

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER VISITS EMSA



François Fillon talks to EMSA staff

On 22 February, French Prime Minister, François Fillon, visited EMSA together with Valérie Pécresse, Minister for Education and Research, Dominique Bussereau, Secretary of State for Transport and Xavier de la Gorce, General Secretary for the Sea. In welcoming the visitors, EMSA Executive Director, Willem de Ruyter, remembered the role played by France in establishing the Agency in the aftermath of the Erika disaster, and outlined the tasks performed. He particularly stressed the role of CleanSeaNet and the EMSA network of oil recovery vessels along the EU coastline in fighting pollution. For his part, Mr Fillon said that maritime safety, together with maritime surveillance and the motorways of the sea, will be priorities within the programme of the future French Presidency of the European Union. He also highlighted the need to improve fishing vessel safety, and to find an answer to the increasing number of accidents and pollution episodes caused by containers lost at sea. He thanked EMSA for its contribution to maritime safety and pollution prevention and response to date, and expressed his desire that it should continue to do so in the future.

TRAINING INSPECTIONS IN BANGLADESH

EMSA experts visited Bangladesh in February in order to inspect of its maritime education, training and certification system. The inspection focused on the activities related to the implementation of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) and involved the Bangladesh Department of Shipping (located in Dhaka) and three maritime education and training institutions. These included the Marine Academy and the National Maritime Institute in Chittagong (both of which are public institutions which operate under the jurisdiction of the maritime administration)

and the Bangladesh Maritime Training Institute (a private establishment with its main office in Chittagong and a branch in Dhaka). Bangladesh seafarers' certificates are not yet recognised at Community level. The inspection report, which is currently under preparation, will provide the basis for a decision on this recognition.

REPORT ON EXECUTION OF POLLUTION ACTION PLAN

On 1 February, the Agency published its report on the financial execution of the action plan for pollution preparedness and response activities. The report covers the two main pillars, which are the network of stand-by oil recovery vessels around Europe and the CleanSeaNet satellite oil spill monitoring and detection service. The 40 page illustrated document can be found at:

<http://www.emsa.europa.eu/ennews20080212161500.html>

INTERSPILL MOU SIGNED

At the end of 2007, EMSA Executive Director, Willem de Ruyter, signed the latest Interspill Memorandum of Understanding (MoU 2007). This continues the Agency's support for the premier European marine pollution conference, which takes place once every three years. Along with the main trade associations and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), EMSA is a member of the steering committee which oversees the conference and associated exhibition. The next event will be held from 12-14th May 2009 in Marseilles.

EMSA HOSTS PILOT IMO HNS COURSE

In co-operation with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), EMSA hosted the pilot version of a new IMO Introductory HNS Model Course for First Responders from 5-7 February in Lisbon. Participants from coastal EU and EFTA Member States attended the course, which has been developed by the IMO to facilitate the ratification and implementation of the OPRC-HNS Protocol 2000, which entered into force on 14 June 2007. The course was delivered by specialists on various aspects of preparedness for and response to marine HNS pollution. EMSA will summarise and present the issues at the next IMO OPRC/HNS Technical Group meeting in March 2008.

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European Maritime Safety Agency