

FOUNDING REGULATION REACHES TEN YEAR MILESTONE

Ten years ago on 27 June 2002, Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002 was adopted and published in the Official Journal, thereby laying the legal groundwork for the creation of the European Maritime Safety Agency. This nine-page document, signed



EMSA's first premises in Rue de Genève, Brussels

by EU Parliament and Council presidents of the time Pat Cox and Miguel Arias Cañete, spoke of the need to enhance safety and prevent pollution in maritime transport. The creation of an agency with this capability was strongly backed by those who suffered from the Erika oil spill and by Commission Vice-President in charge of energy and transport, Loyola de Palacio. The legal provisions of what was known as the Erika II package also included Directive 2002/59/EC on vessel traffic monitoring. The

Administrative Board which would oversee the work of the Agency met together for the first time on 4 December 2002 to put in place rules of procedure - the first among many building blocks leading to EMSA as we know it today.

POLLUTION RESPONSE - STAYING PREPARED

A ro-ro vessel runs into severe difficulty after colliding with another ship off the French coast of Saint Nazaire. This was the scenario played out in the two-day **Orsec 2012** exercise. The aim was to ensure the measures in place - search and rescue, assistance for ships in distress, maritime pollution prevention - were all up to the task. EMSA's Cork-based oil spill response



Five countries put their readiness to the test as part of Bonnex 2012

vessel *Mersey Fisher* was called in to work alongside the French and Spanish vessels and planes involved in the exercise. This was one of three exercises involving **EMSA contracted vessels** held in May and June of this year.

The **Xavega 2012** exercise was organised by the Portuguese National Maritime Authority on 9 May off Sesimbra. EMSA participated in the at-sea

'oil recovery operations' with the *Bahia Tres*, based in Sines, together with other oil pollution response vessels from the Portuguese Navy. The **Bonnex 2012** exercise was conducted on 31 May in waters around the Helgoland island (Germany). The participating EMSA vessel was *Sara* contracted from Aegean Bunkers at Sea. Thirteen other vessels took part in this event from five countries (Germany, France, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden). All three exercises fulfilled the planned objectives.

BLUE BELT TO MOVE TO NEXT STAGE, SAYS KALLAS

Cutting red tape for ships in EU waters was the topic of Vice-President and Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas's speech at the Transport Council on 7 June. "We have to



work towards creating a situation where vessels and cargo, while meeting the required standards for safety, security and customs, can move between EU ports with minimum administrative controls," he said. The **Blue Belt pilot project** demonstrated how information on

vessel voyages, such as that provided by SafeSeaNet, could help national customs administrations. The results of the project, published in May 2012, showed that the information could be used as a basis for risk assessment and make it easier for customs authorities to decide which procedures to apply. Mr Kallas thanked EMSA for managing the project efficiently as well as the 430 customs authorities which took part in the project. "The time has now come to move to the next stage" he concluded.

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION

As the Maritime Labour Convention nears ratification, a number of **training sessions** are being held by EMSA to walk officials through the various national provisions that will have to be



adopted. The two-day session at EMSA on 12-13 June had participants from 24 EU countries, Iceland and Norway. The training kicked off with an overview of EU policy on the working and living conditions of seafarers,

with a special focus on Directive 2009/13/EC. Participants also had the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other maritime administrations. Presentations were given on Norway's experience of implementing the convention and relevant EU legislation, and on the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance as prepared by the UK maritime administration.

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