

MATTHIAS RUETE VISITS EMSA

On 12th March, Matthias Ruete, EU Commission Director-General for Energy and Transport, paid EMSA a visit. In a meeting with the staff, he said that he was very satisfied with the progress to date. In particular, he mentioned the Agency's role in implementing existing EU legislation, as well as in developing the third maritime safety package.

NEW POLLUTION MONITORING UNIT

In reaction to the expansion of its pollution monitoring task, the Agency has set up a new unit to deal with the associated issues. Thus, from 1st April, EMSA's pollution related activities will be split between the 'Oil Pollution Response' and 'Pollution Preparedness and Detection' units. The structure of the former will focus on: contract management of oil recovery vessels; research, evaluation and innovation and; operational activities/fleet management. The latter will focus on: cooperation arrangements; development of satellite monitoring services and; satellite monitoring operations. An expert user group is being set up to ensure an effective interface with Member States.

READY FOR SPILL SPOTTING FROM SPACE

This month saw significant developments in the area of pollution monitoring. Firstly, EMSA launched its CleanSeaNet system. The system will provide EU Member States with processed satellite data for the monitoring and detection of illegal discharges and accidental oil spills at sea. Member States have the responsibility for implementing Directive 2005/35/EC, and this service will ensure that they will be given the necessary support so that maritime pollution monitoring and detection can be done on a wider and more sustainable scale. CleanSeaNet is due to begin operating from

mid-April. In support of the pollution monitoring activities, an agreement was signed on 2nd March between EMSA and the European Space Agency (ESA). Under the agreement, EMSA will be supported by ESA on issues relating to the development of space technologies for maritime monitoring and surveillance. In addition, in its role as a long term operational European user of satellite technology, EMSA will advise ESA on user requirements for new space systems and infrastructure.

NEW DIRECTIVE TO IMPLEMENT

On 1st March, Directive 2005/35 on sanctions for ship source pollution and on the introduction of penalties for infringements came into force. Following a request from the European Commission, EMSA prepared a preliminary discussion paper on the accompanying measures for implementation and organised a workshop on 22-23rd March. The workshop served to exchange the experiences of Member States in implementing the Directive and in discussing the development of accompanying measures.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD GIVES GREEN LIGHT ON SEVERAL KEY ISSUES

The 17th meeting of the EMSA Administrative Board took place on 20th March in Lisbon. At the meeting, the multi-annual staff policy plan for 2008-2010, the preliminary work programme 2008, the draft budget and the establishment plan 2008 were discussed and adopted. Funding of €47 million and 12 additional posts are being requested for the 2008 financial year and a decision by the budgetary authorities of the European Union is awaited. Furthermore, formal decisions were taken to update the rules for seconded national experts and to update the procurement rules under the financial regulation of the Agency.

EMSA INTERNET ADDRESS CHANGES

As from April 2007, the address of the EMSA website will change to: <http://emsa.europa.eu>. At the same time, EMSA e-mail addresses will change to name.surname@emsa.europa.eu. In order to provide continuity and to minimise problems for external users, the old website address will continue to operate for several months after the changeover.

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