European Maritime Safety Agency
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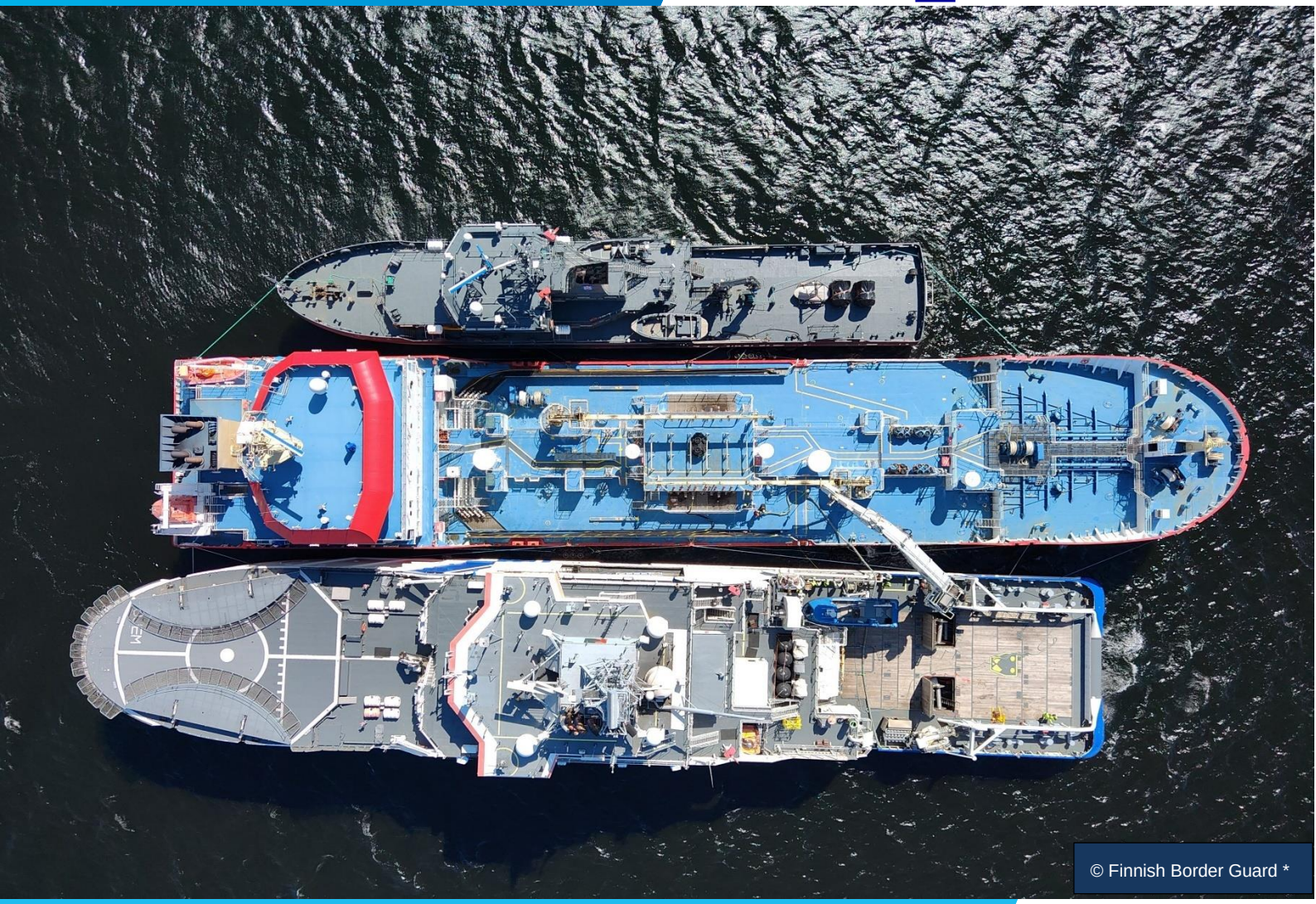



# Overview of Activities 2025

# EMSA OPR Vessels, EAS and MAR-ICE

## Sustainability and Technical Assistance

**Date: 25/03/2026**

EMSA

*Picture on the front page: Vessels *Kindral Kurvits* (Estonia) and *Turva* (Finland) exercising discharge of recovered oil to intermediate storage vessel *Vingaren* during Hanko exercise in Tallin strait.

# Summary

The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), under its mandate set out in Regulation (EU) 1406/2002, provided in 2025 a comprehensive range of services to support EU coastal States in responding effectively to pollution incidents caused by ships and offshore oil and gas installations.

These services operate as a flexible “toolbox”, allowing requesting States to select the most appropriate response measures according to their specific operational needs. By delivering support at EU level, EMSA strengthens and complements national and regional capacities through targeted, cost-effective, and efficient assistance.

EMSA maintains its response services in continuous operational readiness to ensure rapid mobilisation when requested. Once activated, the services operate under the control of the requesting authority. They are available to EU Member States and coastal EFTA States, and—under certain conditions—to non-EU countries sharing a regional sea basin with the EU.

In 2025 the Agency performed, with the active involvement of its Administative Board and national experts, a thorough review of the pollution response services aimed at ensuring their relevance for the years to come and deciding on actions to be undertaken to adapt the services to new pollutants.

Finally it has to be noted that Regulation (EU) 2025/2434 on the European Maritime Safety Agency and repealing Regulation (EU) 1406/2002 was adopted on 26 November 2025. This Regulation entered into force on 18 January 2026 and its article 5 will now be the legal basis for the pollution response activities of the Agency.

### Response Toolbox (end of 2025)

By the end of 2025, EMSA’s response network included:

- 12 fully equipped Oil Pollution Response (OPR) vessels, 10 of which fitted with Light Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (LRPAS) to enhance surveillance capabilities.
- 1 intermediate storage vessel for oil recovered at sea.
- 8 dispersant stockpiles.
- 5 Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) arrangements available for deployment.

### Training, Drills and Exercises

To ensure high operational performance, EMSA regularly conducts training and readiness activities for its contracted assets:

#### Drills and Equipment Condition Tests (ECTs)

All standby oil spill response vessels carry out regular drills under EMSA supervision to verify vessel readiness, test response equipment, and train crews. EAS arrangements are subject to a similar programme of Equipment Condition Tests (ECTs).

#### Operational Exercises

To ensure effective coordination within an international command structure—particularly critical during large-scale incidents—EMSA’s standby vessels participate in at-sea spill response exercises together with national and regional response authorities. EAS equipment is also deployed during these exercises.

#### Notification Exercises

In addition, EMSA takes part in notification exercises to test activation procedures and assess overall service readiness.

### Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS)

For incidents involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), EMSA provides 24/7 expert support through the MAR-ICE Network. This service enables rapid information exchange with EU and EFTA coastal States, as well as EU candidate countries.
Annual MAR-ICE activation exercises help familiarise coastal States with activation procedures, ensuring reliability and efficiency in emergency situations.

### Conclusion

EMSA staff systematically evaluate contractor performance during drills, ECTs, and exercises in accordance with the Guidelines on Conducting Drills/ECTs and Exercises for EMSA Contracted Vessels/EAS Arrangements, ensuring that all services remain at a high level of preparedness.

The vessel drills, EAS Equipment Condition Tests, exercises, and MAR-ICE activations conducted in 2025 confirmed that EMSA's response services were delivered efficiently and met the expectations of participating States and service users.

Table 1. Summary of vessel drills, EAS ECTs and exercises carried out in 2025

| Vessel Acceptance Drills | New EAS stockpile acceptance | Quarterly Drills / ECTs / Equipment training | Operational Exercises: Vessels / EAS | Notification Exercises: Vessels / EAS | MAR-ICE Exercises / Real cases of chemical pollution |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 52 / 50 / 5 | 14 exercises (10 vessels / 8 EAS) | 7 exercises (7 EMSA vessels, 1 EFCA vessel / 2 EAS) | 1 / 1 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENTS: | | 131 | | | |

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 EMSA's Pollution Response Services - Overview

Through its "toolbox" of Pollution Response Services (PRS), EMSA provides a European-level layer of response capacity to strengthen and complement the resources of coastal States. These services support the protection of the marine environment from pollution caused by ships and offshore oil and gas installations. In 2025, as part of its programme of work, the Agency undertook with the active involvement of the Administrative Board and national experts a thorough review of its pollution response services to assess their relevance and their capacity to address new threats. Several actions were identified that will be implemented in the coming years.

### Network of Oil Spill Response Vessels

EMSA has established a network of standby oil spill response vessels through contracts with commercial ship operators. These vessels continue to perform their normal commercial activities but have been technically adapted and equipped to carry out oil spill response operations when required.

In the event of an oil spill, a selected vessel will suspend its commercial operations and be made available to the requesting authority, fully equipped and operating under pre-agreed terms, conditions, and tariffs.

