

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR

EMSA's newly appointed Executive Director was invited to an exchange of views at the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee on 20 February. This step marks Ms Maja Markovčić Kostelac's official appointment, following the Administrative Board of October 2018. The meeting gave Ms Markovčić Kostelac the opportunity to set out her vision for an ambitious new 5-year strategy: "It will recognise EMSA as an organisation at the forefront of technological development and as a centre of excellence for maritime affairs." While offering the highest quality of services to both the member states and European Commission, she continued, "EMSA will intensify its cooperation with other EU bodies, to create even more added value for the maritime sector." Ms Markovčić Kostelac also expressed her desire to "see EMSA increase its international profile, both as an exporter of EU solutions and advocate of EU policies."



RAISING AWARENESS OF THE UPCOMING 0.50% SULPHUR CAP ON SHIP FUEL

Ahead of the 2020 deadline for the application of the EU's Sulphur Regulation, EMSA held a workshop jointly with the European Commission's DG Environment on 13-14 February. The workshop gathered representatives from EU and non-EU countries sharing the Mediterranean basin, as well as from regional organisations such as Rempec and Helcom. The experience shared by Helcom and the Netherlands from the Sulphur Emission Control Area (SECA) in the Baltic Sea indicates a positive health impact due to reduced emissions. Encouraging results were also shared by Rempec, IAASA and France based on the feasibility studies conducted on a potential Emission Control Area in the Mediterranean. Participants acknowledged a slow but steady change in perception towards the benefit rather than the cost of a new ECA in the Med, and agreed to continue the discussions in this direction.



STEPPING INTO A VIRTUAL REALITY TO ENHANCE THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

EMSA has launched a tender for the development of a Virtual Reality Environment for ship inspections in an effort to enhance and modernise the learning experience available to our stakeholders. The new environment is expected to help simulate safety inspections carried out by professionals in the areas of maritime safety, security and the protection of the marine environment. Virtual scenarios will be used to simulate how the inspectors operate in real-life, enabling the learner to understand why the inspection activities are performed in a certain way as well as how to do so.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT WORKSHOP DRAWS STRONG INTEREST

More than 90 representatives, from 23 EU countries and 53 organisations with coast guard-related functions gathered to attend the "New European environmental commitment" workshop held in EMSA on 27-28 February. The workshop was organised jointly by EMSA and the Italian chair of the European Coast Guard Functions Forum. Delegates joined from the European Commission, EFCA and Frontex as well as from regional organisations such as Ramoge, Helcom, and the Bonn Agreement. The focus was on marine pollution prevention, response and enforcement from two main perspectives: risk assessment and education and training. On the first, participants emphasized the need to manage risk in terms of both human and asset resources, by developing regional tools, increasing data sharing and integration, and filling legislative gaps to ensure a consistent approach. On the second, the sectoral qualification framework (SQF) was highlighted as a valuable tool for the implementation of training schemes as well as for cooperation on coast guard functions. The workshop concluded with a round-up of existing best practices and technological developments, and underlined the need for further cross-sectoral cooperation.



PREPARING & PLANNING A SOUND COURSE AHEAD FOR AUTONOMOUS SHIPPING

EMSA has published a new call for tender for the provision of a study on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS), with a bid submission deadline of 29 March. The main objective of the study is to provide meaningful input to the EU member states and the European Commission, and possibly IMO, on the ongoing regulatory Scoping Exercise by identifying the emerging risks and regulatory gaps that are posed by the implementation of the different degrees of MASS. More specifically, it is expected that the first part of the study will focus on MASS with a high degree of automation but still with qualified seafarers onboard. The second part of the study will focus on remotely controlled MASS, not yet fully autonomous but supervised. Among others, there shall be particular focus on human element-related issues.

EMSA AND PARIS MOU HOLD FOUR-DAY PORT STATE CONTROL SEMINAR

On 11-14 February, the 52nd Port State Control Officers' seminar was delivered by EMSA and the Paris Memorandum of Understanding secretariat, in the presence of newly appointed Secretary-General, Luc Smulders. The harmonised EU scheme for the training and assessment of the competences of port state control officers is carried out through periodic seminars, developed and hosted by EMSA and delivered four to five times a year. Each seminar has a duration of four working days and addresses the Paris MoU procedures through case studies and workshops. The scheme is reinforced through the use of dedicated eLearning modules designed by EMSA, seminars organised by the Paris MoU secretariat and national training courses. The overall purpose is to ensure the convergent and effective implementation of the port state control system. In total, 43 participants from 18 Paris MoU member states completed the latest seminar.



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VACANCIES: Project Officer for Vessel and Port Reporting (SNE) (deadline: 18/3/2019); Project Officer for Passenger Ship Safety (SNE) (deadline: 25/3/2019)

PROCUREMENT: Conducting a Europe-wide stress-test of regional capacities and mechanisms to respond to a major oil spill (31/12/2020); Study of risks and regulatory issues of specific cases of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (SAFEMASS) (29/3/2019); Development of a virtual reality environment for ship inspections (16/3/2019). See website for more.