

Detailed Draft Minutes of the 72nd EMSA Administrative Board meeting

1. Welcome from the Chairman and adoption of the agenda

New Board Members/alternates were welcomed, as listed below.

No conflicts of interest were declared. Upon two AOBs requested: by Spain on the rising accommodation costs and the level of EMSA reimbursement and by the Commission on cybersecurity, the agenda was adopted.

The Chairman also recalled that, following the request from the previous meeting, the Summary Report of the Administrative and Finance Committee held on 10 March had been circulated on the same day.

New Board Members:

Finland

- Board Member: Ms Sanna Sonninen, Maritime Director, Finnish Transport and Communication Agency, replacing Mr Juha-Matti Korsi

Belgium

- Board Member: Mr Peter Claeys, Director General of Shipping, Mobility and Transport, Belgium, replacing Ms Els Claeys

New Alternate Members:

Finland

- Alternate Member: Mr Eero Hokkanen, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Transport and Communications, replacing Ms Katja Viertävä

Belgium

- Alternate Member: Ms Nathalie De Jaeger, Head of the Strategic department DG Shipping, Mobility and Transport, Belgium, replacing Mr Peter Claeys

Germany

- Alternate Member: Mr Sebastian Gastes, International and European Maritime Transport Policy, Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport, Berlin, replacing Mr Christian Kohlasse

Proxies/absences:

Austria did not attend the meeting and did not provide a proxy.

Commission: Ms Hanna Jahns (DG ECHO) provided proxy to Ms Fotini Ioannidou (DG MOVE).

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Mr Tassoni, Head of the Executive Office and Administrative Board Secretariat, recalled that the Detailed Draft minutes were circulated on 20 December, and comments were received from Croatia, Czech Republic and DG MOVE that were already included in the document.

Further comments from DG SRD had been received a few days prior to this Board meeting. Nevertheless, Ms Montagnon considered that the final option proposed by the Agency did not adequately reflect the intentions of the Commission.

The final version of the proposed changes was suggested by the Commission during the coffee break and shown on the screen allowing for the Board to identify the changes which were then integrated in the document.

The Administrative Board approved the draft minutes and decisions of the last meeting, which took place in Lisbon on 27 and 28 November 2024. Changes requested by Croatia, Czech Republic and the Commission were integrated in the document.

3. EMSA Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024

3a Consideration and Adoption by the Administrative Board

The Executive Director recalled that 2024 was the 5th year of implementation of the EMSA 5Y Strategy, another challenging year where the Agency managed to implement the strategic objectives thanks to the Board's trust and, of course, the EMSA staff and its dedication. 94% actions were implemented allowing delivering on the outputs as pledged in the 2024 work programme, 3% of which were rescheduled to 2025 and 3% cancelled, half of which being due to external factors.

In terms of budget implementation, 99.22% were executed in commitment appropriations and 97.13% in payment appropriations.

Ms Markovčić Kostelac highlighted 2024 as another year marked by geopolitical instability – the continuation of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the associated sanctions on Russia, the outbreak of the terrible conflict in Gaza and the crisis due to the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea. She underlined the adaptability and the flexibility demonstrated by the Agency to support its stakeholders with the provision of services to address these emergency and crisis situations. For instance, she referred to the services offered by the Agency to the Member States, to the Commission services including FISMA and to EUNAVFOR for the Operation Aspides.

She also shared some of the highlights of the year in different areas of operation and announced the traditional video with the EMSA staff detailing the achievements.

The Chairman congratulated the Agency on its achievements and recalled that the CAAR2024 adoption was subject to the final report from the European Court of Auditors that would be available in the fall.

Ms Ioannidou, DG MOVE, expressed support for the adoption of the CAAR2024 and mentioned the crucial support of the Agency to Fitfor55, FuelEU legislation, the preparation for the adoption of the Maritime Safety package as well as its support on the implementation of sanctions. She also welcomed the excellent budget execution and the good audits results, but also the continuous commitment of the Agency towards reaching gender balance.

Mr Efstratiou (Cyprus) also expressed sincere congratulations for the achievements and the high level of implementation both of the work programme and the budget. He also encouraged the Agency to give more visibility to its work in the IMO.

Mr Banel (France) especially congratulated the Agency on its work in the area of sustainability and surveillance, in particular with CISE and on the elaboration of guidelines to assist the Member States in relation to the 'dark fleet'. Mr Banel was joined by Mr Claeysens (Belgium) and Ms Sonninen (Finland) who hoped the Agency would be able to intensify support in this area in order to help strengthen Member States approach to the "dark fleet". Ms Sonninen expressed special gratitude for the Agency's assistance during the recent incidents in the waters of Finland. The Agency was able to provide valuable background information and to cooperated effectively with all Finnish authorities during the operations.

The Executive Director confirmed the possible further development of specific guidelines and identification of high risks and tools to combat illicit practices used by the 'dark fleet', subject to agreement by the Commission.

Ms Kohlhaas (Germany) also congratulated the Agency on the high value work demonstrated in 2024 and further requested information on the type of cooperation with ESA.

In response to Ms Kohlhaas, the Agency confirmed the added value of working with a more scientific and research-oriented organisation to support and enhance the Agency's operational Earth Observation and SAT-AIS services.

