

PORTUGUESE AND GREEK PRIME MINISTERS VISIT EMSA

Prime Minister António Costa of Portugal and Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis of Greece visited EMSA in Lisbon on 11 January, hosted by the Agency's Executive Director, Maja Markovčić Kostelac. During their visit, the two Prime Ministers received an overview of EMSA's activities, including the Agency's contribution to the European green agenda for maritime transport, its support to the EU's maritime economy, and the advanced monitoring and surveillance systems developed to assist member states and maritime bodies. They toured EMSA's Maritime Support Services operational centre, which receives approx. 30 million messages each day from ships in EU coastal waters, and carries out round-the-clock surveillance to assist member states to detect and respond to marine accidents and possible oil spills. The Executive Director also briefed the two Prime Ministers on EMSA's fleet of pollution response vessels, which are based in ports around the EU, including in Piraeus (Greece) and Sines (Portugal).



JUST PUBLISHED: ANNUAL OVERVIEW OF MARINE CASUALTIES AND INCIDENTS 2020

EMSA has published the Annual Overview of Marine Casualties and Incidents, presenting statistical data on marine casualties and incidents for the year 2019 as well as for the 2014-2019 period. The annual overview is one of the most downloaded publications produced by EMSA, showing the interest of the maritime sector and the public in general. The statistics presented were produced from data uploaded to the European Marine Casualty Information Platform by the marine accident investigation bodies of the EU member states. General figures show: 3062 occurrences reported in 2019 – a decrease of 200 on 2018; the total number of occurrences recorded in the EMCIP database over this period stands at 19500, representing an average of 3236 marine casualties or incidents per year over the period covered; and, a total of 833 investigations launched during the 2014-2019 period, for which 2200 measures or safety recommendations have been issued so far.



ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BODIES TAKE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK ONLINE

EMSA held the annual meeting of the Permanent Cooperation Framework (PCF) for Accident Investigation virtually for the first time in December. Experts from 24 EU/EEA member states and the European Commission attended the online meeting. On the agenda were several topics related to technical cooperation, safety issues identified during investigation and the ongoing revision of Directive 2009/18/EC. The delegates discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the working process and shared good practices to cope with the risks associated with the pandemic, mainly to gather evidence from witnesses and to deploy investigators on scene. The group reached an important milestone, namely to improve the way human and organisational factors are captured in safety investigations, agreeing to embrace a systemic approach. The intervention of an expert in human factors from Lund University facilitated the discussion. For the first time, the PCF discussed the possible operational support of the Agency for safety investigations and expressed interest in exploring the tools and services that EMSA can make available. The PCF validated the methodology for EMSA to provide technical observations on final reports for improving their quality. The group took essential decisions on the users' management of the European Marine Casualty Information Platform (EMCIP) and the reporting workflow in the system. The new features that will be implemented in the platform were discussed and there was significant interest in the business intelligence tools currently available on the platform. The delegates agreed to streamline data sharing with the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM). Finally, the elections of the PCF chairperson and deputy took place via a dedicated web-based platform that ensured the election integrity in compliance with the PCF rules of procedure.

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEES TAKE STOCK OF 2020 ACTIVITIES AND PLAN YEAR AHEAD

At the end of 2020, the Steering Committee meetings of two projects implemented by EMSA, namely SAFEMED IV and Black & Caspian Sea, were held online, due to the current limitations linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both projects fall within the domain of the European Neighbourhood Policy of the EU and are funded by the European Commission. A high rate of attendance from the beneficiary countries was noted for both meetings, together with participants from different services of the European Commission, the Black Sea (BSMOU) and the Mediterranean (MEDMOU) Memoranda on Port State Control and the Black Sea Commission. The paramount importance of the projects to ensure and foster a high level of cooperation and coordination between the project's beneficiary countries, EMSA and all other entities involved in the concerned sea basins was stressed by all participants. The meetings offered the opportunity to take stock of the activities performed in 2020 and to approve the action plans of the two projects until their completion date of 31 December 2021.