Following a formal request for assistance, the vessel will be ready to sail within a maximum of 24 hours. Although each vessel operates commercially in a specific area, all vessels within the EMSA network can be mobilised to respond to an incident anywhere in European waters and shared regional sea basins.

### Equipment Assistance Service (EAS)

In strategically selected locations across Europe, EMSA has established an Equipment Assistance Service (EAS). This service consists of stockpiles of standalone, state-of-the art oil pollution response equipment and dispersants together with the necessary logistic arrangements to ensure its quick mobilisation and transport.

The EAS is designed to complement and reinforce the existing resources of individual Member States. All equipment is maintained in a state of readiness and can be mobilised 24/7 to support oil spill response operations anywhere in European waters and shared sea basins.

### Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)

EMSA has contracted lightweight Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) services, including quadcopters capable of taking off from and landing on EMSA contracted vessels. These systems provide real-time aerial surveillance of the affected area.

The RPAS service enables response coordinators to:

- Assess the extent and movement of an oil spill.
- Monitor the deployment of response equipment (e.g. booms, skimmers, sweeping arms).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of dispersant application.

Equipped with both visual and infrared cameras, RPAS enhance situational awareness and support more informed operational decision-making during clean-up operations.

### EMSA's Services for Marine Chemical Emergencies

EMSA provides specialised support to assist authorities in their decision-making during maritime chemical emergencies. In cooperation with the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) and the Centre of

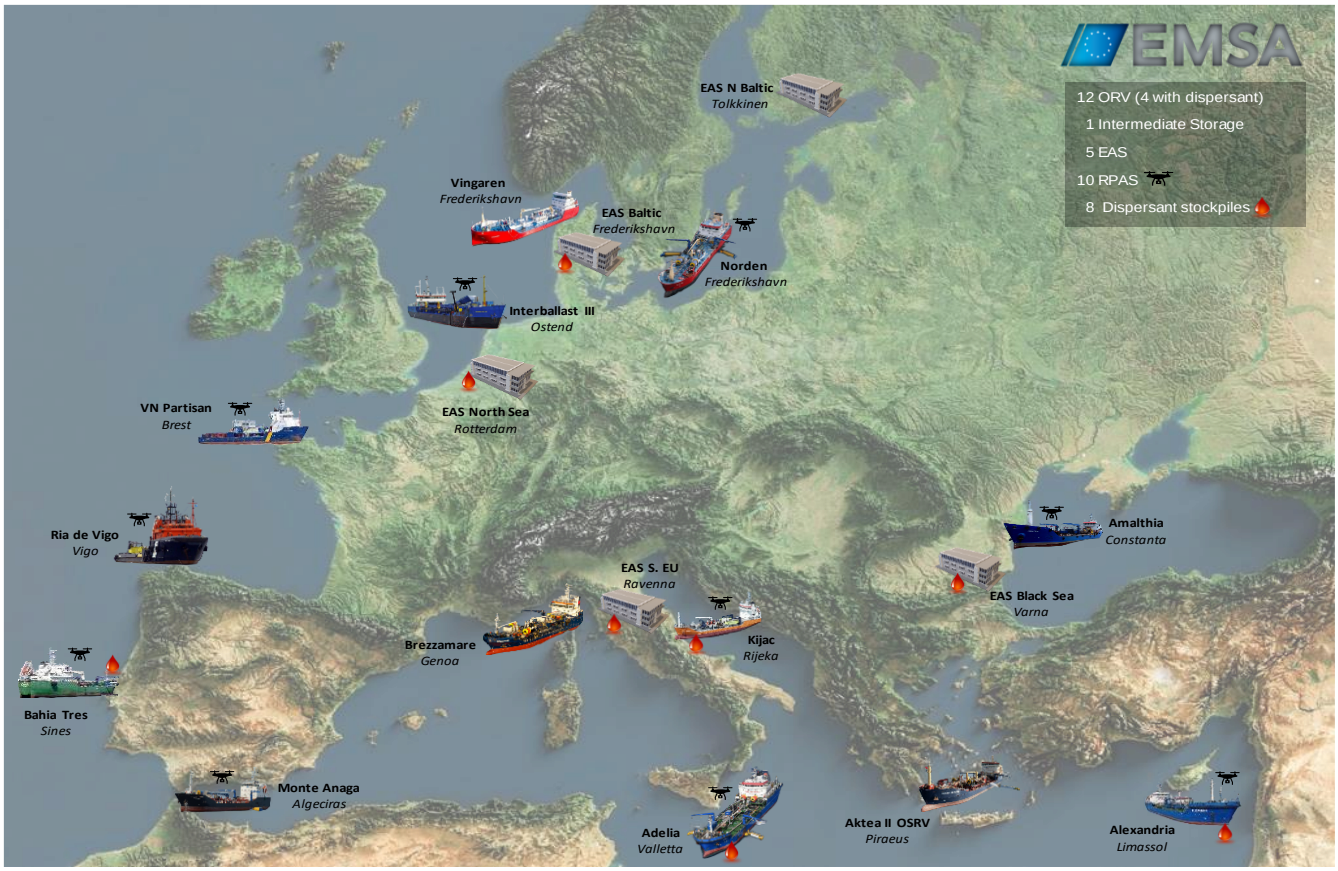
Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (Cedre), EMSA established the MAR-ICE Network. This network of experts delivers 24/7 rapid, substance-specific information and technical advice in maritime incidents involving hazardous and noxious substances (HNS).

In addition, MAR-CIS information sheets provide concise, maritime-focused guidance on specific substances. These sheets are intended to support competent authorities during the initial phase of responding to incidents involving hazardous chemicals. For substances that are not included in the MAR-CIS Library, EMSA has developed the tool BE-CHEM. Using basic information about a substance, this tool informs the user about its probable behaviour when released.

Together, the MAR-ICE Network and MAR-CIS information sheets ensure rapid access to reliable, incident-specific information and expert advice. They complement existing national and regional information systems and strengthen overall preparedness for marine chemical emergencies.

The map below provides an overview of EMSA's PRS and their geographical distribution.

Map 1. Distribution of EMSA's Marine Pollution Response assets in Europe in 2025.




It should also be mentioned that in the context of the cooperation between EMSA, EFCA and FRONTEX on coast guard functions, EMSA has equipped the three EFCA chartered fisheries inspection vessels with selected pollution response equipment, thus increasing the number of vessels available to Member States in case of a pollution incident.

## 1.2 Integration of EMSA services with Member States pollution response mechanisms

To ensure that EMSA's response "toolbox" is well integrated into Member States' response plans, each country needs a clear understanding of EMSA's assets, procedures, contracts, and cost structures. This

knowledge allows EMSA resources to be included in national contingency plans, improving preparedness and ensuring responses are timely, coordinated, and cost-effective.

For the EAS service, relevant personnel in Member States should be trained to operate the different types of equipment. This service also works together with identified Vessels of Opportunity (VOOs), so familiarisation with these arrangements is necessary.
To make full use of EMSA's pollution response tools, ongoing and proactive cooperation between EMSA and national operational teams is essential. EMSA has established a structured annual programme of PRS activities to help national authorities stay informed and ready to integrate EMSA support into their response systems. These activities include training sessions, joint exercises, workshops, and operational briefings, all aimed at improving coordination and enabling a fast and well-organised response to maritime pollution incidents.

Within the cooperation framework between EMSA, EFCA, and Frontex, Multipurpose Maritime Operations (MMOs) are carried out in selected European sea areas. These operations require close cooperation between agencies to support national authorities in performing coast guard tasks at national, EU, and, where relevant, international levels.

In 2025, EMSA's pollution response services played an important role in these activities by providing response assets for 13 operational exercises in European waters. EMSA also delivered practical training to Member States on MAR-ICE and EAS equipment, further strengthening preparedness and response capacity.

The table below summarises the joint operational activities carried out by EMSA and Member States, demonstrating their continued cooperation, capacity building, and efforts to improve maritime pollution response.

Table 2. Joint operational activities EMSA-Member States 2025.

| Service | Activity | Where |
|---|---|---|
| **Vessel Network & EAS** | **Notification/Table-top Exercises: 7**<br>- 7 activations of EMSA Vessel Contractors and 1 of EFCA OPV<br>- 2 activations of EAS Contractors | Member States |
| | **Operational Exercises: 14** (13 with Member States and 1 with Candidate country)<br>- **10** deployments of Vessels<br>- 8 deployments of EAS | Member States |
| | **Dedicated in-country familiarisation on the EAS equipment: 3** | Member States |
| | **Hands-on training sessions for Member State equipment operators at EAS stockpile: 2** | EAS locations |
| | **Equipment check and crew training** on board EFCA offshore patrol vessels**: 3** | EAS locations |
| **MAR-ICE Service** | **Real case activation: 1** | Member States |
| | **Activation of MAR-ICE service for HNS exercises:** 1 | Member States |

## 1.3 Activities of the EMSA Network of pollution response vessels and EAS in 2025

At the end of 2025, the operational resources comprised 12 fully equipped OPR vessels, including 10 vessels with RPAS capability. The fleet was complemented by one intermediate storage vessel for oil recovered at sea, eight dispersant stockpiles ready for mobilisation), and five Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) arrangements available for mobilisation in the event of marine pollution incidents.

