European Maritime Safety Agency

Drills & Exercises Annual Report 2022

Sustainability and Technical Assistance

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EMSA

Summary

The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), following the mandate given in Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council (as amended), operates, in European waters, a range of Pollution Response Services (PRS) consisting of a Network of stand-by oil spill response vessels with onboard Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) arrangements, including specialised stand-alone equipment, dispersant stockpiles as well as the MAR-ICE network of chemical experts, supporting Member States in case of marine incidents involving chemicals.

The oil PRS are available at the request of a coastal State[1], a Responsible Party[2], and/or the European Commission for responding to oil spills at sea caused by ships as well as by oil and gas installations.

At the end of 2022, 16 fully equipped oil spill response vessels, of which 12 with remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) capability, eight dispersant stockpiles and five EAS arrangements were available for mobilisation.

To achieve the level of performance for pollution response required by the Agency, the contracted response arrangements have to perform regular trainings, drills, Equipment Condition Tests (ECTs) and exercises.

The evaluation of the contractors' performance during vessel drills, ECTs and exercises by the Agency's staff in line with the "Guidelines on Conducting Drills / ECTs and Exercises for the EMSA Contracted Vessels / EAS arrangements" is an effective tool to ensure that the adequate level of preparedness of the pollution response services is constantly maintained.

In the field of response to incidents from Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), EMSA is providing rapid access to expert advice through its MAR-ICE Network. This service offers rapid information transfer regarding chemical substances involved in marine pollution emergencies 24/7 to the EU/EFTA coastal Member States and EU Candidate Countries. In order to familiarise EU Member States with the service's activation procedures and to ensure high quality of this service, MAR-ICE exercises are performed each year.

Overall, the outcome of drills, ECTs, exercises and MAR-ICE activations carried out during 2022 demonstrated that the services were provided efficiently and in accordance with the EMSA services users expectations.

Table 1. Summary of drills, ETCs and exercises carried out in 2022

Vessel Acceptance Drills: Newly Contracted / Improvement projects	New EAS stockpile acceptance	Quarterly Drills / ECTs / Equipment training & familiarisation	Operational Exercises: Vessels / EAS	Notification Exercises: Vessels / EAS	MAR-ICE Exercises / Real cases of chemical pollution
1 / 6	1	65 / 56 / 4	9: 9 vessels (2 with RPAS) / 1 EAS	8: 8 vessels (7 with RPAS) / 5 EAS	7 / 2
Total number of events	157				

[1] EU Member States, EU Candidate States, Norway and Iceland as well as those third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the European Union.
[2] Responsible Party means the ship owner or oil and gas installation operator controlling the activity causing the marine pollution or the imminent threat of it, or their contractor.

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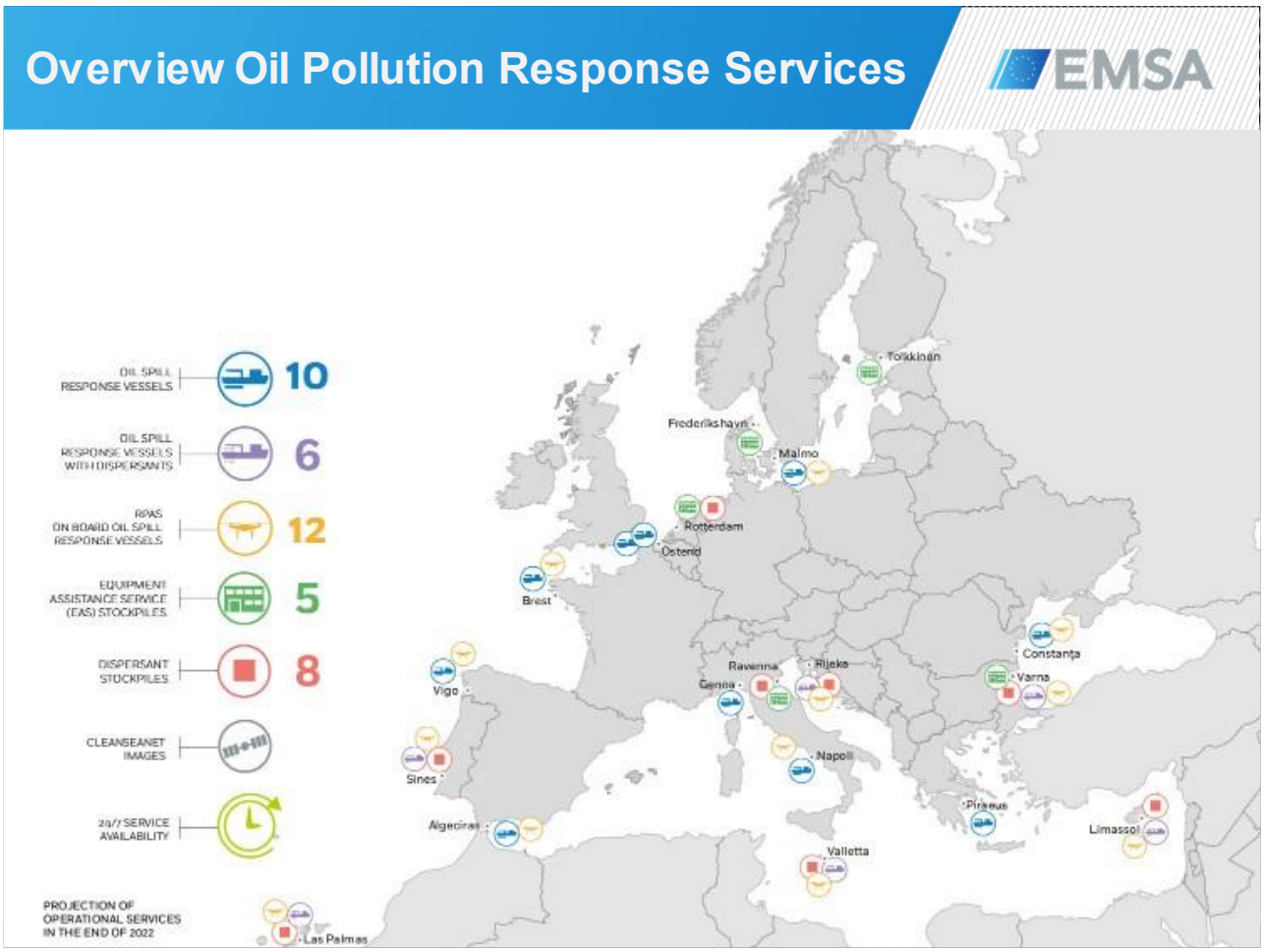
1. Introduction

1.1 EMSA's oil pollution response services (PRS) - Overview

Through its "toolbox" of PRS, EMSA offers a European tier of response resources in order to top-up the capacities of coastal States for protecting their marine environment from oil pollution caused by ships and oil and gas installations. The map below provides an overview of EMSA's oil PRS and their geographical distribution.

Map 1: Distribution of EMSA's contracted vessels and EAS arrangements at the end of 2022



1.2 Integration of EMSA services with MS pollution response mechanisms

The integration of EMSA's pollution response "toolbox" within MS response mechanisms requires a knowledge of EMSA's assets and capacities, activation procedures, contractual aspects and relevant costs so the response assets may be considered as a useful and cost-efficient capacity part of national contingency plans.

Moreover, in the case of the EAS, MS need to be acquainted to the use of the equipment systems since the service needs to be complemented with Vessels of opportunity (VOOs) and a level of training and skills of the personnel in charge of equipment deployment.

Therefore, in order to benefit from EMSA's pollution response "toolbox", a close and regular operational cooperation between EMSA services and MS operational staff is of paramount importance.

With the purpose to enhance the operational cooperation with MS, the Agency established a calendar of activities of the Pollution Response Services for the year 2022.

In addition, to improve communication EMSA-MS regarding operational activities and dissemination of information on EMSA's services, the Agency set-up of a dedicated Helpdesk-Contact Point for Q&A: PRS.OPSTeam@emsa.europa.eu .

The summary of the joint operational EMSA-MS activities conducted in 2022 are listed in the table below.

Table 2. Joint operational activities EMSA-MS 2022

Service	Activity	Where
Vessel Network	**Open days, seminars, participation in drills onboard EMSA vessel** - 6 MS expressed interest. - 2 MS participated in activities onboard.	16 Vessel locations
Vessel Network & EAS & MAR-ICE Service	**Notification/Table-top Exercises: 8** - 8 activations of Vessel Contractors, 5 of EAS Contractors - 7 activations of MAR-ICE service for HNS exercises	MS
Vessel Network & EAS	**Operational Exercises: 9** - 9 deployments of Vessels. - 1 deployment of EAS equipment.	MS
EAS	**Open days, seminars, equipment showcase during ECTs** - 1 MS visit.	5 EAS locations
	Hands-on sessions at EAS stockpile: - 20-22 September (Northern Europe, EAS Rotterdam). - 14-16 June (Southern Europe, EAS Ravenna). - 10 MS participated with 15 participants.	5 EAS locations
	Dedicated in-country familiarisation on the EAS equipment - 5 MS expressed interest. - 2 sessions took place (1 during exercise, 1 national training).	MS to support with logistics
MAR-ICE Service	**National MAR-ICE familiarisation sessions** - 8 MS expressed interest. - 2 sessions executed in 2022.	Online

1.3 Activities of the EMSA Network of pollution response vessels and EAS in 2022

At the end of 2022, 16 fully equipped oil spill response vessels and 5 EAS stockpiles were available for mobilisation in case of marine pollution.

