

## EMSA ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD REVIEWS ACHIEVEMENTS AND INTRODUCES NEW SERVICES IN FIRST MEETING OF THE YEAR

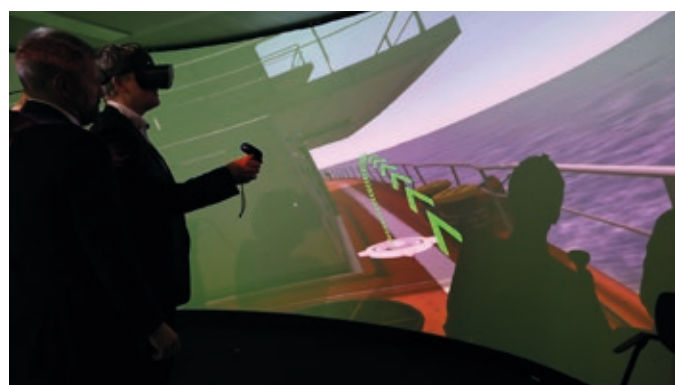
EMSA's Administrative Board held its first meeting of the year mid-March, with the primary focus being on reviewing the achievements and accounts from the previous year. One of the main topics of discussion was the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022, which the Board formally assessed and approved. The Board also enjoyed the traditional annual report video, in which EMSA staff presented the year's highlights in their own languages. The final accounts will be presented for approval in November after the European Court of Auditors has provided its opinion. During the meeting, new products and services were also presented, including two studies on alternative fuels, biofuels, and ammonia, which provide valuable information on their availability, suitability, scalability, as well as legislative, operational and safety constraints. Another highlight of the meeting was the successful deployment of the Agency's first underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to support real accident investigation. The meeting was held remotely, which confirmed that the Board can work effectively online for the typically short March agenda. In-person meetings will resume in June, with the focus being on multi-annual programming. The meeting will include a workshop to maximise the Board Members' engagement with the Agency's future work programme.



## MEPs FROM EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S TRANSPORT AND TOURISM COMMITTEE VISIT EMSA TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE AGENCY'S WORK

A delegation of MEPs from the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee recently paid a visit to EMSA. The delegation consisted of Jens Gieseke and Caroline Nagtegaal, both of whom are members of the committee, with Mr Gieseke serving as vice-chair. During the visit, which took place on 23 February, the MEPs were greeted by

EMSA's Executive Director, Maja Markovčić Kostelac. The visit provided the MEPs with an opportunity to gain a first-hand understanding of EMSA's work. Along with discussions with EMSA's senior management, Mr Gieseke and Ms Nagtegaal were able to tour the Maritime Support Services centre and experience the EMSA Academy's virtual reality training environment.



## EMSA MARKS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE MARITIME SECTOR

EMSA celebrated International Women's Day with a special conference on promoting gender balance and diversity in the maritime industry. The event, held on 8 March, was hosted by Stela Suils Cuesta, Regional Leader of Lean In Portugal, and was attended by EMSA staff members. The conference addressed the gender gap in the transport sector, where only 22% of employees are women. To address this issue, EMSA actively participates in the Women in Transport - EU Platform for Change network and has developed a Gender Action Plan that includes activities to increase the number of women in the maritime sector. EMSA's successful "speed networking" programme is one such initiative that encourages women to pursue careers in the maritime sector. The programme provides one-to-one informative speed networking sessions between female staff members to discuss their careers in EMSA and the maritime industry. Additionally, EMSA also conducts visits to schools and will take part in the upcoming [career fair Futuralia](#) where members of EMSA's Women Network will be speaking to promote maritime careers to young women. By commemorating International Women's Day with such initiatives, EMSA is playing an active role in promoting gender diversity and equality in the maritime sector.



## EMSA LAUNCHES NEW SERVICE OF REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLES FOR UNDERWATER ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

EMSA has introduced a new operational service aimed at supporting Accident Investigation Bodies (AIB) in collecting crucial evidence from sunken ships to aid in understanding accidents and preventing similar incidents in the future. The service, which uses observation-class Remotely Operated Vehicles (OC/ROV), provides underwater surveys and is specifically designed to meet the challenging needs of AIB. This rapidly deployable and flexible service has been developed in close cooperation with the Permanent Cooperation Framework for accident investigation, the EU network of AIB. ROV services are provided to AIB on a voluntary basis, on-demand and free of charge. Although the service is designed to meet AIB needs, it is also offered to the national authorities in the context of Coast Guard functions, for instance for marine safety and counter-pollution operations. In February 2023, the Agency successfully conducted its first two missions deploying ROV in the North Adriatic Sea and the Gulf of Biscay to gather evidence from two sunken vessels, under the coordination of the competent Accident Investigation Bodies, showing the service's capabilities to deliver the expected results.