The key milestones for the development of the Vessel Network in 2025 included:

- Completion of the procurement procedures and signature of Contract No. 2025/EMSA/2025/CPN/0002, Lot 3 (Canary Islands and Madeira). Under this contract, EMSA chartered a new tanker vessel, Panama 100.
- Completion of the procurement procedure and signature of Contract No. 2025/EMSA/2025/CPN/0002, Lot 1 (Bay of Biscay). EMSA re-contracted the vessel VN Partisan, ensuring the continued provision of OPR services in the same operational area after the expiry of the current contract in 2026.
- Under the same procurement, two other lots covering the Atlantic North and the Northern Baltic were not successful. In view of the increased risk in the Northern Baltic, this lot was again published and the procedure is ongoing.

In 2025, the main activities related to the Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) included:

- Award of Framework Contract No. 2025/EMSA/2024/CPN/0037 for the provision of Equipment Assistance Services (EAS) in the Black Sea. EMSA re-contracted the company Bon Marine, ensuring the continued provision of OPR services in the same operational area after the expiry of the current contract in 2026.
- Acceptance of the EAS Southern Europe, contracted from Castalia at the end of 2024, in operational service.

Further details on the services provided by the Vessel Network and the EAS arrangements in 2025 are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Summary of the Vessels and EAS contracts in 2025.

| Area | Contractor / Contract | Vessel(s) / Assets | Vessel type / storage capacity($m^3$) / dispersant stock | Service 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Contracted vessels** | | | | |
| **Baltic Sea** | Stena Oil 2023/EMSA/CPNEG/2/2023 Lot 2 | *Norden* | Oil Tanker / 2880 | Whole year service |
| | Stena Oil 2023/EMSA/CPNEG/5/2022 | *Vingaren* | Oil tanker – Intermediate storage vessel / 6341 | Whole year service |
| **Channel and Southern North Sea** | DC Industrial S.A. 2023/EMSA/CPNEG/3/2022 Lot 1 | *Interballast 3* | Hopper Dredger / 1886 | Whole year service |
| **Atlantic Middle** | Remolcadores Nossa Terra S.A. 2022/EMSA/CPNEG/3/2022 Lot 2 | *Ria de Vigo* | Offshore Supply / 1522 | Whole year service |
| **Bay of Biscay** | Seaowl EMSA/CPNEG/01/2017 | *VN Partisan* | Offshore Supply / 1022 | Whole year service |
| **Southern Atlantic Coast** | Mureloil EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 2 | *Bahia Tres* | Oil Tanker / 7413 / Dispersant 200 t. | Whole year service |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Western Mediterranean Sea** | Naviera Altube<br>EMSA CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 2 | *Monte Anaga* | Oil Tanker / 4096 | Whole year service |
| | Ciane<br>EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 3 | *Brezzamare* | Oil Tanker / 3288 | Whole year service |
| **Central Mediterranean Sea** | Sarda Bunkers<br>EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 1 | *SB Borea* | Oil tanker / 3558 | Contract expired on 11/08/2025. The Contract was not renewed |
| | Petronav<br>EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 3 | *Adelia* | Oil Tanker / 7458<br>Dispersant 180 t. | Whole year service |
| | Environmental Protection Engineering S.A.<br>EMSA/CPNEG/2/2021 Lot 2 | *Aktea II* | Oil Tanker / 4486 | Whole year service |
| **Adriatic Sea** | Dinamarin Ltd<br>EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 1 | *Kijac* | Oil/Chemical Tanker / 1730<br>Dispersant 200 t. | Whole year service |
| **Eastern Mediterranean Sea** | Petronav<br>EMSA/CPNEG/1/2018 | *Alexandria* | Oil Tanker / 7458 /<br>Dispersant 200 t. | Whole year service |
| **Southern Black Sea** | Petronav<br>2022/EMSA/CPNEG/3/2022 Lot 3 | *Amalthia* | Oil Tanker / 5154 | Whole year service |
| | Cosmos<br>EMSA/CPNEG/6/2016 Lot 1 | *Galaxy Eco* | Oil Tanker / 2969<br>Dispersant 200 t. | Contract expired on 19/03/2025 |
| **2. EAS** | | | | |
| **Northern Baltic Sea** | Lamor Corporation AB<br>2022/EMSA/CPNEG/4/2021 | 25 stand-alone equipment sets | Contracted storage area: 900m$^2$ (Tolkkinen, Finland) | Whole year service |
| **Baltic Sea** | Stena<br>EMSA/CPNEG/2/2019 Lot 1 | 24 stand-alone equipment sets | Contracted storage area: 1,000m$^2$ (Frederikshavn, Denmark) | Whole year service |
| **North Sea** | Lamor Corporation AB<br>20231CPNEG/I/2023 - Lot 2 | 29 stand-alone equipment sets<br>Dispersant 205 t. | Contracted storage area: 900m$^2$ (Rotterdam, The Netherlands) | Whole year service |
| **Southern Europe** | Ottavio Novella<br>EMSA/CPNEG/2/2020 | 34 stand-alone equipment sets<br>Dispersant 200 t. | Contracted storage area: 1,000m$^2$ (Ravenna, Italy) | Contract expired on 10/04/2025 |
| | Castalia<br>2024/EMSA/2024/CPN/0010 | 34 stand-alone equipment sets<br>Dispersant 200 t. | Contracted storage area: 1,006m$^2$ (Ravenna, Italy) | Contract implementation started on 10/01/2025 |
| **Black Sea** | Bon Marine<br>EMSA/CPNEG/3/2021 | 17 stand-alone equipment sets | Contracted storage area: 600m$^2$<br>(Varna, Bulgaria) | Whole year service |

## 1.4 Purpose and Types of Drills and Exercises

### Operational Readiness of EMSA's Pollution Response System

EMSA gives high priority to training, drills, Equipment Condition Tests (ECTs), and exercises. These activities ensure that stand-by OPR vessels and EAS arrangements remain fully prepared and able to respond effectively to real pollution incidents.

### Drills for OPR Vessels

Each vessel contract defines which drills must be carried out and how often. These activities ensure that vessels continue to meet EMSA's performance standards. The main types are:

1. Acceptance drills (acceptance tests) – Carried out when a new vessel enters service or after major equipment upgrades. They confirm that the vessel and crew meet EMSA requirements before starting operations.
2. Quarterly oil pollution response drills – Regular drills to test crew readiness, equipment performance, and teamwork.

### EAS Readiness and Testing

Operational readiness is equally important for EAS arrangements. Each EAS contract sets a maximum number of ECTs per year, depending on the amount of equipment covered. If extra equipment is added, EMSA may request additional tests.

ECTs have two main objectives:

- To check that all pollution response equipment works properly and is ready for immediate use.
- To assess the ability of technical support staff to handle and deploy equipment and to train Member State operators.

### Exercises

The main purpose of exercises is to ensure that EMSA's PRS are fully integrated into national and regional response systems. The Agency takes part in two types of exercises:

1. Notification exercises – Tests of communication and activation procedures between EMSA, OPR vessel/EAS operators, and Member State authorities during an emergency. During notification exercises, requests and offers of assistance are chanelled through the Community Emergency Communication and Information System–Marine Pollution module (CECIS MP), operated by DG ECHO under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.
2. At-sea operational exercises – Realistic exercises held with Member States to practice full deployment of response equipment and coordination during large incidents.

EMSA technical staff provide advice and training, but they do not operate equipment during real incidents. Deployment is always the responsibility of trained Member State operators.

