

## EMSA Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021

### Assessment by the EMSA Administrative Board

The Administrative Board's assessment covers three main areas: strategic achievements, operational achievements and the management of the Agency. The assessment takes into account the relevant legal, strategic, and resource framework, as well the applicable annual work programme.

The Administrative Board appreciates the structure of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2021 which reflects that of the EMSA Single Programming Document 2021-2023.

Each activity is clearly linked to its legal basis and placed in strategic context through references to the relevant articles of the EMSA Founding Regulation and to the relevant objectives of the EMSA 5-year Strategy. This demonstrates the consistency of the annual activities with the tasks assigned by the legislator and the strategic outlook adopted by the Administrative Board. Furthermore, the allocation of budget and staff to each activity clarifies relative impact on resources.

### A) EMSA's strategic achievements in 2021

The EMSA 5-year Strategy 2020-2024 on which the Single Programming Document 2021-2023 was based, established EMSA's strategic priorities in the areas of Sustainability, Surveillance, Safety, Security and Simplification - the "5 S" – as well as Digitalisation and Technical & Operational Assistance. This 5-year Strategy reflects the important role played by EMSA to support the Commission priorities in EU policy areas related to the maritime sector in order to strengthen its green and digital transition while maintaining a high level of safety, as well as contribute to the EU's security agenda.

The EMSA Single Programming Document 2021-2023 and the concrete actions planned under each of the "5 S" for 2021 were aligned with the strategic priorities of the 5-year Strategy. The Administrative Board welcomes the fact that the CAAR provides clear examples of EMSA's achievements that contribute to the realisation of the multi-annual strategic priorities or 5/S and the underlying 36 multi-annual strategic objectives.

The Administrative Board noted that overall, EMSA implemented the actions planned, and by that made progress towards achieving the strategic priorities of the Agency – while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw mostly remote working conditions for staff, Member States and Commission representatives and stakeholders.

In our view, the present report addresses the key deliverables of the Agency in 2021 and demonstrates that the objectives set, in particular for the five strategic priorities were met.

The highlights of the strategic achievements in each work area in 2021 are outlined below.

## Sustainability

Strategic priority:

[Contribute to the European Green agenda for maritime transport by strengthening the EU capacity to protect the marine environment, manage climate change and respond to new environmental challenges](#)

EMSA together with the European Environment Agency (EEA) worked on the first European Maritime Transport Environmental Report (EMTER), collecting verified information on the different impacts of shipping on the marine environment and air, as well as climate change. As a first of its kind, this Report represents an essential reading in view of different Commission policy initiatives linked to the European Green Deal. After having consulted all relevant stakeholders on the first draft, the final report was launched on 1st of September 2021. The implementation of this project has also led to enhancing the efforts of the Agency to become a data hub for environmental data related to maritime transport.

EMSA has been also actively participating in several initiatives related to the European Green Deal by providing technical support and data to the European Commission and Member States. This support was mainly focused on the preparation of the Fuel EU Maritime initiative and the proposal on the extension of the ETS to maritime transport, the Zero Pollution Action plan initiative and the work at IMO on energy efficiency and carbon intensity. The technical contribution of the Agency was an essential building block in support of ongoing policy initiatives by the European Commission, such as the "Fit for 55 package" delivered in July 2021, aiming at making Europe climate neutral by 2050.

In the field of response, the Agency has engaged with the Member States and the Commission in a bottom-up approach to reflect on the adequacy of the services it offers. As a result, in addition to maintaining and renewing its existing network of oil recovery vessels and the Equipment Assistance Service, in 2021 the Agency also invested in putting in place an acquisition channel for near shore equipment to complement the existing toolbox by filling the gap in the response to oil spills in shallow waters and proceeded with equipping its stockpiles with medium size equipment. EMSA also continued improving the operational capacities of its vessels by equipping in 2021 two additional vessels with RPAS capacity reaching a total of ten.

## Surveillance

Strategic priority:

[Strengthen EMSA's role as the core information management hub for maritime surveillance](#)

In 2021 EMSA increased the budget dedicated to support with satellite images emergency response linked for example to pollution at sea, search and rescue and anti-piracy. EMSA continued to offer capabilities based on RPAS technology supporting maritime surveillance and further increased its level of activities in becoming a reference at EU and global level for the use of RPAS for maritime surveillance in the civil domain.