ROV help bring greater clarity to underwater accident investigation



EMSA team joins Italian Accident Investigation Body (DIGIFEMA) and ACSM ROV specialists for mission in the North Adriatic Sea in February

## EMSA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 22<sup>ND</sup> CLEANSEANET USER GROUP MEETING

EMSA held the 22<sup>nd</sup> CleanSeaNet (CSN) User Group meeting on 9 March, which brought together more than 30 participants from 19 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and the European Commission (DG MOVE). The participants were pleased to have an in-person meeting after the COVID-19 pandemic and actively participated in the discussions. During the event, EMSA presented an overview of the service results for 2022, which confirmed a declining trend in the number of CleanSeaNet detections per million square kilometres. The participants were also informed about the support provided by CleanSeaNet for operations, exercises and emergencies. EMSA highlighted the enhancements to the service, including the inclusion of the new ICEYE satellite constellation. Users from Spain and Portugal shared their experiences in using CleanSeaNet to support maritime operations, emphasizing the added value of the service during emergencies and exercises. Meanwhile, Finland and France shared their experience of using CSN satellite images, focusing on the prosecution of illegal discharges. Slovenia presented the latest developments in backtracking and monitoring of vessels and oil spills, while the Netherlands showcased their latest national aircraft for missions related to pollution detection. In the final part of the meeting, DG MOVE provided an update on the revision of the Ship Source Pollution Directive and outlined the next steps. Overall, the 22<sup>nd</sup> CleanSeaNet User Group meeting was a success, with participants engaging in fruitful discussions and sharing valuable experiences in the use of EMSA's CleanSeaNet service.



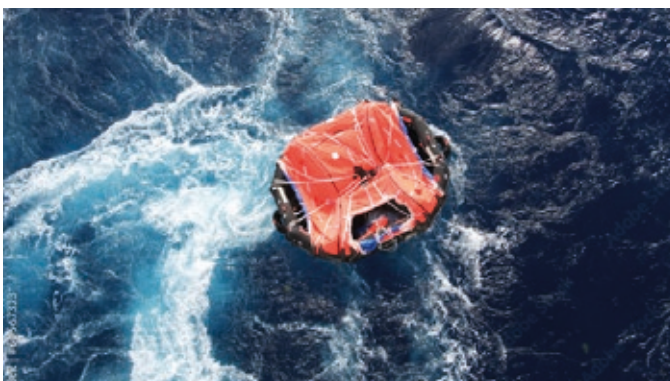
## CISE A STEP CLOSER TO ENTERING OPERATIONAL PHASE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETING

On 7-8 March, 62 appointed experts from both EU Member States and European bodies gathered at EMSA premises and online during the 12<sup>th</sup> CISE Stakeholder Group (CSG) meeting. Among the main highlights of the meeting was the extension of the CISE pre-operational network by another two nodes installed by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and Slovenia. In addition, the CSG approved the Responsibility to Share methodology, thereby completing one of the main objectives of the Transitional Phase of CISE. The CSG also discussed the status of readiness of the CISE network to become operational in 2024 and the related preparatory activities, including pre-operational exercises planned in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2024. The stakeholders were also updated on the state of play of the CISE-ALERT project, which supports moving CISE into an operational network.



## UPGRADED MED PORTAL OFFERS IMPROVED NAVIGATION, ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY, AND MORE

EMSA, as Technical Secretariat of the MarED Group, has announced the release of an upgraded version of the MED Portal. The portal serves as a hub for the Marine Equipment Database and has been enhanced with a host of new features designed to improve the user experience. Among the key improvements, EMSA has optimised the webpage layout to provide better exposure to information and navigation between menus. The product search function now offers a more detailed outcome, displaying information on applied modules, certificate numbers, and notified bodies' numbers, all



in a single line. Additionally, the new version of the MED Portal addresses several inconsistencies related to the submission of Declarations of Conformity, offering users better feedback throughout the process. Finally, EMSA has implemented new accessibility features that allow users to change the contrast layout colour scheme and the adaptive font size. These changes aim to make the MED Portal more inclusive and user-friendly for all users.