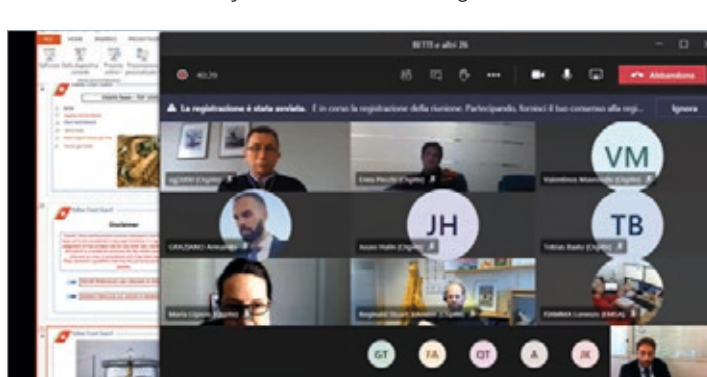
EMSA TO HOLD CISE WORKSHOP WITH FINNISH BORDER GUARD FOR BALTIC AREA

On 28 April, EMSA, in collaboration with the Finnish Border Guard, will hold a Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) workshop for authorities in the Baltic Sea region (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden). The meeting is one of a series organised by EMSA and DG MARE to further discuss the implementation of CISE, and to strengthen its development in specific countries and regions. CISE is an EU initiative which aims to make European and EU/EEA member states surveillance systems interoperable to give all relevant authorities from different sectors access to the classified and unclassified information they need to conduct missions at sea. Two test campaigns were held in 2020 with the dual aim of running checks on the connectivity and operability of the network, as well as to increase the number of countries involved and services offered. Training is a key part of the service and, on 24-25 November, 20 participants from eight different countries and two agencies attended a two-day remote course. The trainers from EMSA and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre re-created a test version of the CISE environment with 10 test nodes so participants could carry out hands-on exercises during the session.



COURSE ON "INSPECTION PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES FOR FLAG STATE INSPECTORS" GOES ONLINE

EMSA has delivered a ten-week online course for the first time on "Inspection Principles and Techniques for Flag State Inspectors" as part of the EMSA Academy. Participants from 15 countries spent on average 1.5 hours per day on independent learning activities, with an additional two hours per week for online meetings. Through this innovative and first-of-its-kind course, the participants had the opportunity to increase their knowledge, competence and skill on the inspection principles and techniques for FSI, thereby helping their daily work. Feedback from the participants confirmed that the course was well structured, that the learning material was easy to comprehend, that lecturers were capable of conveying their knowledge and experience efficiently and, most importantly, that the online course was considered of even higher added value than the traditional five-day in-classroom training.



EMSA'S RPAS SERVICES IN ACTION - ENDING THE YEAR ON A HIGH NOTE

EMSA's Remotely Piloted Aircraft System services closed the year on a high note with several deployments coming to a successful conclusion. The focus was broad covering general maritime surveillance, emissions monitoring, fisheries control and a new RPAS service for port monitoring and pollution response. Last year saw the first regional deployment requested by the Finnish Border Guard in cooperation with Estonian and Swedish authorities in the Baltic Sea. A Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft was deployed at six different locations, including onboard the OPV Turva vessel. The same VTOL aircraft - equipped with a small 'sniffer' - was used in France by the Maritime Affairs Department to measure sulphur emissions from vessels crossing the southern part of the Channel. Also in France, a general maritime surveillance operation was carried out over the Mediterranean Sea with a fixed wing aircraft at the request of the Marine Nationale (Navy) and Douanes (Customs). Lightweight quadcopters were used for a wide range of tasks, including a first time deployment for port monitoring in Antwerp, multipurpose coast guard surveillance at the request of Romania's Border Police in the Black Sea, and fisheries control to support EFCA's activities from on board the Lundy Sentinel control vessel. 2021 started off strong with EMSA working on the next generation of the Data Centre, to be known as the SurvSeaNet. New contracts are also being prepared to increase capacity for emissions monitoring with a regional or sea basin approach as well as long range RPAS services.



Spectacular shot from Nordic Unmanned of the VTOL aircraft used for emissions monitoring

CONTRACTS SECURE ROBUST STAND-BY POLLUTION RESPONSE IN WATERS AROUND EUROPE

Three new contracts for stand-by oil spill response vessels and one new contract for an Equipment Assistance Service were successfully concluded by EMSA in December 2020. The three public procurement procedures for stand-by oil spill recovery vessels cover: the Central Mediterranean Sea - M/T SB Borea, based in Napoli (Italy), capacity 3,200 m³, contractor Sarda Bunkers; the Southern Atlantic coast - M/T Bahia Tres, based in Sines (Portugal), capacity 7,414 m³, contractor Murelloil; and, the West Mediterranean Sea - M/T Brezzamare, based in Genoa (Italy), capacity 2,600 m³, contractor Ciane/Ottavio Novella. After completing the preparation phase, these new arrangements will enter into stand-by service by the end of 2021. In addition, the Agency concluded the tender for the Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) in Southern Europe. The service will be provided by Ottavio Novella and the equipment stockpile will be based in Ravenna (Italy). It will become operational by mid-2021.