The main milestones for the Vessel Network development in 2022 were:

- The entry into service of the new vessel arrangement contracted at the end of 2021 to replace the response capacity for the Aegean Sea. The tanker *Aktea II* based in Piraeus, Greece, replacing the tanker *Aktea* successfully completed the Preparatory Phase and entered operational service on 1 July 2022.

- Completion of the improvement of spill detection and monitoring capacity by equipping vessels *Adelia* (Malta), *Bahia Tres* (Sines, Portugal) and *SB Borea* (Naples, Italy) with remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS).
- Completion of replacement of RPAS with a new system on board *Galaxy Eco* (Varna, Bulgaria), *Mencey* (Las Palmas, Canary Islands) and *Norden* (Malmo, Sweden).
- Awarding of three Vessel Availability Contracts covering Atlantic Middle, Channel and North Sea and Black Sea North to replace the contracts expiring in 2023.

The main activities implemented in 2022 related to EAS were:

- Bringing into operational service the new EAS arrangement for the Black Sea, based in Varna (Bulgaria), contracted to the company Bon Marine at the end of 2021. The Acceptance of the new EAS Black Sea took place on 4-5 April 2022 and entered into operational service as from 6 April 2023.
- EMSA's response toolbox was enhanced in 2022 through delivery of near-shore equipment (work boats, 10m^3 oil storage barges and rigid fence coastal booms) to all EAS arrangements.
- Following the successful conclusion of a procurement procedure, award of a new contract to renew the EAS in the Northern Baltic Sea. The arrangement will become operational beginning of 2023.

Details regarding the service of the Vessel Network and EAS arrangements in 2022 can be found in the table below.

Table 3. Summary of the Oil Pollution Response services in 2022

Area	Contractor / Contract	Vessel(s) / Assets	Vessel type / storage capacity(m^3) / dispersant stock	Service 2022
1. Contracted vessels				
Southern Baltic	Stena Oil EMSA/NEG/1/2015 Lot 2	*Norden*	Oil Tanker / 2880	Whole year service
Channel and Southern North Sea	DC Industrial S.A. 2014/EMSA/NEG/1/2014 Lot 3.1	*Interballast 3*	Hopper Dredger / 1886	Whole year service
	DC Industrial S.A. EMSA/NEG/1/2014 Lot 3.2	*DC Vlaanderen 3000*	Hopper Dredger / 2744	Whole year service
Atlantic North	MOJO Maritime, France EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 2	*Mersey Fisher* *Corrib Fisher*	Product Tankers /4754 / 5028	Contract expired 12/06/2022
Atlantic Coast	Remolcadores Nossa Terra S.A. EMSA/NEG/1/2014 Lot 1	*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
Canary Islands and Madeira	Petrogas EMSA/NEG/1/2015 Lot 1	*Mencey*	Oil Tanker / 3500 / Dispersant 200 t.	Whole year service
Western Mediterranean Sea	Naviera Altube EMSA CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 2	*Monte Anaga*	Oil Tanker / 4096	Whole year service
	Ciane EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 3	*Brezzamare*	Oil Tanker / 3288	Whole year service

Central Mediterranean Sea	Sarda Bunkers EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 Lot 1	*SB Borea*	Oil tanker / 3558	Whole year service
	Petronav EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 3	*Adelia*	Oil Tanker / 7458 Dispersant 180 t.	Whole year service
Aegean Sea	Environmental Protection Engineering S.A. EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 3	*Aktea OSRV (Aegis I as a back-up vessel)*	Oil Tanker / 3000 Offshore Supply / 950	Contract expired on 31/03/2022
	Environmental Protection Engineering S.A. EMSA/CPNEG/2/2021 Lot 2	*Aktea II*	Oil Tanker / 4486	Entered into service on 01/06/2022
Adriatic Sea	Dinamarin Ltd EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 1	*Kijac*	Oil/Chemical Tanker / 1730 Dispersant 200 t.	Whole year service
Eastern Mediterranean Sea	Petronav EMSA/CPNEG/1/2018	*Alexandria*	Oil Tanker / 7458 / Dispersant 200 t.	Whole year service
Northern Black Sea	Petronav EMSA/NEG/1/2014 Lot 2	*Amalthia*	Oil Tanker / 5154	Whole year service
Southern Black Sea	COSMOS EMSA/CPNEG/6/2016 Lot 1	*Galaxy Eco*	Oil Tanker / 2969 Dispersant 200 t.	Whole year service
2. EAS				
Northern Baltic	Lamor Corporation AB EMSA/CPNEG/2/2018	25 stand-alone equipment sets	Contracted storage area: 812m^2 (Tolkkinen, Finland)	Whole year service
Baltic Sea	Stena EMSA/CPNEG/2/2019 Lot 1	24 stand-alone equipment sets	Contracted storage area: 1,000m^2 (Frederikshavn, Denmark)	Whole year service
North Sea	Ambipar EMSA/CPNEG/2/2019 Lot 2	29 stand-alone equipment sets Dispersant 205 t.	Contracted storage area: 900m^2 (Rotterdam, The Netherlands)	Whole year service
Southern Europe	Ottavio Novella EMSA/CPNEG/2/2020	34 stand-alone equipment sets Dispersant 200 t.	Contracted storage area: 1,000m^2 (Ravenna, Italy)	Whole year service
Black Sea	Bon Marine EMSA/CPNEG/3/2021	17 stand-alone equipment sets	Contracted storage area: 600m^2 (Varna, Bulgaria)	The new EAS entered into service on 06/04/2022

1.4 Purpose and types of drills and exercises

The vessel arrangements contracted by the Agency are equipped with state-of-the-art, oil containment recovery and spill detection equipment. In addition, some of the vessel arrangements have dispersant spraying capabilities with dispersant stock available. The pollution response equipment provided by the Agency through the EAS aims at achieving high effectiveness of the pollution response actions.

Once the technical requirements of each contract are satisfied, the most important factors determining success of the pollution response system are the skills of the vessel's crews in the operation of the equipment, the capability of the oil spill response coordinators to lead the response action and to integrate EMSA's response assets within the pollution response mechanisms of the Member States. For the EAS the critical factor lies

with the operational condition of the equipment. Therefore, regular training, drills, equipment condition tests (ECTs) and exercises are essential to achieving and maintaining the appropriate level of performance.

Each Vessel and EAS contract defines the types and number of drills, ECTs and exercises to be carried out by each associated service:

- The vessels perform two types of drills: (1) acceptance drills (also referred to as acceptance tests) which entail the acceptance of a new vessel into service or of a vessel/equipment improvement project and (2) regular quarterly oil pollution response drills; and two types of exercises: (1) notification exercises and (2) at-sea operational exercises;
- Regarding the EAS arrangements, a maximum number of ECTs per year for the initial services is fixed in the contract based on the number of equipment sets. Additional ECTs may be contracted by EMSA in case of additional equipment being stored in the EAS arrangements. ECTs aim at guaranteeing the full functionality of the equipment as well as ensuring that the technical support personnel are able to deploy and instruct Member State's operators on how to use the equipment. It has to be noted that technical support personnel do not operate the equipment during response operations. Regarding exercises, there are the same two types of exercises as for the vessels.