### Guidelines and Continuous Improvement

EMSA has developed detailed Guidelines on Conducting Drills/ECTs and Exercises for Contracted Vessels and EAS Arrangements. These guidelines are part of all contracts and are regularly updated to reflect:

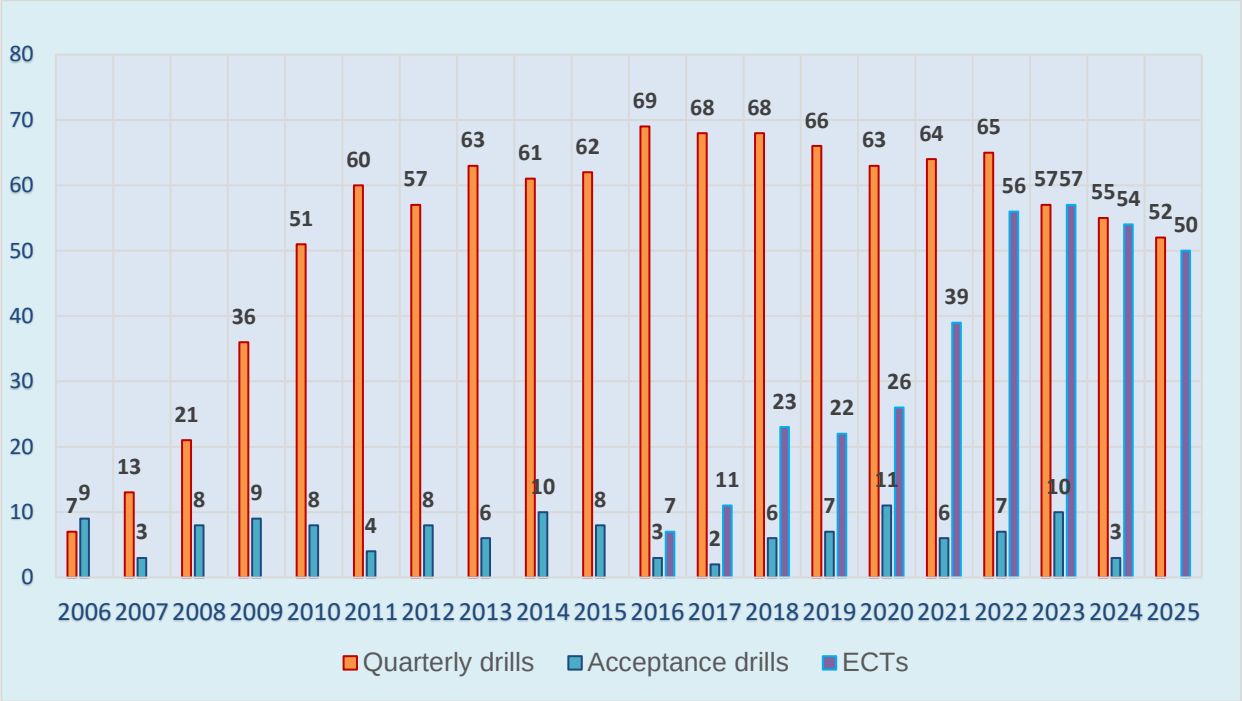
- Lessons learned from previous incidents and exercises.
- New technology and best practices.
- Changes in services or additional equipment.

Through regular drills, exercises, and equipment tests, EMSA ensures that its vessels and EAS arrangements remain ready to deliver a fast, effective, and well-coordinated response to maritime pollution emergencies.

# 2. Drills & ECTs performed in 2025

In 2025 a total of 52 quarterly drills, and 50 ECTs were performed respectively by the Vessels and the EAS arrangements under contract to the Agency. A summary of Vessel drills and EAS ECTs performed by EMSA's OPR services during the period 2006-2025 is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1. Number of Vessel drills and EAS ECTs 2006 – 2025




## 2.1 Vessel drills

### 2.1.1 Acceptance drills

Acceptance drills are a key step before a new vessel, new equipment, or overhauled equipment can enter the standby phase of the pollution response service. These drills confirm that all requirements are met and that the vessel is ready for operations. In 2025, no vessels completed the contract preparatory phase. As a result, no acceptance drills were carried out during the year.

### 2.1.2 Quarterly drills

The vessel Contractor must carry out a drill every quarter to train the crew and test the oil pollution response equipment. This ensures that the vessel is ready to provide an effective response when needed. The performance standards for the vessel, crew, and equipment are set out in the Vessel Availability Contract. A quarterly drill is accepted only if all these standards are met. Approval of the Contractor's Quarterly Drill Report is required before the Vessel Availability Fee can be paid.

In 2025, all quarterly drills were accepted, and none was rejected. This confirms that the vessels were operated in line with EMSA standards and remained fully operational.

A summary of the quarterly drills carried out in 2025 is provided in the table 4 below.

Table 4. Summary of the Vessels drills carried out in 2025.

| Area | EMSA Contractor / Contract | *Vessel* | No. | Date in year 2025 (day/month) | RPAS Flight | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baltic | Stena Oil 2023/EMSA/CPNEG/2/2023 Lot 2 | *Norden* | 1Q | 12/03 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 20/06 | yes | |
| | | | 3Q | 17/09 | | |
| | | | 4Q | 19/11 | | |
| | DC Industrial S.A. | *Interballast 3* | 1Q | 04/03 | | |
| | | | 2Q | 17/06 | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Southern North Sea and the Channel** | 2023/EMSA/CPNEG/3/2022 Lot 1 | | 3Q | 06/08 | yes | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 4Q | 06/10 | | |
| **Atlantic Middle** | Remolcadores Nossa Terra S.A. 2022/EMSA/CPNEG/3/2022 Lot 2 | *Ria de Vigo* | 1Q | 05/02 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 27/05 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 23/07 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 29/10 | | |
| **Bay of Biscay** | Seaowl EMSA/CPNEG/01/2017 | *VN Partisan* | 1Q | 21/02 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 18/04 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 29/08 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 28/10 | | |
| **Southern Atlantic coast** | Mureloil EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 2 | *Bahia Tres* | 1Q | 31/03 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 18/06 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 14/08 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 27/11 | | |
| **Western Mediterranean Sea** | Naviera Altube EMSA CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 2 | *Monte Anaga* | 1Q | 05/02 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 19/05 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 12/08 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 21/10 | | |
| | Ciane EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 3 | *Brezzamare* | 1Q | 25/03 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 22/06 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 24/09 | | |
| | | | 4Q | 28/10 | | |
| **Central Mediterranean Sea** | Sarda Bunkers EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 1 | *SB Borea* | 1Q | 20/03 | | 3 drills required. All were conducted and accepted by EMSA. The Contract expired on 11/08/2025 |
| | | | 2Q | 17/06 | yes | |
| | | | 3Q | 01/08 | | |
| | | | 4Q | - | | |
| | Petronav EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 3 | *Adelia* | 1Q | 11/03 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 19/06 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 20/08 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 23/10 | | |
| | Environmental Protection Engineering S.A. EMSA/CPNEG/2/2021 Lot 2 | *Aktea II* | 1Q | 06/03 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 06/06 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 30/09 | | |
| | | | 4Q | 15/11 | | |
| **Adriatic Sea** | Dinamarin Ltd EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 1 | *Kijac* | 1Q | 03/02 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 20/05 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 11/09 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 28/11 | | |
| **Eastern Mediterranean Sea** | Petronav EMSA/CPNEG/1/2018 | *Alexandria* | 1Q | 20/02 | | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 19/06 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 25/08 | yes | |
| | | | 4Q | 21/10 | | |
| **Southern Black Sea** | Petronav 2022/EMSA/CPNEG/3/2022 Lot 3 | *Amalthia* | 1Q | 11/03 | yes | 4 drills required. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. |
| | | | 2Q | 17/06 | | |
| | | | 3Q | 27/08 | | |
| | | | 4Q | 23/10 | | |
| | Cosmos EMSA/CPNEG/6/2016 Lot 1 | *Galaxy Eco* | 1Q | 05/03 | | 1 drill was required. It was conducted and accepted by EMSA. The contract expired on 19/03/2025 |
| | | | 2Q | - | | |
| | | | 3Q | - | | |
| | | | 4Q | - | | |
| **TOTAL Vessel drills 2025:** | | | **52** | | | |

Figure 1. 4th Quarterly drill on board *Norden.* Oil boom deployment.

## 2.2 EAS - Equipment Condition Tests (ECTs) and training sessions

According to the contract, the EAS Contractors shall train their staff and maintain the equipment in a full state of readiness for carrying out oil pollution response services efficiently. To demonstrate the fulfilment of these obligations, the Contractors carry out ECTs. An ECT is a periodical test of the condition, functionality and operational readiness of the equipment set in normal operational conditions (in water).

Due to weather limitations, most of the activities were carried out during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the year, where weather conditions are more favourable, with a few performed in Q4. The results of the ECTs were assessed partly on site by EMSA and partly remotely based on the visual evidence provided by the contractors.

Within the framework of the joint co-operation programme EMSA-Member States, two training sessions for equipment operators were organised, within the context of ECTs, in the EAS North Sea (Werkendam, the Netherlands) and EAS Black Sea (Varna, Bulgaria):

- Hands-on session EAS North Sea, with 9 operators from 6 Member States, 27-29 May 2025.
- Hands-on session EAS Black Sea, with 4 operators from 4 Member States, 17-19 June 2025.

The trainees were able to get familiarised and operate different equipment systems such as the Current Buster 4, the Ro-Trawl, the Lamor work boats and oil storage barges.

The summary of the ECTs carried out in 2025, including jonit training activities with Member States, is presented in the table below.

