

**WILLEM DE RUITER SIGNS EQUASIS MOU**

Left to right: Jacques Bénard, Equasis Director; Willem de Ruiters; Ephtimios Mitropoulos, IMO General Secretary, Michel Aymeric, Maritime Director of the French Ministry of Transport.

On 25<sup>th</sup> January, EMSA Executive Director, Willem de Ruiters, signed the new Equasis' MoU during a ceremony at IMO headquarters, in the presence of the Secretary General Ephtimios Mitropoulos. EMSA is now a contracting party to Equasis as the new acting representation for the European Union, and Norway and Australia have also joined as new members. Equasis is a web-based system which provides safety related information on ships. It is operated via a non profit making organisation, which was established in Paris in 2000 by a number of international maritime authorities to promote a quality culture throughout the maritime industry as a whole.

**FRENCH TRANSPORT MINISTER AT EMSA**

Mr Dominique Perben (second on the left), French Minister of Transport, paid a visit to EMSA during a recent trip to Lisbon. He expressed his concerns on issues relating to classification societies, particularly in view of the circumstances surrounding the MSC Napoli accident, and talked about his government's priorities. The activities of EMSA were also presented at the meeting. He had the opportunity to meet French staff working at the Agency.

**A COORDINATED IMO APPROACH TO THE AIR POLLUTION PROBLEM**

A study for the Commission looked at all shipping journeys starting or finishing in Europe and estimated the emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>x</sub>). By 2010, these emissions in EU sea areas are likely to equate to 75% of total land-based emissions (including those of cars, trucks, industrial plants). Against this background, the revision of MARPOL Annex VI on Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships is currently ongoing at IMO level. In support of this initiative, and in order to prepare a joint EU position for DG Environment, a workshop was organised at EMSA on 15-16<sup>th</sup> February. The two days were used as a first step to a possible coordinated approach at IMO level. Leading industry representatives presented their views.

**EMSA SIGNS RULECHECK CONTRACT WITH KOREAN REGISTER OF SHIPPING**

EMSA and the Korean Register of Shipping (KRS) have concluded a contract to develop a system which will give those responsible for carrying out a ship inspection in EU ports a complete list of all rules and procedures which need to be applied in their work. The system will be called Rulecheck. It will ensure that the Port State Control Officer is able to more easily apply the relevant rules to the ship, notwithstanding the complexities contained in the various international conventions (Directive 1995/21/EC as amended and the Paris Memorandum on Port State Control). This should lead to improvements in the effectiveness and consistency with which inspections are carried out in all countries which operate under the Paris MoU umbrella.

**EMSA TO LAUNCH ANTI-POLLUTION VESSEL TENDER**

EMSA recently published a Prior Information Notice (2007/ S 30-035502) in the EU Official Journal for at-sea oil recovery services in the Atlantic, West Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea areas. This is the first step in a procurement procedure whereby the Agency intends to establish contracts to ensure the availability of appropriate vessels in each of the areas identified. More information at: <http://www.emsa.europa.eu/end185d014d016.html>

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