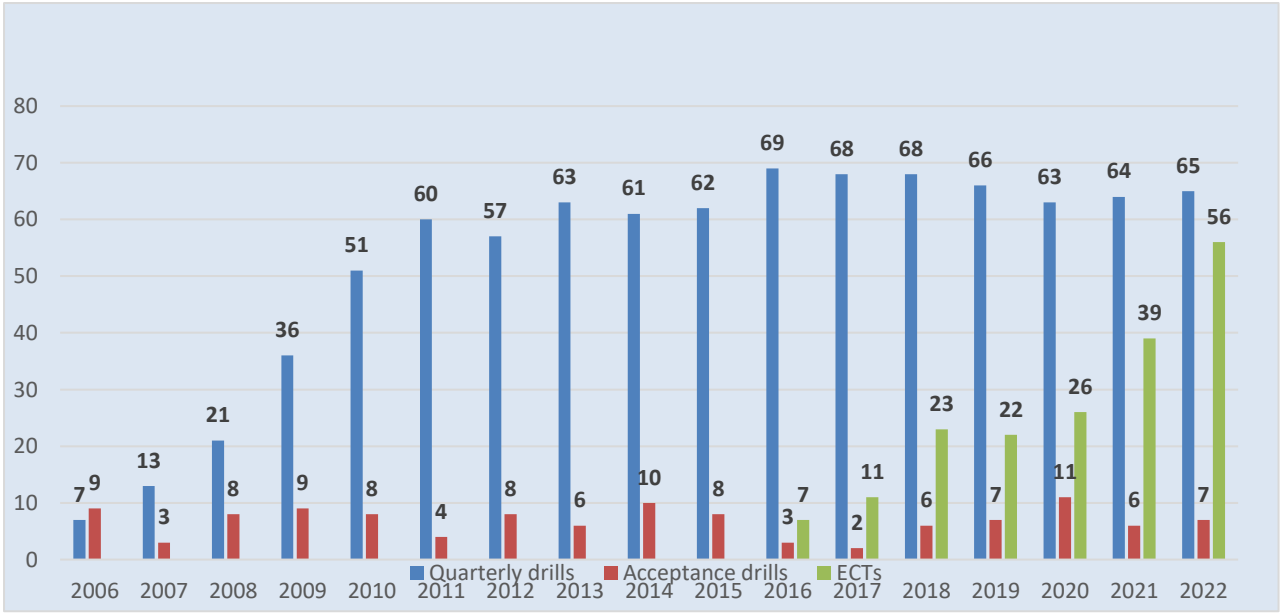
Detailed instructions on conducting drills ECTs and exercises, including their methods of evaluation are provided in the "Guidelines on Conducting Drills/ECTs and Exercises for the EMSA Contracted Vessels/EAS arrangements". These Guidelines constitute a component of all contracts. They are periodically reviewed and updated taking into account new services development, new types of equipment/services acquired, and lessons learned during drills and exercises.

2. Drills & ECTs performed in 2022

In 2022 a total of 65 quarterly drills and 7 acceptance drills related to vessels, and 56 EAS 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 2006-2022 is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1. Number of Vessel drills and EAS ECTs 2006 – 2022



2.1 Vessel drills

2.1.1 Acceptance drills

The acceptance drills are of particular importance as they are the major milestone for new vessels, new equipment as well as the overhauled equipment to enter into the standby phase of the pollution response service.

The table below summarise the vessel acceptance drills in 2022.

Table 4. Vessel / Equipment Improvements and Acceptance tests carried out in 2022.

No.	Contract	Contractor	Vessel/EAS	Home port	Subject	Acceptance Test Date	Results
1	2021/EMSA/CPNEG/2/2021 - Lot 2 Aegean Sea	EPE	*Aktea II*	Piraeus, Greece	Acceptance of the newly contracted vessel	28-29/06/2022	Acceptance effective from 01/07/2022
2	Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. 2019/EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 – Lot 3 Central Mediterranean Sea	Petronav	*Adelia*	Malta	Acceptance of the improvement project: accommodation for the lightweight RPAS services on board the vessel	09/08/2022	Acceptance effective from 15/08/2022
3	Amendment number 6 to Contract No. 2016/EMSA/CPNEG/17/2016 - Lot 1 Southern Black Sea	Cosmos Shipping	*Galaxy Eco*	Varna, Bulgaria	Acceptance of the improvement project: Replacement of the RPAS on board the vessel	30/09/2022	Acceptance effective from 01/10/2022
4	Amendment n umber 5 to Contract No. 2015/EMSA/NEG/1/2015 - Lot 1 Canary Island and Madeira	Petrogas	*Mencey*	Canary Island	Acceptance of the improvement project: Replacement of the RPAS on board the vessel	11/10/2022	Acceptance effective from 12/10/2022
5	Amendment number 5 to Contract No. 2015/EMSA/NEG/1/2015 - Lot 2 Southern Baltic Sea	Stena Oil	*Norden*	Malmo, Sweden	Acceptance of the improvement project: Replacement of the RPAS on board the vessel	20/10/2022	Acceptance effective from 21/10/2022
6	Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. 2020/EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020-Lot 1 Central Mediterranean Sea	Sarda Bunkers	*SB Borea*	Naples, Italy	Acceptance of the improvement project: accommodation for the lightweight RPAS services on board the vessel	14/11/2022	Acceptance effective from 15/11/2022
7	Amendment No. 3 to Contract No. EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 - Lot 2 - Southern Atlantic Coast	Mureloil	*Bahia Tres*	Sines, Portugal	Acceptance of the improvement project: accommodation for the lightweight RPAS services on board the vessel	29/11/2022	Acceptance effective from 30/11/2022

Figure 1: Acceptance Test on board *Aktea II*. Sweeping arms deployment and pumping test.

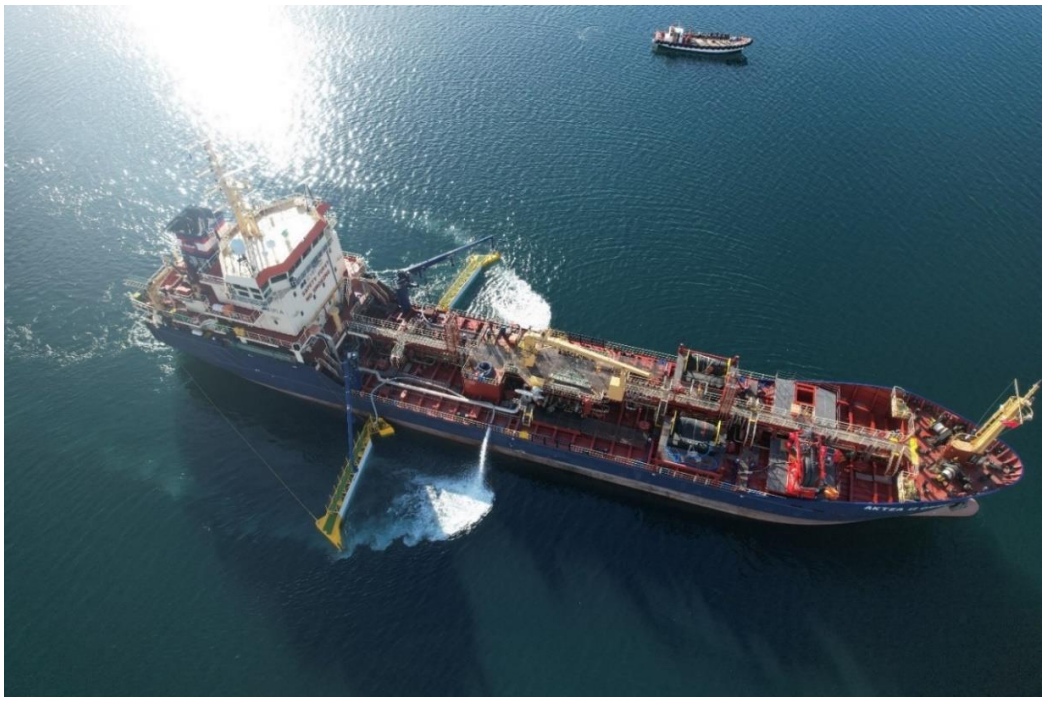


Figure 2: RPAS Acceptance test on board Borea.

2.1.2 Quarterly drills

The EMSA vessel Contractor is obliged, on a quaterly basis, to proceed to a drill to train the vessel's crew and test the oil pollution response equipment, in order to be ready to carry out oil pollution response services efficiently.

The guidelines describing performance standards for the vessel, crew and equipment are part of the Vessel Availability Contract. The quarterly drill can be accepted only if all required standards have been achieved. The acceptance of the Contractor's Quarterly Drill Report is a condition for the payment of the Vessel Availability Fee.

The summary of the quarterly drills carried out in 2022 is presented in the table below.

Table 5. Summary of quarterly drills 2022.