Table 5. EAS ECTs and Training sessions 2025.

| Contractor | 1st Quarter | 2nd Quarter | 3rd Quarter | 4th Quarter | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LAMOR AB EAS North Sea (Werkendam)** | | Ro-Trawl (05/25) | Lamor Barge (10/25) | Lamor Work Boat (11/25) | Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA |
| | | New Naval Barge (05/25) | Lamor V-Sweep (10/25) | Lamor Work Boat (11/25) | |
| | | Lamor Work Boat (05/25) | Desmi Speed Sweep (10/25) | | |
| | | Current Buster 4 (05/25) | Current Buster 6 (10/25) | | |
| **Stena Oil EAS Baltic Sea (Frederikshavn)** | | Lamor Barge (04/25) | Lamor Medium Skimmer (08/25) | | Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA |
| | | Lamor Work Boat (04/25) | Ro-Trawl (09/25) | | |
| | | Desmi Speed Sweep (04/25) | Current Buster 6 (09/25) | | |
| | | Current Buster 4 (05/25) | | | |
| | | Lamor Work Boat (05/25) | | | |
| | | Lamor V-Sweep (06/25) | | | |
| | | Lamor Medium Skimmer (06/25) | | | |
| **Castalia EAS Southern Europe (Ravenna)** | | Lamor Workboat (05/25) | Desmi Ro-trawl (09/25) | | Equipment was mostly found in a good condition. An Event report was submitted in 1 case, which is being repaired. All ECTs accepted by EMSA |
| | | Lamor Workboat (05/25) | Lamor V-Sweep (09/25) | | |
| | | Lamor Medium Skimmer (05/25) | Current Buster (09/25) | | |
| | | New Naval Fence Boom (05/25) | Lamor Barge (09/25) | | |
| **LAMOR AB EAS Northern Baltic Sea (Tolkkinen)** | | Ro-Trawl (05/25) | High Capacity Skimmer (09/25) | Lamor Workboat (12/25) | Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA |
| | | Ro-Trawl (05/25) | New Naval Storage Barge (09/25) | Lamor Workboat (12/25) | |
| | | Lamor V-Sweep (05/25) | Lamor Barge (09/25) | Medium oil Spill Skimmer(12/25) | |
| | | Lamor V-Sweep (05/25) | Lamor Oil Storage Barge (09/25) | | |
| | | Lamor V-Sweep (05/25) | | | |
| | | Desmi Speed Sweep (05/25) | | | |
| **Bon Marine EAS Black Sea (Varna)** | | Current Buster 4 (06/25) | Lamor Work Boat (07/25) | Lamor Medium Skimmer (12/25) | Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA |
| | | Lamor Work Boat (06/25) | Current Buster 6 (07/25) | Lamor Work Boat (12/25) | |
| | | Ro-Trawl (06/25) | Lamor Barge (07/25) | Lamor Work Boat (12/25) | |
| **TOTAL ECTs 2025:** | | **50** | | | |

Figure 2. EAS North Sea. Equipment Condition Test of the NOFI Current Buster 6.

Furthermore, as part of the Service Level Agreement between the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and EMSA, three training sessions took place on board EFCA Offshore Patrol Vessels, fitted with EMSA equipment for pollution response:

- Equipment check and crew training on board EFCA vessel Ocean Guardian, 20 June 2025.
- Equipment check and crew training on board EFCA vessel Ocean Protector, 27 June 2025.
- Equipment check and crew training on board EFCA vessel Ocean Guardian, 2 October 2025.

## 2.3 Technical Issues Record

Checking the technical status and completeness of the oil pollution response equipment on board the vessels and at the EAS stockpiles is an important element of each drill / ECT attended by EMSA observers.

### 2.3.1 Equipment Condition Monitoring and Incident Reporting

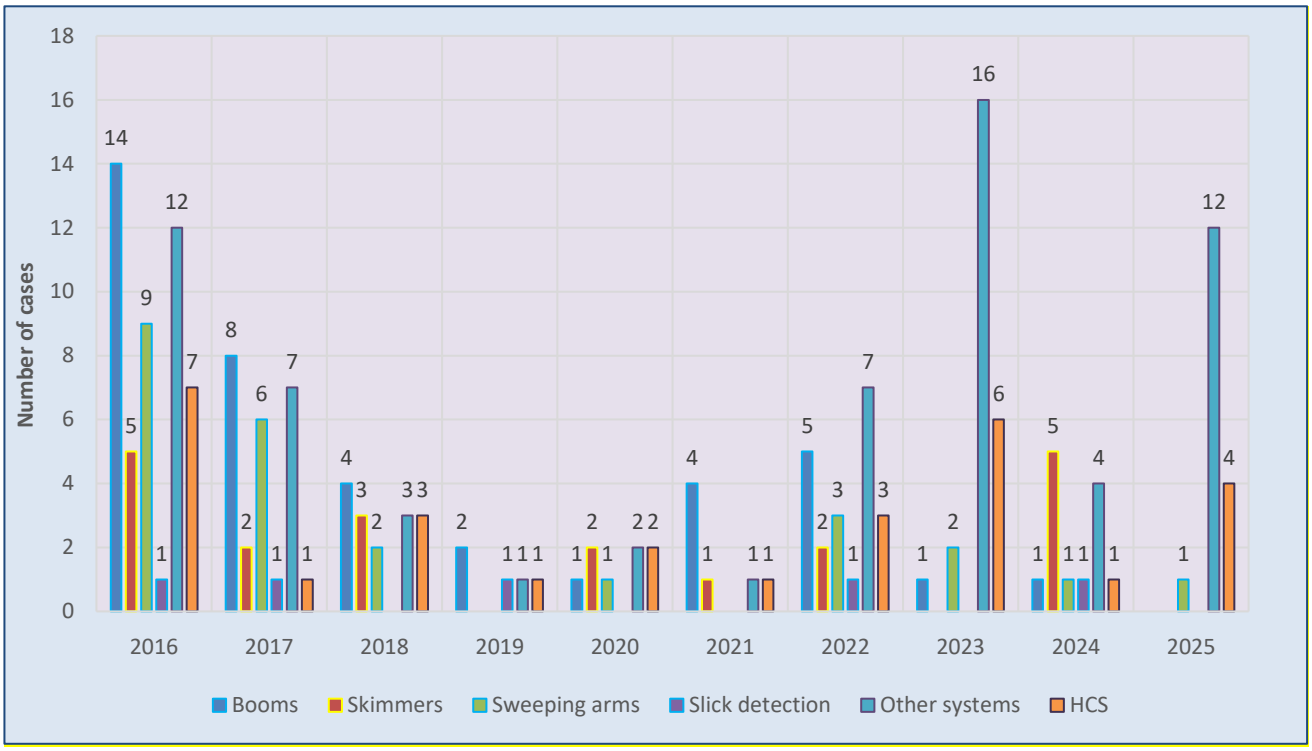
To maintain a high level of operational readiness, EMSA conducts annual inspections of all pollution response equipment installed on contracted vessels and stored within the Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) stockpiles. These inspections assess the functionality, reliability, and overall condition of the equipment, with the objective of identifying and resolving potential issues before they affect operational performance.

In addition to these inspections, both vessel and EAS contracts require contractors to report any operational incidents or equipment malfunctions. To ensure consistent and efficient reporting, EMSA uses a dedicated reporting tool known as the Event Report. This system allows contractors to submit detailed information on equipment failures and technical issues.

The Event Report system supports EMSA in monitoring equipment performance, identifying recurring technical problems, evaluating system reliability, and implementing corrective actions when necessary.
In 2025, EMSA received 17 reports of equipment failures. Of these, 11 were related to EAS equipment, while the remaining 6 concerned equipment installed on contracted vessels.

Considering the number of contracted vessels, EAS stockpiles, and the overall volume of equipment in operation, this represents a relatively low number of incidents and confirms the high reliability of EMSA's pollution response equipment.

Chart 2. Number of Technical issues 2016 – 2025.




### 2.3.2 Analysis of Equipment Failures

EAS equipment issues were primarily identified during Equipment Compatibility Tests (ECTs). These included:

4 failures of power packs used to operate equipment such as the Current Buster, Ro-Trawl, Speed Sweep, and Weir Boom system, 5 cases of equipment damage during deployment or retrieval, including two incidents where equipment became entangled in the propeller of the towing vessel,

All EAS-related issues were minor and were repaired without difficulty at the EAS warehouse.
Failures related to vessel-installed equipment included: 2 malfunctions of High-Capacity Skimmer (HCS) umbilical hose, representing the most significant technical issue reported during the year. In both cases, hydraulic or water hoses inside the HCS umbilical hose ruptured, rendering the system temporarily unusable. Repairs were complex because accessing the damaged hoses required cutting the outer protective rubber layer of the umbilical hose. These repairs were therefore costly and time-consuming. In one case, EMSA replaced the damaged HCS with a unit from the EAS stockpile to maintain the operational capacity whilst repairs were undertaken.

