



BOARD SAYS “YES” TO OIL POLLUTION RESPONSE.

– The Administrative Board, which met in Lisbon on 21/22nd October for its 9th Meeting, has decided to adopt the European Maritime Safety Agency’s Action Plan for Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response. This plan foresees the chartering of anti-pollution ships that will be used as a “top-up” for coastal States. In the first step, industry will be invited to respond to a call for expressions of interest. The responses will enable the Administrative Board to discuss the final tendering stage for vessels based on the best available input. The vessels will be used at the request of Member States and under their responsibility. They will be stationed in four geographical sectors: the Baltic Sea, the Western approaches to the English Channel, the Atlantic coast and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The budget, proposed by the Commission, approved by the European Parliament, but still needing an approval by the Council, amounts to 17,800,000 euros for 2005. It should be noted that Italy did not accept the plan, while Germany accepted it, in general, but reserved its position on the financial implications.

WILLEM DE RUITER VISITS RUSSIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION.

– EMSA’s Executive Director participated in two maritime safety conferences which were organised “back to back” by the Mare Forum and the Russian Register between 5-7th October in Saint-Petersburg. There was a very broad range of industrial and government representation – from Russia, Europe, USA, Japan and others. Acting in tandem with the European Commission representatives, this offered an excellent opportunity to explore options for further optimisation of the safety and environmental implications associated with rapidly increasing Russian oil exports. This is an issue on which Mr Barrot expressed his concern when speaking in the European Parliament.

GOAL BASED STANDARDS.

– On 26th October, 46 experts from almost all Member States met in Brussels, together with experts from industry and IMO to discuss the matter of Goal Based Standards (GBS). GBS is a new approach to rule-making that is currently being developed at IMO. The approach has initially concentrated on hull construction and safety issues and has been used during the development of IACS common rules for tankers and bulk carriers where the goal was “ship structures that were more robust”. The approach also has the potential for use in other areas of shipping safety regulation. The Brussels meeting, hosted by EMSA, was a forum for information exchange and debate prior to MSC 79 in December. The quality and content of the papers that were presented were welcomed by the experts that attended.

SAFESEANET: HANDING OVER THE BATON.

– The technical responsibility for SafeSeaNet was transferred from DG TREN to EMSA on 20th October. SafeSeaNet is a computer network based EU ship reporting system. At its core is a distributed data base with information on such things as vessel traffic, dangerous cargoes, inspections, etc.

TRAINEESHIPS: MANY INFORMATION REQUESTS.

– Our mailbox often gets information requests from students in different fields of study and from all over the European Union. Our answer remains monotonously the same: please, be patient. The Agency is now recruiting experts and National Detached Experts for its core work. Therefore, although EMSA is delighted at the interest it arouses in young European minds, the recruitment of trainees will not be considered for some time.

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