Area	EMSA Contractor	*Vessel*	No.	Date in year 2022	Comment
Baltic	Stena Oil AB EMSA/NEG/1/2015 - Lot 2 Southern Baltic Sea	*Norden*	1Q	22/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	08/06	
			3Q	22/08	
			4Q	20/10	
Southern North Sea and the Channel	DC Industrial 2014/EMSA/NEG/1/2014 - Lot 3.1 Channel & Southern North Sea	*Interballast III*	1Q	30/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	21/06	
			3Q	20/09	
			4Q	11/10	
	DC Industrial 2014/EMSA/NEG/1/2014 - Lot 3.2 Channel & Southern North Sea	*DC Vlaanderen 3000*	1Q	30/30	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	21/06	
			3Q	19/09	
			4Q	11/10	
Atlantic North	MOJO Maritime, France EMSA NEG/1/2013 - Lot 2 Atlantic North	*Corrib Fisher*	1Q	16/03	Due to the contract expiration 2 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			4Q	-	
		Mersey Fisher	2Q	31/05	
			3Q	-	
Atlantic coast	REMOLCANOSA EMSA/NEG/1/2014 - Lot 1 Atlantic Coast	*Ria de Vigo*	1Q	02/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	20/07	
			3Q	13/08	
			4Q	16&18/11	
Bay of Biscay	SEAOWL 2017/EMSA/CPNEG/22/2017 Bay of Biscay	*VN Partisan*	1Q	11/02	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	09/06	
			3Q	20-23/08	
			4Q	17-18/11	
Southern Atlantic coast	Mureloil EMSA NEG/1/2012 - Lot 1 Southern Atlantic Coast	*Bahia Tres*	1Q	20/01	4 drills required in 2022 All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	15/06	
			3Q	12/07	
			4Q	30/09	
Canary Islands and Madeira	Petrogas EMSA/NEG/1/2015 - Lot 1 Canary Islands and Madeira	*Mencey*	1Q	23/02	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	07/06	
			3Q	22/09	
			4Q	11&20/10	

Western Mediterranean Sea	Naviera Altube EMSA CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 2 Western Mediterranean Sea	*Monte Anaga*	1Q	09/02	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	4-5/05	
			3Q	22/09	
			4Q	09/11	
	CIANE EMSA/NEG/1/2020 Lot 3 Western Mediterranean Sea	*Brezzamare*	1Q	25/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	15/05	
			3Q	03/08	
			4Q	3-4/11	
Adriatic Sea	Petronav 2019/EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 Lot 3 Adriatic Sea	*Adelia*	1Q	24/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	08/06	
			3Q	26/07	
			4Q	07/10	
Central Mediterranean Sea	Sarda Bunkers 2020/EMSA/CPNEG/1/2020 - Lot 1 Central Mediterranean	*Santa Maria*	1Q	31/01	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	27/04	
			3Q	28/07	
			4Q	02/11	
Aegean Sea	EPE EMSA NEG/1/2013 - Lot 3 Aegean Sea	*Aktea OSRV*	1Q	23/02	1 drill required in 2022. The drill was conducted and accepted by EMSA. The contract expired on 31/03/2022
			2Q	-	
			3Q	-	
			4Q	-	
		Aegis I *Aegis*	2Q	n/a – under Contract with EFCA from 01/01/2022 until 31/03/2022	
			4Q		
Aegean Sea	EPE EMSA/CPNEG/2/2021 Lot 2 Aegean Sea	*Aktea II*	1Q	-	2 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA. The vessel entered the service on 01/07/2022
			2Q	-	
			3Q	27/09	
			4Q	15-16/11	
Adriatic Sea	Dinamarin Ltd 2019/EMSA/CPNEG/1/2019 – Lot 1 Adriatic Sea	*Kijac*	1Q	3&19/01	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	10/04	
			3Q	05/09	
			4Q	29/11	
Eastern Mediterranean	Petronav EMSA NEG/1/2010 - Lot 1 Eastern Mediterranean	*Alexandria*	1Q	23/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	19/05	
			3Q	05/09	
			4Q	26-27/10	
Black Sea	Petronav 2014 EMSA/NEG/1/2014 - Lot 2 Northern Black Sea	*Amalthia*	1Q	26/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	17/05	
			3Q	01/08	
			4Q	03-04/10	
	COSMOS 2016 EMSA/CPNEG/6/2016 - Lot 1 Southern Black Sea	*Galaxy Eco*	1Q	15/03	4 drills required in 2022. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	20/06	
			3Q	20/07	
			4Q	29/09-01/10	
Total number of quarterly drills 2022:		**65**			

The outcome of the quarterly drills carried out during 2022, with no drill rejected, demonstrates that the various vessels arrangements are operated up-to EMSA standards and that the vessel arrangements are fully operational.

Figure 3: Quarterly drill on board *Kijac* and 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 favorable. 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 cooperation programme EMSA-MS, two training sessions for the Member States' equipment operators were organised in the EAS North Sea (Rotterdam, The Netherlands) and EAS Southern Europe (Ravena, Italy). The trainees were able to get familiarised and operate different equipment systems such as the Current Buster 4, the Speed Sweep, the Ro-Trawl and V-Sweep systems.

In addition, dedicated in-country familiarisation on the EAS equipment was provided in two occasions:

- Current Buster 6 from the EAS Southern Europe, within the context of MALTEX 2022 exercise in Malta.
- Lamor Oil Spill Barge from the EAS Northern Baltic, within a national exercise in Finland, in co-operation with the Finnish Border Guard.

The summary of the ECTs, equipment trainings and familiarisation activities with MS carried out in 2022 is presented in the table below.

Table 6. ECTs, Training and Familiarisation sessions 2022.

Contractor	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Result
Ambipar EAS North Sea (Rotterdam)	N/A	Lamor Barge (04/22) Current Buster 6 (04/22) Speed Sweep (04/22) New Naval Barge (05/22) Work Boat (05/22) Current Buster 4 (05/22) Fence Boom (05/22)	Current Buster 4 (09/22) Speed Sweep (09/22) Lamor medium size skimmer & New Naval Barge (09/22) Current Buster 6 (09/22)		Equipment was found in a good condition. Exception was the DESMI Speed Sweep which broke during an ECT performed as part of the MS training in September. All ECTs accepted by EMSA.
Stena Oil EAS Baltic Sea (Frederikshavn)	N/A	Speed Sweep (04/22) Lamor Barge (04/22) Ro-Trawl (05/22) Fence Boom (05/22) New Naval Barge (05/22) Work Boat (06/22)	Current Buster 6 (07/22) Ro-Boom (08/22) Ro-Trawl (09/22)	N/A	Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA.
Ottavio Novella EAS Southern Europe (Ravenna)	N/A	Skimmer / V-Sweep (04/22) Fence Boom (05/22) Current Buster 4 (06/22) Speed Sweep (06/22) Lamor V-Sweep (06/22) Work Boat (06/22)		Work Boat (10/22) Lamor Barge (10/22) New Naval Barge (10/22) Lamor Skimmer (10/22) Current Buster 4 (10/22) Ro-Trawl (10/22) Ro-Boom (10/22)	Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA.
LAMOR AB EAS Northern Baltic Sea (Tolkkinen)	N/A	Oil Storage Barge (06/22) Fence Boom (06/22) Arctic Skimmer LAS 125 (06/22) Arctic Skimmer LAS 125 (06/22)	Medium sized oil skimmer (09/22) Current Buster 4 (09/22) Work Boat (8/22)		Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA.

		Skimmer LFF 100 (06/22)			
		Arctic Skimmer LRB 150 (06/22)			
		Arctic Skimmer LRB 150 (06/22)			
Bon Marine EAS Black Sea (Varna)	N/A	Current Buster 4 (05/22)	Work Boat (07/22)	Work Boat (10/22)	Equipment was found in a good condition. All ECTs accepted by EMSA.
		Fence Boom 05/22)	Work Boat (07/22)	V-Sweep (10/22)	
		New Naval Barge (05/22)	Trawl Net (08/22)	Work Boat (10/22)	
		Current Buster 6 (06/22)	Speed Sweep (09/22)		
		Lamor Skimmer (06/22)	Lamor Barge (09/22)		
TOTAL ECTs 2022: 56					
Training sessions for Equipment Operators:	- Hands-on session (3 days) at EAS Southern Europe, with 6 MS operators, 14-16 June 2023. - Hands-on session (3 days) at EAS North Sea, with 7 MS operators, 20-22 September 2022.				
In-country familiarisation activities:	- In-country familiarisation EAS equipment in Malta, 6 September 2022. - In-country familiarisation EAS equipment in Finland, 5-8 September 2022.				