## EMSA DELIVERS SUCCESSFUL IMSAS TRAINING COURSES TO EGYPT AND MOROCCO IN PREPARATION FOR 2024 AUDITS

EMSA has successfully delivered training courses on the International Maritime Organization's Member States Audit Scheme (IMSAS) to Egypt and Morocco, as requested by these countries as SAFEMED V beneficiaries. The courses were conducted from 7-9 February and 28 Feb-2 March respectively, in preparation for the audits to be carried out in 2024. These courses were provided as part of a broader technical assistance package on IMSAS that includes preparatory "mock" audits of IMO Member States' national administrations and support during the conduct and follow-up activities of the IMSAS audit. The training courses were conducted under the EMSA Academy framework. The training course is a combination of lectures and practical exercises covering the responsibilities of IMO Member States as a Contracting Government, a flag State, a coastal State, and a port State, as defined in the IMO Instruments Implementation (III) Code. The course has also been delivered to EU Member States both in an online and classroom setting. The cyclical nature of the Audit Scheme has increased interest in this type of training, along with other modes of support related to IMSAS. This speaks to the high level of trust placed in EMSA by Member States seeking to achieve maximum compliance with mandatory IMO instruments. EMSA will continue to prioritise the associated capacity building activities in this field. Recognising the added value of cooperation in this area, the EMSA Academy will continue to provide technical assistance to all countries seeking to improve their compliance with mandatory IMO instruments. This includes participation of an EMSA observer in the audit and assistance in preparing and implementing the corrective action plan addressing the audit's observations and findings.



## MARINE POLLUTION EXPERTS GATHER IN FINLAND FOR DBX EU MODEX EXERCISE AND CONFERENCE

Marine pollution experts and officials from 14 European countries gathered in Porvoo, Finland, from 27 February to 3 March for the Marine Pollution Discussion-Based Exercise (DBX EU MODEX) and Conference. The exercise was held in response to a request for technical assistance from the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and was executed with the active support of EMSA. The participants, including marine authorities, environmental agencies, and civil protection personnel, worked together to respond to a challenging hypothetical scenario involving various maritime accidents that triggered marine pollution with the release of oil and hazardous and noxious substances (HNS). The exercise was divided into four phases: Alert, Rescue, Environmental Response, and Long-term Impact. The incident scenario was simulated in virtual reality, and the participants were provided with phase-specific introduction videos. The DBX EU MODEX aimed to bring together different actors involved in marine pollution response to improve collaboration and prepare for future marine accidents. The participants shared their knowledge and expertise to improve collaboration in marine pollution preparedness and response. One of the main objectives of the exercise was to further integrate offshore and onshore response actors and activities. The participants successfully achieved this goal, and many returned home motivated to strengthen this cooperation for even better preparedness in the future. All videos of the exercise scenario, the four parts of the DBX EU MODEX Conference, and other videos can be viewed on the [DBX EU MODEX YouTube playlist](#).



## FINNISH BORDER GUARD DEPLOYS ARCTIC SKIMMER FOR IN-COUNTRY TRAINING

The Finnish Border Guard recently activated EMSA's offer to Member States for in-country training on the use of the Agency's oil spill response equipment. During a training event held on February 6-7, the Finnish Border Guard deployed one of EMSA's Arctic Skimmers from the Agency's Equipment Assistance Stockpile in the Northern Baltic. EMSA currently has four arctic skimmers, two LAS 125 and two LRB150, located in Tolkkienen, Finland, to cater to the specific ice conditions in this part of Europe. The skimmer was deployed by the Finnish Border Guard vessel UISKO in the Gulf of Bothnia during a joint exercise with the Swedish Coast Guard. This training opportunity highlights the importance of being prepared for potential oil spill incidents and the benefits of collaborating with other agencies to ensure effective response measures. EMSA's Equipment Assistance Stockpile provides Member States with access to specialised equipment to enhance their oil spill response capabilities.



Finnish Border Guard Uisko tests out EMSA arctic skimmer LAS 125 capabilities in ice conditions



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**PROCUREMENT:** Provision of Maritime Master's and PhD Programmes to Representatives of ENP Beneficiaries (22/3/23); Feasibility Studies on Sea Traffic Management for IPA and ENP Beneficiaries (20/4/23); See website for more.

**PUBLICATIONS:** EMSA Academy Learning Services Catalogue 2023; Risk Based Assessment Tool (RBAT); Cargosafe; See website for more.