Other technical issues included one malfunction of a dispersant spraying system nozzle, one sweeping arms pump and one HCS pump and hydraulic connection problems.

Corrosion and rust were also observed on some equipment items, particularly those stored for extended periods in harsh environmental conditions. Preventive measures, including anti-corrosion treatments and protective maintenance, were applied to mitigate further deterioration.

All reported malfunctions were addressed promptly and effectively. EMSA worked closely with contractors to restore equipment to full operational status without prolonged downtime. As a result, in 2025 all oil pollution

response equipment under both Vessel and EAS contracts remained operational and ready to support Member States in responding to pollution incidents, in line with EMSA's operational standards.

### 2.3.3 Equipment Aging and Future Replacement

Although EMSA's pollution response network remains fully operational, some equipment procured during the early years of the programme is beginning to show signs of aging and wear.

To address this proactively, EMSA has introduced a comprehensive inventory verification process, under which each item of pollution response equipment is systematically assessed to monitor its technical condition. This process enables EMSA to make informed decisions regarding the withdrawal of aging equipment from service and its replacement with newer, upgraded systems when necessary.

The replacement of aging equipment remains dependent on the availability of financial resources. EMSA therefore continues to seek cost-effective solutions to ensure the long-term sustainability of its pollution response capabilities.

Through continuous monitoring, maintenance, and the gradual renewal of equipment, EMSA ensures that its operational assets remain reliable and capable of providing high-quality support to Member States in responding to marine pollution incidents.

Figure 3. Umbilical hose cut for repairs inside.

# 3. Exercises performed in 2025

At-sea operational exercises are a key element in ensuring effective cooperation between the EMSA and EU Member States. These exercises contribute directly to the integration of EMSA's Oil Pollution Response (OPR) services into the national response mechanisms of coastal States. By working together in realistic scenarios, all parties strengthen their capacity to react quickly and efficiently in the event of a maritime pollution incident.

Operational exercises create a structured environment in which EMSA resources and national authorities operate side by side. This practical cooperation strengthens coordination at technical, operational, and communication levels. It allows response teams to test procedures, verify compatibility between systems, and confirm that equipment can be deployed effectively under realistic sea conditions.

In addition, these exercises provide valuable practical experience for personnel from Member States. Participants gain direct exposure to the equipment available through EMSA stockpiles, including containment and recovery systems. Since large-scale oil spill incidents do not occur frequently, regular exercises are essential to maintain operational readiness and ensure that crews remain familiar with procedures and technical requirements.

It should be underlined that, EMSA does not independently initiate operational exercises. Participation normally takes place following a request from a Member State or within the framework of a Regional Agreement. This approach ensures that exercises reflect national priorities and regional cooperation needs.

To ensure efficient involvement, EMSA applies a structured internal and external coordination process. This includes advance planning, logistical preparation, technical briefings, and alignment with national authorities. Following each exercise, the Agency facilitates the exchange of feedback between EMSA and the participating Member States. This post-exercise evaluation process allows for the identification of strengths, areas for improvement, and potential adjustments to procedures or equipment configurations. The overall objective is to continuously enhance operational preparedness and reinforce cooperation mechanisms.

## 3.1 Operational Exercises

In 2025, EMSA contracted vessels were deployed on 10 occasions to participate in at-sea pollution response operational exercises. In parallel, Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) arrangements were activated six times. These deployments were carried out in close cooperation with Member States and/or within the framework of Regional Agreements.

The exercises took place in the following countries: Germany, Sweden, Portugal (Azores), Italy, Finland, Estonia, Greece, Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Turkey, Croatia, and Cyprus. These activities covered different sea basins and operational environments, including the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Black Sea, thereby ensuring broad geographical coverage and varied operational conditions.

Some new elements were introduced during the operational exercises carried out at sea in 2025:

- **EMSA working boat**. During the HEREMA exercise conducted near Kavala, Greece in June 2025, the organisers requested support from EMSA in the form of a working boat from the EAS Black Sea, based in Varna, Bulgaria. The boat, which is fitted with an integrated boom and skimmer system for oil spill response operations, was delivered to the exercise location one day before the start of the main activities. After its arrival, the boat and its equipment were inspected and tested to ensure they were ready for operational use.

  For the very first time, an EMSA working boat was deployed and used during the operational phase of the exercise at sea. This allowed participants to demonstrate and practice the use of the integrated boom and skimmer system for containment and recovery operations in a realistic setting. In addition, two technical support personnel from EAS Black Sea were present during the exercise. They provided technical assistance and helped the assigned boat operators become familiar with the vessel and its equipment, ensuring that it could be operated safely and effectively during the exercise.

Figure 4. EMSA working boat during HEREMA Exercise.


- **STS activities**. During two consecutive exercises conducted by Estonia and Finland—Puhas Meri and Hanko—in the Baltic Sea on 3-4 June 2025, the organisers included in the scenario a ship-to-ship transfer of oil recovered at sea to a reception vessel. Several ships tested their capability to unload the recovered oil into the EMSA intermediate storage vessel Vingaren (Please refer to the picture in the cover of the Report).

Besides the multinational operational exercises, three dedicated in-country familiarisation sessions with a specific focus on EAS equipment were organised in 2025, as follows:

- Cuxhaven, Germany (April 2025): Deployment and operational testing of the Current Buster 6 system with the German Havariekommando.
- Lysekil, Sweden (April 2025): Deployment and operational testing of the Current Buster 4 system with the Swedish Coastguard.
- Tolkkinen, Finland (September 2025): Deployment and operational testing of the Floating rubber barges and High- Capacity skimmer with the Finninsh Border Guard and the Estonian Navy.

These sessions included the physical deployment of EAS equipment systems onboard vessels provided by the respective Member States, allowing participating crews to conduct full deployment cycles, familiarisation with handling procedures, system configuration, towing arrangements, and operational limitations under real maritime conditions. Technical specialists from EMSA were present to provide guidance and ensure compliance with operational standards.

Feedback received from exercise organisers, together with reports submitted by EMSA service providers, confirmed that all contracted vessels and EAS systems functioned in accordance with operational expectations. All assigned tasks were executed successfully, and the equipment performed reliably throughout the exercises. These results demonstrate the continued readiness and operational capability of EMSA's oil pollution response services in support of Member States.

The summary of operational exercises performed by EMSA contracted vessels and EAS arrangements in 2025 is shown in the table below.

Table 6. Operational exercises 2025.

| No. | Name of Exercise | Date | Location | Participating Parties | EMSA Vessel (RPAS) / EAS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **National familiarisation EAS** | 02 April | Cuxhaven, Germany | Germany / EMSA | *EAS North Sea Current buster 6* |
| 2 | **National familiarisation EAS** | 22-24 April | Lysekil, Sweden | Sweden / EMSA | *EAS Baltic Current buster 4* |
| 3 | **ATLANTIC POLEX.PT** | 07 May | Faial Island, Azores, Portugal | Portugal / EMSA | *EAS North Sea Current buster 4* |
| 4 | **BARRACUDA 25** | 08 May | Pozallo, Sicyly, Italy | Italy / EMSA | *Adelia* |
| 5 | **HANKO** | 04 Jun | Hanko, Finland | Finland / EMSA | *Vingaren* |
| 6 | **PUHAS MERI** | 03 June | Muuga, Estonia | Estonia / EMSA | *Vingaren* |
| 7 | **HEREMA** | 05 Jun | Kavala, Greece | Greece / EMSA | *Aktea II EAS Black Sea / Working boat* |
| 8 | **POLEX BE 25** | 18 Jun | Ostend, Belgium | Belgium / France / EMSA | *Interballast III* |
| 9 | **BREEZE 25** | 18 Jul | Varna, Bulgaria | Bulgaria / EMSA | *Amalthia / EAS Black Sea* |
| 10 | **BALEX DELTA 25** | 26-27 Aug | Swinoujscie, Poland | Poland / HELCOM Countries / EMSA | *Norden* |
| 11 | **BC SEA 25** | 16 Sept | Tekirdag, Turkey | BC Sea Countries / Turkey / EMSA | *Aktea II EAS Black Sea* |
| 12 | **National familiarisation EAS** | | | Finland / Estonia / EMSA | |
| 13 | **POLEX DUBROVNIK 25** | 02 Oct | Dubrovnik, Croatia | Croatia / Italy / Slovenia / EMSA | *Kijac* |
| 14 | **NEMESIS 25** | 05 Nov | Cyprus | Cyprus / EMSA | *Alexandria* |

Figure 5. *Interballast III and Zeetijger* conducting STS operation during Polex Belgium 25 Exercise.