Figure 4: Coastal boom - ECT in EAS Baltic

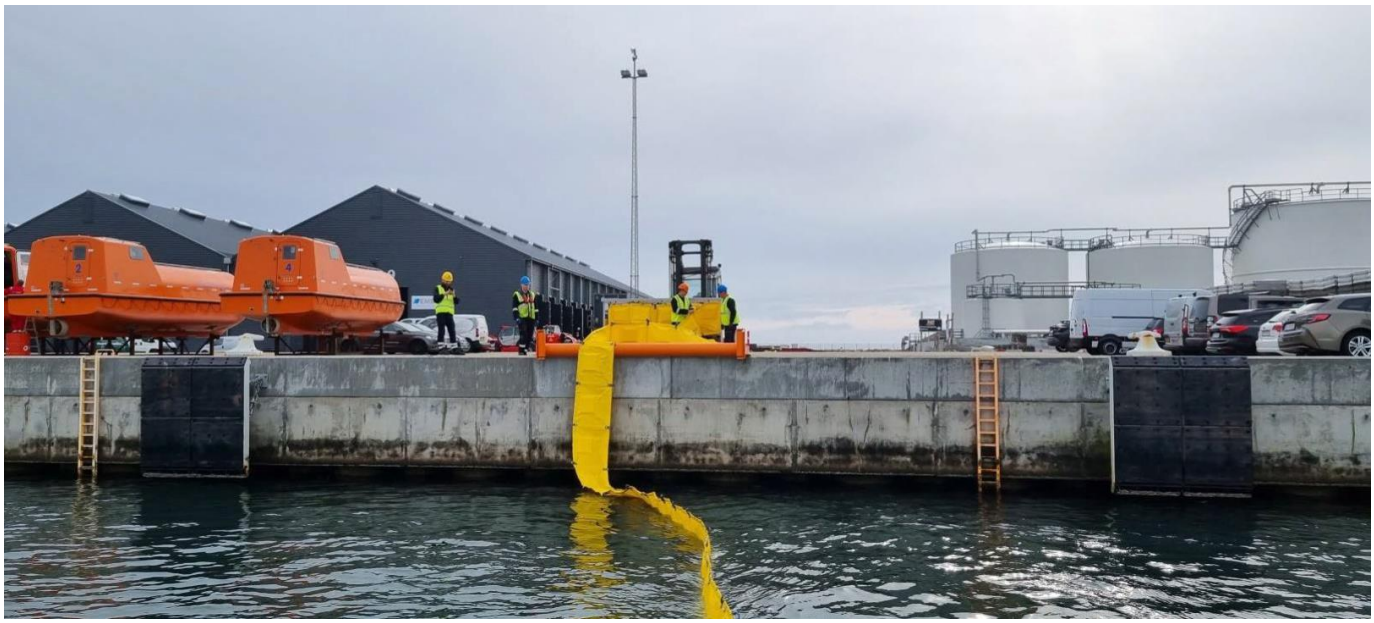


Figure 6: Commissioning working boat in EAS Black Sea.

Figure 7: Commissioning working boat in EAS Black Sea.

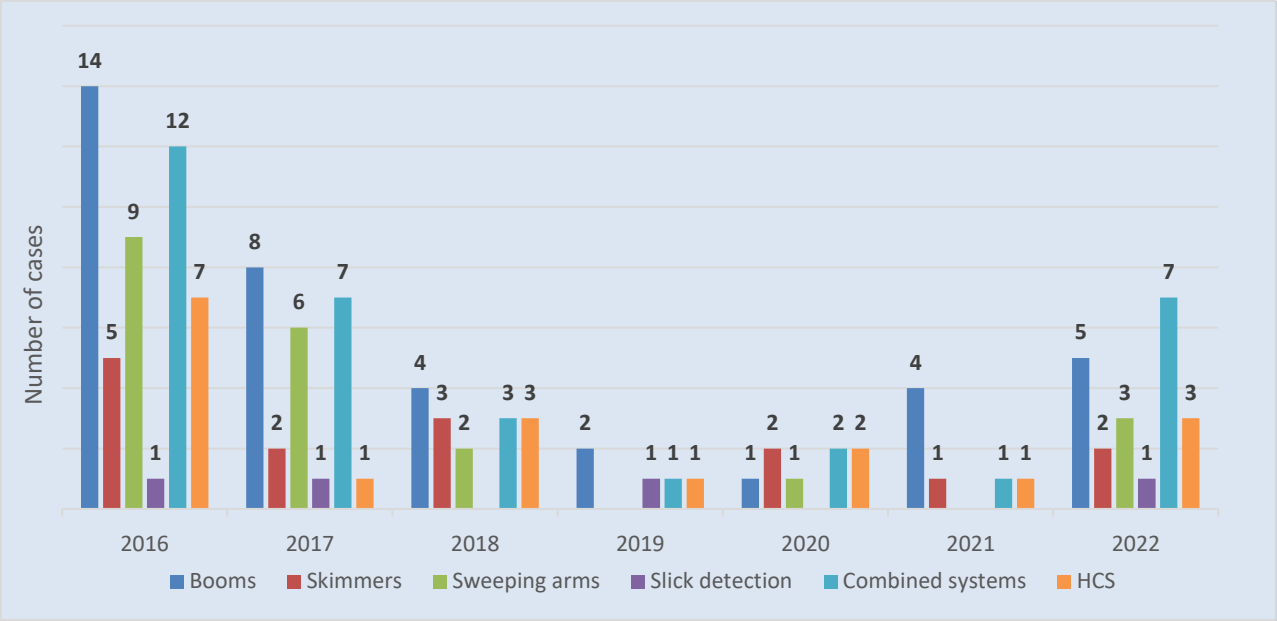
Figure 8: ECT V-sweep system in EAS Black Sea

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.

Both vessels and EAS contracts provide for a mandatory reporting of incidents/malfunctions. Besides this, EMSA conducts annual verification of all equipment.

Chart 2. Number of Technical issues 2016 – 2022.



A slight increase of number of recorded technical failures can be observed. However, it is worth to emphasise that the number of equipment systems in EAS warehouses increased in 2022 by almost one third, due new deliveries of medium size and near shore equipment from last years' procurement.

Most common equipment failures were:

- Small damages of equipment during deployment, retrieval or towing, e.g., puncture or tear of the boom section fabric (3 cases), ripped off towing slings of the floating barges (2 cases).
- Malfunctions of the hydraulic systems, e.g., leaking hydraulic hoses (2 cases), air in the hydraulic oil (1 case).
- Problems with starting power packs, e.g., broken spring starter (2 cases).
- Single cases of the failure of sweeping arm pump, computer of the slick detection system, brush module component of the high capacity skimmer, etc.

The technical issues were dealt with in efficient and effective way and the equipment was brought back to the operational state as quickly as possible.

In general, in 2022 the OPR equipment under the Vessel and EAS contracts was maintained in constant operational condition ready to perform service for the Member States up to the EMSA required standards.

Nevertheless, the EMSA network exist already for 17 years and equipment bought in the early years shows signs of ageing, wear and tear and, for items such as oil slick detection software, obsolescence. The Agency conducts a thorough equipment inventory verification and close monitoring of the equipment condition, in order to be prepared to take informed decisions based on technical grounds on the declassification of old equipment and, subject to availability of financial resources, replacement with new.

3. Exercises performed in 2022

At-sea operational exercises assist the integration of EMSA's OPR services within the response mechanisms of Member States, improving the necessary coordination and cooperation of the EMSA resources with the coastal State response units. There are also rare opportunities for the Member States' personnel to familiarize with the equipment available in the stockpiles.

It has to be pointed out that, with the exception of exercises within regional cooperation projects implemented by the Agency, EMSA does not organize exercises but participates when requested.

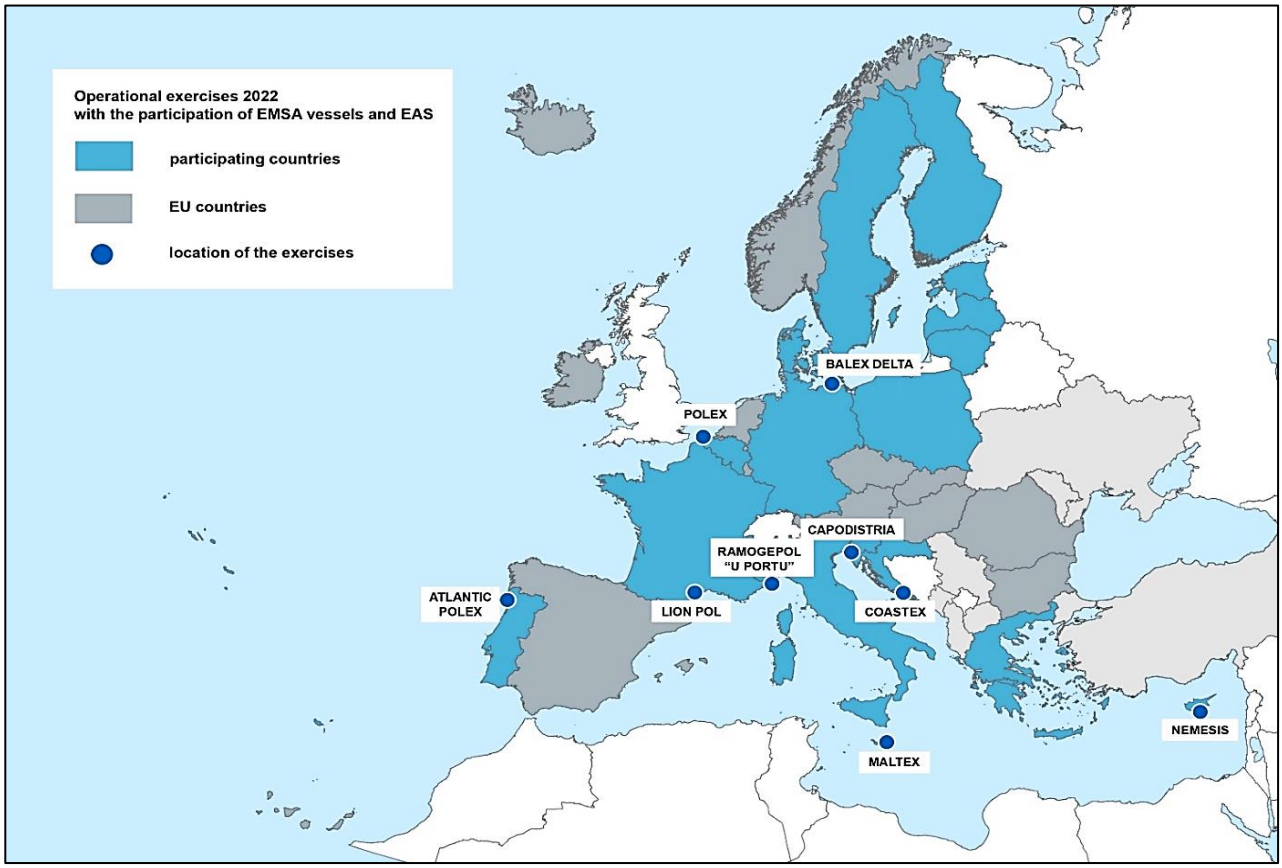
The Agency is implementing a procedure for the internal/external exercise coordination in order to provide the full set of services (Vessels, EAS, Mar-ICE, CleanSeaNet and others) in a harmonised manner as well as to provide/receive feedback to and from the Member States after the performance of the exercises.