EMSA offers a whole range of pollution response options to coastal states (situation as at end of 2020)

FINNISH AUTHORITIES ATTEND ONLINE INFO SESSION ON EMSA'S MAR-ICE SERVICE FOR CHEMICAL EMERGENCIES

Following a request by the Finnish authorities, EMSA together with the MAR-ICE Contact Point, Cedre provided an online information session on 9 December to 16 Finnish experts on the activation procedures of its MAR-ICE service for chemical emergencies. The participants gained a better understanding of how to activate the service, what type of assistance it can provide and had the opportunity to practice activating MAR-ICE during the session on the basis of a test scenario. Noting that this was the first time such an event was organised, the Agency could explore providing member states with short MAR-ICE information sessions upon request more frequently in the future.

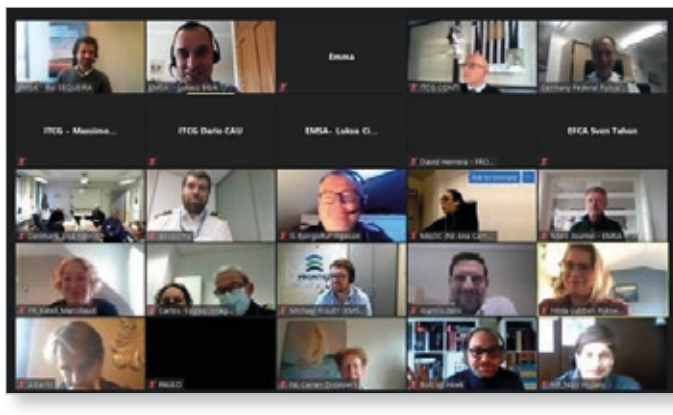
SEAMLESS SAT-AIS DATA SERVICES WITHIN REACH

EMSA has signed a Framework Contract with Spire Global Luxembourg for the provision of a Sat-AIS data service with a view to ensure seamless SAT-AIS data services. The SAT-AIS data feed will complement the present SAT-AIS data stream and will serve as a back-up solution. EMSA is now providing its users with a global real-time SAT-AIS data service consisting of more than 30 million space-based detected AIS messages per day using high performance satellites.



SIXTH WORKSHOP ON AUTOMATED BEHAVIOUR MONITORING TOOLS

Over 40 experts and active users from EU Member States and EU bodies representing various communities (safety, security, fisheries control) participated in the sixth Automated Behaviour Monitoring and Advanced Analytics workshop on 14 December, via videoconference. During the event, they provided valuable feedback on the usage of ABMs and their priorities for the future developments, as well as the ABM/IMS training needs. ABM supports various maritime authorities by automatically detecting and alerting anomalous or specific ship behaviours. The use of new technologies (Artificial Intelligence) may further enhance these IMS services and reduce workload for the surveillance operators, hence the related topics on Machine Learning (ML) scenarios and data sets were also discussed.



2021 SEES NEW LOOK AND FEEL FOR EMSA'S WEBSITE

EMSA has redesigned its website both to better reflect the Agency's strategic priorities as well as to improve the user experience. Now structured around the areas of sustainability, safety & security, digitalisation, simplification, surveillance and technical assistance, the new website offers more room for rich media content, improved navigation, fully adaptive mobile use and, for the first time, multilingual content. The new development is also expected to give greater visibility to EMSA's latest activities as well as to its presence on social networks.

emsa.europa.eu

PUBLICATIONS: Single Programming Document 2021-2023 (20/1/2021). See website for more.

VACANCIES: Project Officer for Visits and Inspections (SNE) (1/3/2021).

PROCUREMENT: Maintenance services for EMSA and EMCDDA (14/2/2021); Provision of publications and subscriptions (29/1/2021). See website for more.