## 3.2 Notification exercises

Notification exercises are generally conducted alongside operational exercises, although stand-alone notification exercises are also organised when needed. Their purpose is to test and implement the agreed procedures and communication channels for reporting incidents, as well as for requesting and providing assistance. These exercises are typically initiated by the Member States.

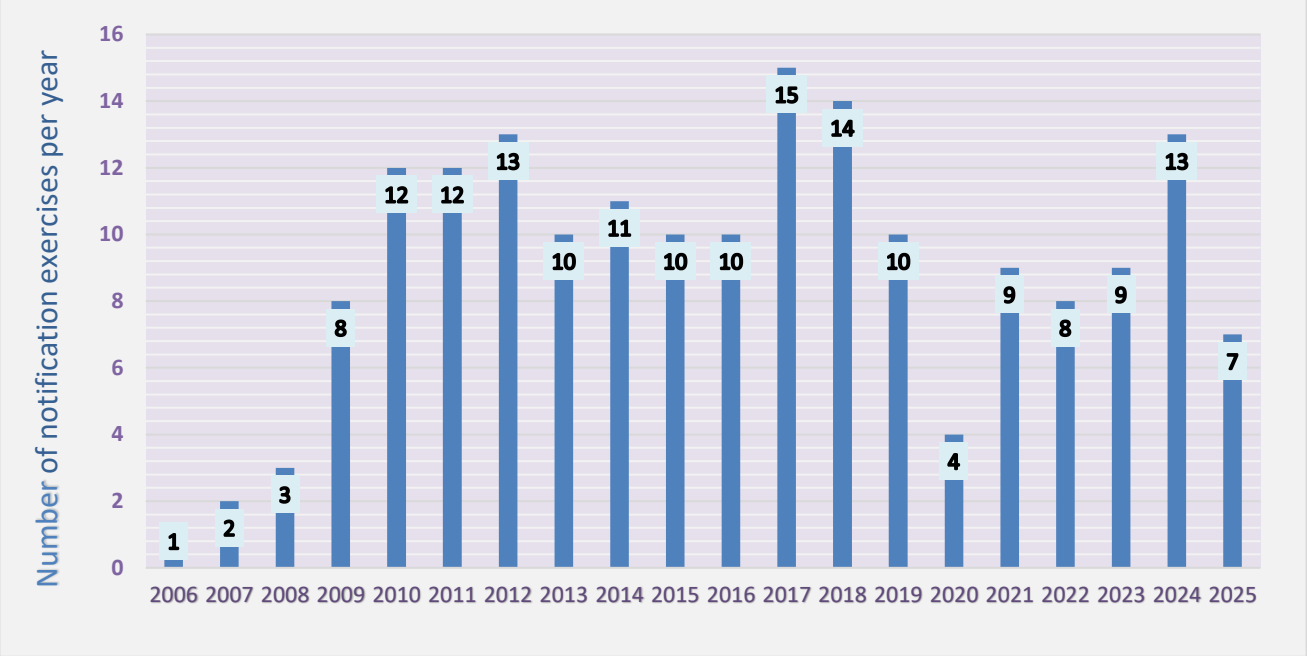
Notification exercises involve EMSA, one or more Requesting Parties, EMSA's contractor(s), and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), operated by Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). Notification exercises are a unique opportunity for Member States operators to familiarise themselves with the procedures to request assistance through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), and also in the use of EMSA contracts and forms.

The main performance indicator is the time required for the Incident Response Contract (Vessel – IRC-V or Equipment Assistance Service – IRC-E) to be signed by both the EMSA contractor and the Requesting Party. In 2025, the Agency participated in 7 notification exercises, involving eight activations of vessels and two of EAS arrangements.

Time measurement begins when EMSA receives the formal request for assistance. Considering variables such as the time of day, day of the week, contractor location, and other operational factors, six hours is considered an acceptable target for completing the mobilisation process, including signature of the Incident Response Contract (IRC). During the exercise, EMSA provides any necessary support to the Member State to facilitate the completion and signing of the IRC.

The chart below illustrates the annual count of notification exercises conducted from 2006 to 2025.

Chart 3. Notification exercises 2006-2025




Of the seven notification exercises conducted in 2025, four completed the full procedure for mobilising EMSA vessels and/or EAS resources. In all cases, EMSA contractors responded immediately and in accordance with established standards. However, in three exercises, the Member States terminated the procedure before the IRC Form was signed.

It is important to stress that mobilisation of EMSA resources can only take place once the Incident Response Contract and its annex (the IRC Form) have been signed. The contract sets out the respective obligations of the Requesting Party and the Contractor. Exercises provide a valuable opportunity to familiarise response authorities with all contractual provisions.

The IRC Form specifies the requested vessel configuration or the type of equipment required under the EAS. Experience shows that completing this form can be challenging; therefore, sufficient time should be allocated during exercises to go through the entire process carefully. It should also be reiterated that, in the case of exercises, signing the IRC does not trigger any payment obligation for the Requesting Party.

In previous years, the number of notification exercises was significantly higher. Conducting only seven exercises in 2025 doesn't guarantee that operators in the Emergency Centres are acquainted with both CECIS and EMSA mobilisation procedures, especially when taking into account the relatively high rate of change in personnel in these centres. Increased participation in notification exercises would enhance overall preparedness for marine pollution response.

The 2025 exercises also highlighted the need in some Member States for additional CECIS training for personnel responsible for requesting assistance from other Member States and EMSA in pollution response situations. Summary of results of the notification exercises carried out in 2025 is described in the table below.

Table 7.Outcome of the Notification exercises 2025.

| No. | Name / date / place | Participating parties | Assistance Request party / time | EMSA assistance offer type / time | Acceptance of EMSA assistance offer / time | EMSA action | Signature time IRC-E /time | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **ATLANTC POLEX.PT 2025 06/05/2025 Azores** | Portugal, EMSA | Portugal 16:37 | EAS North Sea equipment 17:30 | Current Buster 4 17:49 | Notice of Pollution Response sent to EAS 17:54 | None | Exercise discontinued after acceptance of EMSA offer and provision of EMSA's clarifications on the price and delivery conditions. |
| 2 | **BARRACUDA 2025 07/05/2025 Pozzallo** | Italy, EMSA | Italy 14:08 | OPR vessel ADELIA 15:30 | OPR vessel ADELIA 15:34 | Notice of Pollution Response sent to the vessel contractor 15:50 | IRC-V 19:21 | Successful exercise with IRC -V signed within the reasonable time. MS and EMSA contractors exercised full procedure of EMSA assistance mobilisation. |
| 3 | **POLEX Belgium 2025 17/06/2025 Ostend** | Belgium, France, EMSA | Belgium 09:43 | OPR Vessels VN Partisan with RPAS and Interballast III with RPAS 13:38 | OPR Vessels VN Partisan with RPAS and Interballast III with RPAS 14:16 | none | None | Exercise terminated 2 minutes after the acceptance of EMSA assistance offer. |
| 4 | **Breeze 25 14/07/2025 Varna** | Bulgaria, EMSA | Bulgaria 08:22 | OPR vessel AMALTHIA with RPAS 09:14 and Ro-trawl 1500 from EAS Adriatic 10:19 | OPR vessel AMALTHIA with RPAS and Ro-trawl 1500 from EAS Adriatic 10:20 | Notice of Pollution Response sent to the vessel contractor and EAS 11:47 | IRC-E 14:23 IRC-V 14:49 | Successful exercise with both IRC -V and IRC-E signed. |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | **BROWN WEASEL 22/09/2025 Finland** | Estonia, Finland, EMSA | Finland 10:07 | Intermediate storage vessel VINGAREN and EAS Northern Baltic Equipment 12:06 | Intermediate storage vessel VINGAREN 14:44 | Notice of Pollution Response sent to the vessel contractor 14:50 | None | The exercise was not continued after acceptance of ssistance offer. IRC-V was not signed. |
| 6 | **POLEX 25 01/10/2025 Dubrovnik** | Croatia, EMSA | Croatia 14:21 | OPR vessel KIJAC with RPAS, 16:30 | OPR vessel KIJAC with RPAS, 17:21 | Notice of Pollution Response sent to the vessel contractor 17:25 | IRC-V 18:21 | Successful exercise with IRC -V signed within the reasonable time. MS and EMSA contractors exercised full procedure of EMSA assistance mobilisation. |
| 7 | **Nemesis 2025 29/10/2025 Cyprus** | Cyprus, REMPEC, EMSA | Cyprus 10:20 | OPR vessel Alexandria with RPAS 10:57 | OPR vessel Alexandria with RPAS 11:41 | Notice of Pollution Response sent to the vessel contractor 11:46 | IRC-V 12:08 | Successful exercise with IRC -V signed within 2 hours' time. MS and EMSA contractors exercised full procedure of EMSA assistance mobilisation. |

# 4. MAR-ICE Activations

The MARitime Intervention for Chemical Emergencies (MAR-ICE) Network of chemical experts was established in October 2008, through a 3-party Cooperation Agreement between EMSA, CEFIC (European Chemical Industry Council) and CEDRE (Centre for Documentation, Research and Experimentation on accidental water pollution). The MAR-ICE service became fully operational in January 2009 and has since been activated 75 times. The current service runs through to end of 2027.