3.1 Operational exercises

In the course of 2022, nine EMSA contracted vessels (two of which equipped with RPAS) and one equipment set from the EAS were deployed in nine at-sea oil pollution response operational exercises, organised in cooperation with EU Member States and/or Regional Agreements.

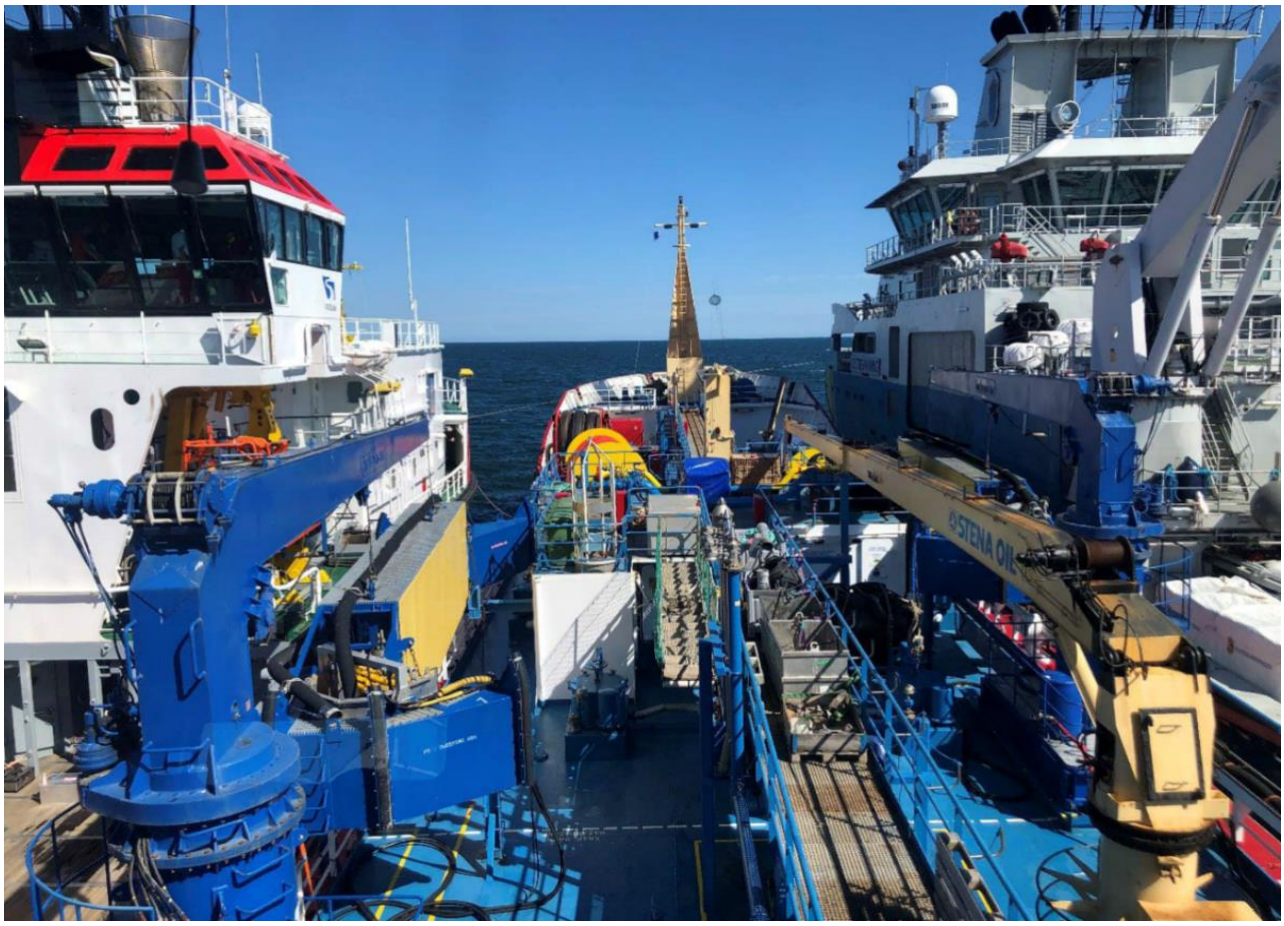
These events took place in the Baltic Sea, The Channel, Atlantic coast, West, Central and East Mediterranean Sea. Due to the presence of floating mines in the Black Sea, the exercise scheduled with Bulgaria was cancelled.

Map 2: Geographical distribution of operational exercises with EMSA vessels participation in 2022



For the first time, an EMSA contracted vessel participated in an HNS response exercise, part of the BALEX DELTA 2022, playing the role of the vessel in distress and providing exercise platform for the exercising parties.

Figure 9: HNS response exercise, during BALEX DELTA 2022. *Norden* (middle) is assisted by the German vessel *Arkona* (left) and Swedish vessel *KBV 003 Amphitrite* (right).



Feedback from the exercises organisers as well as reports from EMSA service providers indicate that all vessels/EAS systems deployed in the operational exercises successfully completed the tasks assigned.

The summary of operational exercises performed by EMSA contracted vessels/EAS arrangements in 2022 is shown in the table below.

Table 7. Operational exercises 2022

No.	Name of Exercise	Date	Location	Participating Parties	EMSA Vessel (RPAS) / EAS
1	**ATLANTIC POLEX 2022**	04/05	Viana do Castelo / Portugal	Portugal / EMSA	*Ria de Vigo*
2	**LION POL 22**	24/05	Sète / France	France / EMSA	*Brezzamare*
3	**BALEX DELTA 2022**	23-24/08	Mecklenburg Bay, approaches to Rostock / Germany	Germany / Denmark / Estonia / Finland / Latvia / Lithuania / Poland / Sweden / EMSA	*Norden / RPAS*
4	**COASTEX 22**	06/09	Split / Croatia	Croatia / EFCA / EMSA	*Kijac*

5	**MALTEX 2022**	07/09	Malta	Malta / EMSA	*Adelia / RPAS / EAS*
6	**CAPODISTRIA 2022**	04/10	Koper / Slovenia	Slovenia / EMSA	*Kijac*
7	**RAMOGEPOL "U Portu" 2022**	05/10	Imperia, Liguria / Italy	Italy / France / Monako / EMSA	*Brezzamare*
8	**POLEX OCTOBER 2022**	12/10	Ostend / Belgium	Belgium / EMSA	*Interballast III*
9	**NEMESIS**	04/11	Cyprus EEZ	Republic of Cyprus / Greece / France / United Kingdom / USA / Egypt / Italy / Lebanon / Israel / EMSA	*Alexandria*

Figure 10: BALEX DELTA 2022 exercise - Oil pollution response. Strike team DELTA composed of *KBV 003 Amphitrite* (strike team leader), *Norden* and *Kiel* vessel of the German National Fire brigade.