In 2021 EMSA has also done a particular effort in renewing and expanding its RPAS portfolio offered to Member States and Agencies. This includes new capabilities deployable from vessels, that can be used also for emissions monitoring and retendering of the service for light RPAS to equip EMSA and EFCA chartered vessels, with an improved sensor payload. In terms of capabilities deployable from land, EMSA contracted a new long range service that besides having new radar sensors and phone detection capabilities can also deploy a life raft for 8 persons. Additionally, and to support EMSA's regional strategy, a

new coastal service was contracted, which has an autonomy of up to 15 hours thanks to a system of antennas along the coast based on radio relay.

Concerning Copernicus Maritime Surveillance, the Agency signed and started the implementation of a new Contribution Agreement with the Commission (DG-DEFIS) that defines the scope of activities to take place between 2021 and 2027.

## Safety & Security

Strategic priorities

Contribute to higher maritime safety standards, anticipate new maritime safety challenges and expectations, and provide knowledge-based solutions with the aim of contributing to the reduction of marine casualties and human loss.

Strengthen maritime security in Europe and globally where there is a European interest.

The Agency confirmed and deepened its relevance as a key partner to the European Commission and Member States at EU and IMO level in the development of the necessary adequate safety and standardisation framework both for traditional ship safety aspects, like steering and manoeuvrability or fire safety, and innovative disrupting technologies, as new alternative energy systems for ships and autonomous systems, multi-dimensional safety aspects of electrical systems related to shore side electricity.

Safety analyses of data from EMCIP provided added value as a tool to identify safety issues and possible improvements towards a further enhancement of the safety culture.

EMSA also provided initial technical support to the European Commission in the process of the revision of three safety Directives (AI, PSC, and FS) in view of setting up the Impact Assessments.

Given the steady increase in cyber-threats and risk of cyber-attacks aimed at disrupting the maritime domain, the main stakeholders, i.e. industry, academies, and Governments have acknowledged that more attention should be paid to this challenge. EMSA has established an internal Task Force to progress relevant work in cooperation with relevant institutions.

As concerns the Human Element, EMSA has worked at the side of the European Commission and the EU Member States during the comprehensive revision of the STCW-F Convention and for the planned revision of the STCW Convention at IMO and has fostered the implementation of the MLC, 2006 Convention, providing training to ensure compliance and enforcement to both EU Member States and ENP countries.

## Digitalisation & Simplification

Strategic priority

Facilitate the simplification of EU shipping by supporting EU-wide digital maritime solutions

EMSA's Cloud Strategy was adopted in July 2021. Implementation of this strategy will lead to a state-of-the-art technological landscape capable of accelerating maritime digital services production in EMSA's software factory while providing user community the benefits from cloud technologies. A project for the development of the Maritime Picture in the cloud as envisaged by the 5-year strategy was designed and the proof of concept has been finalized. This will enable EMSA to offer to Member

States a new generation of services, more advanced analytical solutions and tactical applications for management and coordination of maritime operations, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence.

The new SafeSeaNet (SSN v.5) became operational according to the agreed schedule by the HLSG and the Central SSN. This new version of the system supports the legal requirements for registration of persons on board passenger ships, the revised Port Reception Facilities Directive and the Exchange of Information with the new PRF inspection system (THETIS-EU), improved incident reports and additional security measures.

The integrated maritime picture provided through IMS, Automated Behaviour Monitoring, Earth Observation services based on satellite imagery and RPAS were shared with Frontex and EFCA with the required customisation in the framework of coast guard cooperation and specific bilateral Service Level Agreements. New Cloud based capabilities (enrolled to limited number of users initially) related to the Long-term Storage of AIS data (HP-IMS) made possible the development of historical ABMs.

With the objective of continuing to offer maritime digital services in support of the daily work of the competent authorities of the Member States EMSA continued working on the development of THETIS and its modules. In particular, work continued in relation to ship related certificates, using THETIS as the platform to store relevant information, so as to make them available to Member States in their capacity both as Flag and Port States.

In the context of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, EMSA continued to support two distinct EU Naval Force operations, namely EUNAFOR-Somalia: Operation Atalanta, and EUNAVFOR-Med: Operation Iriini. To this end new Cooperation Agreements were signed.

Finally the Agency kicked off the work on a future platform in support of eCertification for Seafarers in line with the upcoming legislative developments.

## Technical & Operational Assistance

Strategic objectives

[Consolidate EMSA support to the Commission for the development of EU and international legal acts and for assessing their implementation](#)

[Extend and formalise EMSA training schemes](#)

[Support EU neighbourhood and sea basin policies to level-up and harmonise standards](#)

The contribution of the Agency to the development and implementation of EU standards and regulations in the maritime sector is delivered through a programme of visits and inspections, corresponding reports and cumulative horizontal analyses.

In addition, the Quality Management System for Visits and Inspections, covering the full scope of the Agency's visits and inspections activities continued to be implemented and provides a solid framework for continuous improvement, as one of the building blocks of the wider certification of the Agency's activities.

