

SAFEMED III CleanSeaNet Information Session

18 November 2013

Summary Report

The SAFEMED III CleanSeaNet Information Session took place on 18 November 2013 at EMSA premises. It was attended by seven SAFEMED III beneficiary countries, i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

The information session aimed at providing SAFEMED III beneficiary countries with general information on the European oil spill monitoring and vessel detection service CleanSeaNet (CSN)) and to identify the potential interest from the beneficiaries' administrations to benefit from the service.

The CSN service, set-up to support the European Union Member States' actions to combat deliberate or accidental pollution caused by ships in the marine environment, offers assistance to the EU Member States in identifying and tracing oil pollution on the sea surface and monitoring accidental pollution during emergencies. It also contributes to the identification of polluters.

The functioning of the service has been introduced to the participants. The CSN service is based on radar satellite images which are analysed in order to detect possible oil spills on the sea surface. It has been explained that when a possible oil spill is detected in national waters, an alert message is delivered to the relevant country. Analysed images are available to national contact points within 30 minutes of the satellite passing overhead.

Each participating country will have access to the CSN service through a dedicated user interface, which enables them to view ordered images of the spills. Users can also access a wide range of supplementary information through the interface, such as oil drift modelling (forecasting and backtracking), optical images, and oceanographic and meteorological information.

The speakers underlined the benefits of this service: providing accurate and timely information on the alleged polluters allows the coastal States taking the appropriate measures (e.g. verifying the spill, inspecting the vessel on entry into port, etc.). As an example, a recent case of a vessel-polluter

detected by CSN has been presented. A CleanSeaNet satellite image has been used as primary evidence in a maritime pollution court decision. The image detected a vessel on 25 February 2012 discharging oil in the waters between Land's End and the Scilly Isles (UK). The master reported that the tanker had been discharging palm oil but had stopped at 13.5 nautical miles from the coast. However, the CleanSeaNet image and alert report clearly showed that the discharge had continued within the 12 nm limit and was therefore illegal. As a consequence, the owner was found guilty and fined.

The speakers have also presented a number of cases when the CSN images enabled the coastal States to better target the vessels for port state control, which helped then discovering a number of deficiencies on board.

The participants visited EMSA's Maritime Support Services (MSS) Centre, the main day-to-day task of which is the provision of support to the SafeSeaNet EU vessel traffic monitoring and information system; the LRIT global ship tracking system and the CleanSeaNet oil spill monitoring and vessel detection system. Other systems are also monitored by the MSS, such as the THETIS port state control database, the BlueBelt customs pilot system and the IMDatE integrated maritime surveillance platform.

At the end of the day all the participants acknowledged the importance of the CSN service for combatting deliberate or accidental pollution in the Mediterranean.

Staffs from the SAFEMED III beneficiary countries interested to benefit from this service and to participate in the "Pilot project on provision of CSN services" will be invited by EMSA to attend SAFEMED III Training for CleanSeaNet Operators scheduled on 18 and 19 April 2014 in Lisbon. The provision of the service via pilot project to the interested SAFEMED III countries is foreseen upon the signature of the relevant Conditions of Use.

For more information on CSN service consult EMSA's website:

<http://emsa.europa.eu/operations/cleanseanet.html>

EMSA's publication "Addressing Illegal Discharges in the Marine Environment" is available on the following link:

<http://emsa.europa.eu/publications/guidelines-manuals-and-inventories/280-manuals/1879-addressing-illegal-discharges-in-the-marine-environment.html>