3.2 Notification exercises

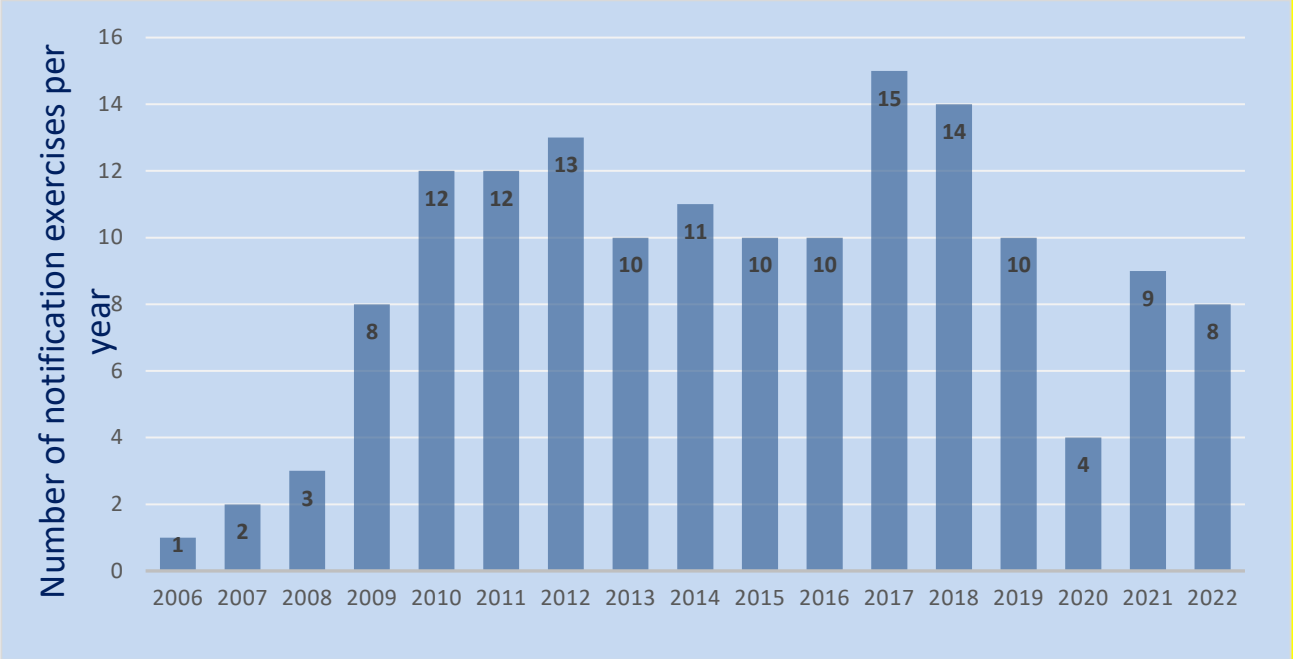
Notification exercises are usually conducted in conjunction with operational exercises. In addition, 'stand-alone' notification exercises are occasionally carried out. The aim of these exercises is to test and implement agreed procedures and lines of communication for reporting incidents and for requesting and providing assistance. These exercises are usually launched by the Member States.

Notification exercises involve EMSA, one or more Requesting Parties[3], EMSA's contractor(s) and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), operated by DG ECHO. The main criterion for the evaluation of the notification exercise is the time needed for the Incident Response Contract (Vessel - IRC-V or EAS - IRC-E)[4] to be signed by both the EMSA contractor and the Requesting Party.

In 2022, the Agency participated in eight notification exercises involving eight activations of EMSA vessels (in seven cases with RPAS on board) and five activations of the EAS services.

The number of notification exercises carried annually over the years 2006-2022 is shown on the chart below.

Chart 3. Notification exercises 2006-2022.



The result of the notification exercises shows that more exercising states used the opportunity to perform full procedure of mobilisation of EMSA assistance (signing the IRC-V and IRC-E). Four out of eight States completed the procedure, whereas in 2021, there were only two out of nine.

During each exercise, EMSA Contractors reacted immediately and in line with standards set by EMSA. However, still some Member States terminated the procedure prior to the signature of the IRC Form.

It has to be stressed that the mobilisation of EMSA assets is based on the signing of the Incident Response Contract and its annex, the IRC Form. The contract contains important provisions related to the respective obligations of the Requesting Party and the Contractor.

Exercises are a good opportunity to ensure that response authorities are made aware of all clauses of this contract. In the same way, the IRC Form describes which configuration of the vessel / type of equipment from the EAS is requested. It has to be reiterated that for exercises, signing the IRC does not trigger the payment of any fee by the Requesting Party.

[3] EMSA's OPR services can be activated by the following Requesting Parties: EU Member States, EU Candidate Countries, European Free Trade Association (EFTA)/European Economic Area (EEA) coastal Member States, third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the Union, Responsible Parties and/or the European Commission.

[4] Incident Response Contract: This contract is to be concluded between the EMSA contractor and the Requesting Party. This pre-established model contract addresses the actual response operations. It covers the terms and conditions of the service and includes the associated daily hire rates. Following a request for assistance, EMSA will activate or even pre-mobilise the vessel / equipment to facilitate the operation. The command and control during an incident rests with the affected coastal State using the vessel / equipment.

During the notification exercises 2022, it was also noted the improvement in the use of CECIS by the MS. Nevertheless, there is still a need for more CECIS training to be provided for the pollution response personnel responsible for requesting assistance from other Member States and EMSA.

Summary of results of the notification exercises carried out in 2022 can be found in the table below.

Table 8. Outcome of the Notification exercises 2022.

No.	Name / date	Participating parties: MS / Service mobilised	Comments
1	**ATLANTIC POLEX.PT 2022 / 04/05**	Portugal, EMSA / Remolcanosa (*Ria de Vigo with RPAS*)	MS opened an emergency in CECIS and requested assistance of EMSA vessel and satellite images. EMSA reacted to MS request immediately by placing the offer of assistance in CECIS. The Agency offered the vessel *Ria de Vigo* with RPAS on board and requested satellite images. Notice of Pollution Response was sent to the EMSA vessel Contractor, Notice of RPAS mobilisation to RPAS operator and IRC-V to MS. IRC was signed by the Requesting Party and EMSA vessel Contractor. The procedure of signing the IRC-V was completed. Time from the offer acceptance to the signature of the IRC-V was less than 6 hours.
2	**NEMESIS 1) 2022 / 24/05**	Cyprus, EMSA / Petronav (*Alexandria with RPAS) / EAS Black Sea*	The exercise went very well and the reaction time of EMSA and contractors was good. Both IRCs (Vessel and EAS) were signed by all parties. It took approx. 2 hours from submission to countersignatures. Petronav and the requesting State took the exercise to the next level (usually the exercise is considered completed after the IRC signature) by simulating the issue of: Notice of Readiness, Notice of Arrival; Notice of Ending the Operations.
3	**LION POL 2022 / 24/05**	France, EMSA / Ciane (*Brezzamare*)	MS opened an emergency in CECIS and requested assistance of EMSA vessel and RPAS. EMSA reacted to MS request immediately by placing offer of the vessel *Brezzamare* and the RPAS to be launched from the French Navy Vessel. Both offers were accepted in CECIS. IRC-V was sent to the Requesting Party and Notice of Pollution Response to EMSA Contractor. At this stage the exercise was discontinued. The procedure of signing the IRC-V was not completed.
4	**BALEX BRAVO 2022 / 15/08**	Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, EMSA / Stena Oil (*Norden with RPAS) / EAS Baltic*	The MS opened an emergency in CECIS and requested assistance with oil recovery vessels, satellite images and oil recovery equipment. Within 1-hour EMSA placed in CECIS offer of Oil recovery vessel Norden stationed in Malmo, Sweden, equipped with HCS, oil boom, sweeping arms and RPAS. EAS equipment from Frederikshavn: Brush skimmer LBA 500. Quantity: 2 Temporary storage tanks ScorTank 10m3. Quantity: 2 Fence boom Scorpion 750. Quantity: 500m All EMSA offers were accepted by the requesting state in CECIS almost immediately. Notices of pollution response were sent to the relevant contractors and IRC-V and IRCs-E to the requesting MS. The reaction time of EMSA and contractors was satisfactory. Requesting state terminated the exercise at the stage of accepting offers and receiving the IRCs without continuing further steps of the EMSA assets mobilisation procedure. The IRCs were not signed.

5	**MALTEX 22 / 06-07/09**	Malta, EMSA / Petronav (*Adelia with RPAS / EAS South Europe*)	MS requested 1 oil recovery vessel and equipment from EAS. South Europe. EMSA offered assistance of Adelia (stationed in Malta) with RPAS on board and RO-Trawl system from EAS South Europe. Both offers were accepted. Overall, the exercise went very well and the reaction time of EMSA contractors as well as the requesting party were. Time from the request to the signature of both IRCs (Vessel and EAS) by all parties (Malta and EMSA contractors) was less than 2 hours.
6	**LYSEKIL / 23/09**	Sweden, Denmark, EMSA / No Contractors activated	MS requested assistance of 2 vessels. The Agency placed in CECIS offer of *assistance (Vessels /EAS)*. The offer was not accepted. Sweden accepted assistance of 3 vessels from Denmark. Acceptance/rejections of the offers were not communicated through the CECIS request overview window.
7	**NEMESIS 2) 2022 / 26/10**	Cyprus, EMSA / Petronav (*Alexandria with RPAS) / EAS Black Sea*	The exercise went very well and the reaction time of EMSA and contractors was good. Both IRCs (Vessel and EAS) were signed by all parties. It took approx. 2.5 hours from submission to countersignatures. The exercise completed the full EMSA resources mobilisation procedure including: Notice of Readiness, Notice of Arrival; Notice of Ending the Operations.
8	**POLEX ES 22 / 16/11**	Spain, EMSA / Remolcanosa, Seaowl / (*Ria de Vigo with RPAS / VN Partisan with RPAS) / EAS North Sea*	MS requested assistance in CECIS. The request included mechanical recovery equipment, oil recovery vessel and Sattelite imagery. EMSA placed in CECIS offer of 2 oil recovery vessels, list of equipment from EAS North Sea and satellite images. The offer was not accepted in CECIS and the exercise was stopped at this stage. Procedure of the resources mobilisation was not exercised.

