prefecture for the Atlantic. The countries involved in this regional exercise included several from what is known as the Bonn Agreement (Denmark, France, Norway and the United Kingdom) as well as from the Lisbon Agreement (France, Portugal and Spain).

The exercise provided an opportunity to test different intervention strategies for large-scale pollution response. The outcome of each could be measured using a tool developed specifically for the purpose of determining the most effective response techniques. Together EMSA and the various countries represented put forward their assets for the simulated oil recovery operation, in a fictitious setting. The exercise allowed participants to share and exchange the technical know-how they had gained during previous real-life incidents and maritime crisis.

This simulation exercise is part of a first series of Europe-wide stress tests which is aimed at determining the extent to which EMSA's current services match the needs of its member countries and will serve to pave the way forward for EMSA's multiannual planning framework.

"Our ultimate goal is to prevent pollution from reaching the shoreline. Through these simulation exercises, we are able to test the various response options at sea using the resources available and look at the best way to pool these to maximize the efficiency of our collective response," explained EMSA Executive Director, Maja Markovčić Kostelac.

A central part of EMSA's mandate is to provide additional, top-up resources to individual member countries in the event of marine pollution at sea. It was in this capacity that EMSA recently supported the response operations of the French authorities during the CSL Virginia incident, off the coast of Corsica in September 2018, and following the Grande America sinking, in March 2019 in the Bay of Biscay.

The assets available from EMSA upon request include a network of standby oil spill response vessels, remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), an equipment assistance service including dispersants, a satellite-based oil spill monitoring service known as CleanSeaNet, and two services in the case of chemical spills at sea (MAR-ICE and MAR-CIS).

See the EMSA website for more information on the Agency's [Pollution Response Services](#) / Contact EMSA at: information@emsa.europa.eu

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