Countries requesting the service can activate the MAR-ICE Network for real incidents, as well as for drills and exercises by contacting the MAR-ICE Contact Point and sending the MAR-ICE Activation Form, as per the activation procedures and contact numbers known to the relevant national authorities dealing with pollution response at-sea.

The MAR-ICE Network offers a 24/7 service to Member States (EU and Coastal EFTA) providing, upon request, rapid access to specialised information and expert advice on chemicals involved in marine spills. This expert support is available both remotely via phone and email (MAR-ICE service Level-1) and on-site at the command centre of the requesting country (MAR-ICE service Level-2). The information and support provided by the MAR-ICE Contact Point is based on product specific characteristics and on advice from chemical industry experts.

Other dedicated tools developed by EMSA for chemical spill support, complement the MAR-ICE service, such as the 301 MARitime Chemical Information Sheets (MAR-CIS) datasheets and the BEhaviour of CHEMicals (BE-CHEM) tool outputs. When these are available for the substances involved in the specific incident or exercise scenario, they are also provided to the requesting country through the MAR-ICE service.

In 2025, the MAR-ICE Network was activated twice, as presented in the Table below: once for a real incident, and once for an exercise.

Table 8. Overview of MAR-ICE service activations in 2025.

| MAR-ICE SERVICE ACTIVATIONS 2025 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No.** | **Date** | **Country** | **Incident / Scenario / Products involved** | **Assistance provided** |
| **1** | **07/03/2025** | **Norway (NCA)**<br>**Incident** | The **incident** involved a vessel being towed to shore following an engine failure, with **fertiliser** as cargo on board.<br>A request was made for information on how the product would react in case of fire on board (there was no fire or cargo spillage during this request) | **Activation of MAR-ICE Level 1**<br>The MAR-ICE service provided relevant product-specific documentation, information and advice regarding the product. |
| **2** | **10/02/2025** | **Spain (SASEMAR)**<br>**Exercise** | The **exercise scenario** involved fire on board a vessel (no spillage of product at sea, only on the deck of the ship)<br>**Products involved**: Ethyl Alcohol, Sulfuric Acid, Butane (gas) and Hydrogen Peroxide.<br>**Request covered** product specific information. | **Activation of MAR-ICE Level 1**<br>The MAR-ICE service provided the following product-specific documentation and information regarding the products involved:<br>• MAR-CIS datasheets<br>• ERICards<br>• Cedre chemical guide<br>Fire-relevant information and information about the products' behaviour and impacts was provided. |

During the activations, comments regarding the Activation Form were noted. The requested information was provided within the established timelines of the service and the user feedback received was overall positive, with the information provided considered very useful.

There were no requests by Member States in 2025 for national MAR-ICE familiarisation sessions. These short online sessions aim to raise awareness on the service and present to a wider national audience the service's scope, activation procedures and expected outputs. These sessions are available upon request and free of charge to relevant national administrations.

# 5. Key Conclusions and Insights

- **Efficiency of EMSA's Pollution Response services**

The pollution response activities carried out in 2025 under the OPR Vessel Network, EAS, and MAR-ICE confirmed that European Maritime Safety Agency services are fully operational and performing well. They meet EMSA's own standards and the needs of Member States, showing a strong level of readiness to respond effectively to marine pollution incidents.

- **Mobilisation of EMSA response resources - Notification Procedures**

In previous years, a higher number of notification exercises were carried out. In comparison, only seven exercises were conducted in 2025, and just four of them completed the full mobilisation process. This level of activity is low considering the number of European coastal states and operational exercises carried out. Increasing participation in notification exercises would significantly strengthen overall readiness for responding to marine pollution incidents. The exercises conducted in 2025 also showed that some Member States need further training on CECIS, particularly for staff responsible for requesting assistance from other Member States and from EMSA during pollution response operations. Strengthening these skills would help ensure faster and more effective mobilisation of response resources when needed.

- **Enhancing Regional Operational Cooperation**

As part of the cooperation framework between EMSA, EFCA and Frontex, Multipurpose Maritime Operations (MMOs) are conducted in specific areas of European waters. These operations require strengthened inter-agency collaboration to support national authorities in carrying out coast guard functions at the national, EU, and, where appropriate, international levels. In 2025, EMSA's pollution response services played a key role in these activities, providing (among others) response resources for the Polex 25 exercise in Belgium.

- **Equipment De-classification - the Need for Modernization**

Although the EMSA Vessel Network has been operational since 2006, some of the equipment purchased in the early years is now showing clear signs of wear, ageing, and obsolescence, particularly IT-related systems. EMSA is therefore carrying out systematic assessments of equipment condition and, subject to available budget, plans to speed up the replacement of outdated assets. To manage obsolete equipment, the Agency has established a policy that allows for its disposal. Based on the results of the condition assessments, outdated equipment may be donated, sold, or scrapped, as appropriate. Continued modernisation of equipment is essential to address new types of oil pollution, support the expansion of response services, and improve coordination mechanisms. These efforts are key to maintaining a strong and effective marine pollution response framework in the future and to ensuring that EMSA can fully fulfil its mandate.

- **Providing EMSA Pollution Response assets for Exercises and Training**

EMSA vessels and EAS systems take part in operational exercises every year, with all related costs covered by EMSA. These resources are provided to Member States free of charge, including the costs of vessels and equipment. However, during exercises, Member States often do not make full use of the capabilities of EMSA vessels. Activities are frequently limited to basic deployments, such as sweeping arms only. To improve the training value of these exercises, Member States are encouraged to develop more advanced and realistic scenarios that make use of the full range of available capabilities. This includes not only the equipment available on board the EMSA vessels (booms, skimmers, oil slick detection systems, remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), and dispersant spraying systems) but also the equipment available in the EAS. At the same time, cost efficiency must be considered. Member States should plan exercises carefully and optimise the use of EMSA resources to ensure they are deployed in the most effective and cost-efficient way, while maximising operational learning and preparedness.

- **Mobilisation of EAS equipment for the operational exercises**

EMSA offers support to Member States for conducting exercises using stand-alone equipment from the Equipment Assistance Service. The EAS stockpiles are well equipped with a wide range of assets, including equipment suitable for deployment from ships of opportunity and for operations in shallow waters. Despite the opportunity to train with this diverse equipment — including working boats — Member States often prefer to use EMSA's contracted OPR vessels during exercises. In most cases, these vessels are used in a relatively simple configuration, typically employing sweeping arms for oil recovery. However, in a real pollution response scenario, EAS equipment is expected to play a role that is just as important as that of OPR vessels operating in open sea conditions. For this reason, incorporating EAS equipment into operational exercises would significantly strengthen Member States' pollution response capabilities and preparedness.

- **HNS Response Services**

EMSA actively promotes the MAR-ICE service through technical meetings, workshops, and expert forums at both European and international levels. In addition, the Agency offers tailored national familiarisation sessions upon request, aimed at providing Member State personnel with a comprehensive understanding of MAR-ICE activation procedures, operational scope, and available service offerings. These sessions are designed to strengthen preparedness, clarify communication channels, and ensure that all relevant stakeholders are equipped to activate and use MAR-ICE effectively in real-life maritime incidents involving hazardous and noxious substances. Despite these continued awareness-raising and training efforts, the level of utilisation of MAR-ICE services by Member States remains unsatisfactory. The frequency of activation does not fully reflect the service's operational potential, nor does it correspond to the scale of maritime activities and associated risks within European waters.

- **Future proofing PRS “toolbox”**

The Single Programming Document 2025-2027, under Section 1.2 Operational PRS, addressed under output No.5 the need to, “Hold discussions on possible actions to make the PRS “toolbox” future proof, in the light of new risks and relevant traffic patterns”.

To address this activity effectively, a Road Map was implemented in 2025, with two main phases:

- A stakeholder consultation with the members of the EMSA Administrative Board and experts from the Member States’ competent authorities.
- Drafting a Report incorporating the feedback and perspectives of stakeholders received during the consultation process and highlighting the possible way forward, with due regard to the Agency’s mandate and available resources..

The Report put forward possible concrete scenarios and actions to make EMSA’s Operational PRS future-proof in the coming years, in view of emerging risk scenarios, including geopolitical developments affecting maritime traffic, and incidents involving alternative fuels. From 2026 onwards, EMSA, in line with Regulation (EU) 2025/2434, will implement proposed actions to strengthen its operational pollution response capacities. This will support the upgrade of the PRS “toolbox” and enable more informed, risk-based deployment of EMSA pollution response assets.

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