In 2021 the Agency's flagship project, under the label of EMSA Academy, constituted the backbone of the different activities planned in support of the competent authorities of the Member States. Focussing on functions, and combining state of the art tools, such as the eLearning platform MakCs and the Virtual Reality Environment for Ship Inspections (VRESI), the Agency has put together different learning paths in support of professional development using common core curricula, instructions, guidance, procedures, syllabi.

EMSA offers to Member States, candidate and potential candidate countries and neighbouring countries sharing EU sea basins an increasingly innovative, collaborative and flexible capacity building

toolbox, that can be specialised and tailor-made and relies increasingly on successful existing services, tools and applications as well as new technologies and learning services outside formal education.

Following the interest expressed by third countries, access to tools in support of Port State Control activities in different regions of the world was authorised by the EMSA Administrative Board, in accordance with the relevant procedure. Currently, eight out of nine Port state control regimes in the world are using EMSA tools, namely RuleCheck and/or MaKCs.

## B) EMSA's operational achievements in 2021

The Administrative Board took note of the different operational achievements that contributed to the Strategic Objectives, as highlighted at the beginning of the CAAR 2021, and of the information on the operational outputs against previously set objectives as per the Single Programming Document 2021-2023, as detailed in Part I "Achievements of the year". We consider that the overall performance and quality of the outputs were high and contributed to reaching the strategic objectives.

## C) Management

An overall effective and efficient monitoring of programme implementation was in place to track the delivery of planned outputs and performance per activity, and signal potential risks throughout the year and across the Agency.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the activities of the Agency. The Administrative Board welcomed the adaptations and measures EMSA implemented to continuously adjust to the pandemic. The swift adaptation of its working methods allowed the Agency to continue providing its stakeholders with the range and quality of services they expect.

The Key Performance Indicators used by the Agency to measure the continuity and quality of the EMSA external services have met their respective targets overall. As per previous years, cases in which targets have not been met have been duly justified.

The Administrative Board welcomed the continuous information provided on the mitigating measures put in place by the Agency to address the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the outcome of the Agency's assessments to minimise the impact on the budget.

The high level of implementation of the work programme resulted in an excellent budget implementation and the Agency executed 84,797,211 € in Commitment Appropriations (CA), representing 99.67% of the total budget of the year, and 82,798,089 € in Payment Appropriations (PA), amounting to 97.32% of the total budget<sup>1</sup>.

Based on information outlined in Parts II, III and IV of the CAAR2021 and on the work of the Administrative and Finance Committee throughout the year, the Administrative Board notes the Agency's exhaustive and meticulous approach to the follow-up of the outcome of audits by the various auditing bodies. In particular, the Administrative Board appreciates the fact that the Internal Audit Service of the Commission (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) did not issue any critical audit recommendations or observations that could lead to a reservation in the annual declaration of

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<sup>1</sup> Counting C1 Funds (appropriations voted in the current budget).

assurance and that at the end of 2021, all audit recommendations issued and due by 31/12/2021 and earlier had been implemented.

Furthermore, the Administrative Board notes that measures are in place to maintain an appropriate risk and control environment and provide an appropriate level of assurance. The Agency welcomed the adoption of the Agency's new Anti-Fraud Strategy. Building blocks of assurance leading to the Declaration of the Authorising Officer are in place, as are measures to address any serious management and control weaknesses identified.

## Conclusion

The Administrative Board of the European Maritime Safety Agency concludes that the Agency has met its objectives in accordance with the annual work programme for 2021 and the overall multi-annual strategic framework.

The Administrative Board notes with satisfaction how the Agency is committed to its core tasks and also with dedication contributes to improved European cooperation and efforts to contribute to the EU green deal while continuing to take on a pioneering role in the digital transformation of maritime transport by incorporating new technologies into the maritime situational picture as well as into services that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of maritime administration and enforcement.

The Administrative Board at the same time notes great uncertainty due to the invasion by Russia of Ukraine. EMSA should continue to monitor the situation closely and provide up-to date information to Member States and the Commission on maritime safety, security and the marine environment, as was already done with the EMSA report on "Impact of developments in Ukraine on maritime traffic and seaborne trade".

Finally, the Administrative Board greatly values the excellent performance of the EMSA staff in carrying out the tasks of the Agency, even throughout another particularly challenging year, enhancing maritime safety, security, pollution prevention and the overall sustainability of the sector, paving the way for the use of new technology to the benefit of the European maritime community.

Done at Lisbon, 23 March 2022



Signed

Andreas Nordseth

Chairman of the Administrative Board