4. MAR-ICE activations for drills and exercises

The MAR-ICE Network of chemical experts was established in October 2008, through a 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 currently runs through to December 2027.

Requesting countries can activate the MAR-ICE Network for real incidents, as well as for drills and exercises by sending the MAR-ICE Activation Form to the MAR-ICE Contact Point, 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 EU Member States, Coastal EFTA States and coastal EU Candidate Countries providing, upon request, rapid access to specialised information and expert advice on chemicals involved in marine spills. This expert support is available both remotely (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.

When available, the 237 MAR-CIS info sheets and the BE-CHEM tool outcomes are also provided to the requesting country through the MAR-ICE service.

In 2022, the MAR-ICE network was activated:

- Twice for real incidents, once regarding containers lost at sea, and once regarding an unknown substance found at the sea bottom.
- Seven times for exercises. Details are presented in the Table 8 below.

During the exercises, some minor communication issues were noted, as well as some deviations from the service's activation procedures by the requesting party. The requested information was provided within the established timelines of the service.

Table 9: MAR-ICE drills/exercises in 2022.

MAR-ICE SERVICE DRILLS / EXERCISES 2022				
Nr	**Date**	**Country**	**Scenario**	**Assistance provided**
1	5/5/2022	**Portugal (Atlantic POLEX exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved an explosion on a container vessel, with a container at sea. **Product involved**: Ethylene (UN 1964) **Request covered** product specific information.	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - ERICards - EmS sheets (IMDG) - OECD SIDS - Summary of risk assessment for Ethylene
2	7/7/2022	**EMSA (Port of Refuge TT exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved a collision between a Ro-Ro and another vessel, resulting in fire on the Ro-Ro. **Product involved:** Several dangerous goods were on-board the Ro-Ro, which was loaded with trailers and trucks. **Request covered** product specific information and risk assessment.	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - Safety Datasheets - ERICards - Risk assessment related to the fire on board Ro-Ro and the substances in the trailers/trucks
3	15/08/2022	**Germany (BALEX Bravo 2022 exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved a collision involving a container vessel with several substances transported on board and spilled at sea and on-board following the collision. **Product involved:** Several products were involved **Request covered** product specific information	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - MAR-CIS info sheets - Safety Datasheets - ERICards - ChemInfo data - HNS-MS data
4	7/9/2022	**Malta (exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved a tanker and a container ship. **Product involved:** Ethylbenzene (UN 1175) **Request covered** product specific information and information on the trajectory and fate of the substance's dispersion	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - MAR-CIS info sheet - CHEMMAP modelling outputs
5	5/10/2022	**Italy (RAMOGEPOL 2022 exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved an explosion on board an oil/chemical tanker with the product spilled at sea **Product involved:** Sodium hydroxide (UN1823) **Request covered** product specific information and information on the trajectory and fate of the substance's dispersion	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - MAR-CIS info sheet - BE-CHEM output - Cedre Manual on product - CHEMMAP modelling outputs
6	11/10/2022	**Slovenia (exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved a vessel collision with the product spilled at sea **Product involved**: Methanol (UN1230) **Request covered** product specific information, information on the trajectory and fate of the substance's dispersion, as well as a brief risk assessment of the product spilled at sea, mainly regarding response options and required PPE	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - MAR-CIS info sheet - CHEMMAP modelling outputs - Information and advice regarding the response strategy and PPE to be used
7	14/11/2022	**Malta (PACE 2022 exercise)**	**Exercise scenario** involved a catamaran with lithium-ion batteries on board **Product involved**: Lithium-ion batteries (UN 3480) **Request covered** product specific information	**Activation of MAR-ICE Level-1** The MAR-ICE service provided: - Datasheet from the Canadian Emergency Response Guidebook - SDS for UN3480 Information on risks from the lithium battery guide for shippers

5. Conclusions / Highlights

- The outcome of the drills, ECTs and exercises carried out during 2022 demonstrated that the service is operationally ready, efficient and in accordance with EMSA requirements.

- Since 2019, the Agency has been implementing improvement projects on the Vessel Network to enhance the detection capabilities for oil pollution on the sea surface, by equipping the contracted vessels with Lightweight Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (LRPAS). In 2022, another three EMSA vessels have been equipped.

  Currently, 12 of the 16 Agency's contracted vessels are equipped with LRPAS. The aim is to continue equipping, gradually and subject to technical feasibility, all EMSA vessels with LRPAS capabilities on board.

- In 2022, the Agency extended its capabilities to assist the Member States in marine pollution incidents in shallow waters. The Agency delivered stand-alone equipment specially designed for near shore operations: i.e., working boats with oil collectors, 10m^3 floating storage barges and coastal booms. This equipment is already available in the five existing EAS warehouses, and therefore MS should consider using this equipment for training and exercises.

- The Vessel Network exists already since 17 years and equipment purchased in the early years shows signs of ageing, wear and tear and for some specific IT related equipment, obsolescence. The Agency conducts regularly a thorough equipment inventory and condition verification in order to decide on the old equipment de-classification and, subject to financial resources, replacement with new purchases. This process will be intensified in coming years.

- The results of the notification exercises have improved compared to previous years. More Member States have followed the full procedure to mobilize EMSA's resources. However, it is noted that there is still a need to provide CECIS training for the pollution response personnel responsible for requesting assistance from other MS and EMSA.

  In addition, the range of marine pollution response services offered by the Agency and available to Member States increases every year. Knowledge of their mobilisation procedures and the ability to use them by MS is essential for an effective response in the event of serious marine pollution incidents. Hence, the need to intensify the notification exercises and to apply the full procedure of mobilising EMSA resources during these exercises.

- In order to benefit from EMSA's pollution response "toolbox", a close and regular operational cooperation between EMSA services and MS operational staff is of paramount importance. In 2022, the Agency started a practice of sharing a calendar of activities of the Pollution Response Services for each coming year. This is intended as a catalog of activities, part of a new approach to enhance operational cooperation EMSA-MS.

  To facilitate communication through this process and dissemination of information on EMSA's services, the Agency set-up of a dedicated Helpdesk-Contact Point for Q&A: PRS.OPSTeam@emsa.europa.eu

- EMSA's Vessels and EAS systems are deployed in some ten operational exercises per year. These exercises, organised by MS, take place in all European waters and the Agency covers the costs of the participation of EMSA services.

  It should be noted that MS usually use only a fraction of the ship's capacity during these exercises. For example, often the vessel's only task during an exercise is to deploy sweeping arms and follow the formation. To ensure the maximum effectiveness of the trainings, MS should be encouraged to expand the exercise scenarios and use the full capabilities of EMSA vessels (booms, skimmers, slick detection system, RPAS, dispersant spraying systems) as well as of EAS equipment systems.

- The costs of participation in these exercises is determined by the distance to the exercise site, fuel cost and the vessel's daily rate. In case of EAS stand-alone equipment, the main cost elements are the transport costs and the provision of Technical Support Personnel, both costs also covered by EMSA.

  The issue of aiming at cost efficiency in exercises should be considered. High inflation and the increase in the cost of fuel, equipment and labour also significantly affect the cost of the exercises, in particular with deployment of vessels. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on the effective use of EMSA vessels during operational exercises at sea.

- The steadily increasing number of MAR-ICE service activations for exercises involving also HNS scenarios, demonstrates MS' willingness to learn more about the service, how it can be activated and what it can offer in terms of specialised information, advice and support for chemical incidents at-sea.

- EMSA is continuing its efforts to raise awareness on the service during the meetings of the CTG MPPR and PRS User Group, as well as during relevant workshops. The Agency also offers the possibility for MS to request "National familiarisation sessions on the MAR-ICE service". During these short dedicated information sessions provided jointly by EMSA and the MAR-ICE Contact Point and held online, several national/local HNS experts from a MS can participate to find out more about the MAR-ICE Network, its activation proecedures and the service provided.

- On the basis of consultations with MS and in line with their expectations, the Agency is going to expand its capabilities in the field of responding to HNS incidents at sea. In 2022 for the first time, an EMSA contracted vessel participated in the HNS response scenario, part of the BALEX DELTA 2022 exercise, playing the role of the vessel in distress and providing exercise platform for the deployment of HNS intervention teams.

  The Agency also intends to enhance the operational capacity in HNS response. A first procurement for specialised equipment to support MS in HNS incidents was launched at the end of 2022.

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