Also in response to Germany on the downtime of the SafeSeaNet system, which was longer than the targeted maximum, Mr Bal, Head of Department 3 – Digital Services, explained that a connectivity issue had impacted all EMSA maritime applications in the first quarter of 2024 due to a cyber attack. The Agency was working on strengthening its firewall in order to be better prepared in the future.

For Mr Spanos (Greece) EMSA was an innovative, effective and transparent agency that added value to its stakeholders and ensured efficiency also in 2024.

The Agency took note of typos to be corrected under the human component and the implementation of the coast guard cooperation Annual Strategic Plan.

The Executive Director thanked the Board for the recognition of the Agency's work and the joint success.

In response to Cyprus on the dissemination of information, Ms Markovčić Kostelac highlighted also the communication work already achieved: almost 65000 followers on different social media platforms, 3 to 5 information announcements daily shared with stakeholders and the wider public, and a 38% increase in terms of web users. Ideas were welcome to spread information even more, with the use of events such as open days, webinars etc.

Mr Efstratiou further informed the EMSA Administrative Board that Cyprus would organise on the occasion of the June Board meeting, a reception in the presence of the Shipping Deputy Minister of Cyprus, Mrs. Marina Hadjimanolis at the Cyprus Embassy in Lisbon. The official invitation would come in the coming weeks.

3b Assessment by the Administrative Board

Mr Banel reported to the Administrative Board the discussions held in the Administrative and Finance Committee on 10 March on the Assessment's part c) Management, confirming a favourable opinion on behalf of the Committee on the text, subject to the changes proposed by the Commission with the appropriate wording in relation to Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.

The Chairman invited the Members to comment on the draft Assessment, presented on screen with the changes proposed at the Committee meeting and the AB Assessment was adopted.

The Administrative Board adopted the EMSA Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024, in accordance with Articles 15(2)(d) and 10(2)(b) of the EMSA Founding Regulation and provided its assessment of the EMSA Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024, in accordance with Article 48 of the EMSA Financial Regulation, taking into account the European Court of Auditors' observations of previous years and subject to the preliminary observations of the European Court of Auditors.

The Board's adoption and assessment will be subsequently confirmed by written procedure if there are no substantial changes or revisited at the June meeting if there are, once the preliminary observations are available.

4. Update on Agency's activities

4a Update on RPAS operations 2025

Ms Markovčić Kostelac, Executive Director, presented the deployments planned in the Agency's SPD 2025 as well as the adaptations needed to mitigate the impact of the unexpected bankruptcy of one contractor. The contingency plan aimed at optimising the provision of the service while ensuring sound financial execution.

In terms of operational impact on Member States, some delays in the commencement of operations were possible while the objectives, as well as the duration and area of operations, remained largely unchanged. The contingency plan was budget-neutral, successfully absorbing the significant financial impact of EUR 8.5 million which was a fundamental point in what concerns the budget execution linked with RPAS activities.

The Agency will monitor closely the implementation of the contingency plan and make necessary adjustments if required.

Finland described the very positive cooperation with the Agency in this area and thanked EMSA for successful delivery of services despite the challenges in the region.

The Administrative Board took note of the information provided by the Agency on the RPAS operations 2025. In particular, details were provided concerning the contingency plans to ensure operational continuity and budget execution following the unexpected bankruptcy of one of the Agency's contractors.

4b Update on the ongoing procurement for the network of vessels

The Executive Director recalled that, following the agreement of the Board in November, a procurement procedure for 4 lots for the network of vessels was launched at the beginning of the year: Bay of Biscay, Canary Islands and Madeira, North Atlantic and Northern Baltic.

The procurement had two phases: 1. to identify interested tenderers and assess their financial and professional capacity; 2. the proper bidding phase.

The first phase ended on 3 March and interest has been shown for each of the 4 lots. The Agency was in the process of evaluating the legal, financial and professional capacity of each request. The invitation to the second phase would be issued in the beginning of June and the Agency would provide an interim update at the June Board meeting if possible, and a more comprehensive one in November.

Finland and Estonia pointed out the very high risk in the region for oil spills and chemical discharges due to escalating geopolitics and the proximity of Russia, compounded by challenging conditions for response and mitigation measures, especially in winter. The deployment of an EMSA vessel in the Northern Baltic Sea was therefore necessary and would demonstrate good cooperation not only on environmental issues but also strategically.

France also highlighted the importance of coverage of the outermost regions such as La Guadeloupe, La Réunion and Mayotte and hoped the analysis of risk would be extended to those areas.

Germany, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, Poland, Iceland and Norway all shared the same concerns, with references to high traffic volumes, growth of the dark fleet, aging and poorly reported vessels, lack of familiarity with icy conditions, and considered it highly important and urgent to protect the Northern Baltic Sea, but also Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Romania, Portugal, Bulgaria, Malta and Hungary.

The Chairman concluded the discussions and announced more information possibly at the June and certainly at the November meeting.

The Administrative Board took note of the information provided by the Agency on the ongoing procurement for the network of vessels, the 1st Phase of which ended on 3 March with interest shown by potential bidders for all 4 lots. According to the calendar of the procurement, the invitation to the 2nd Phase will be done by the beginning of June. An update will be provided on the ongoing process at the June Administrative Board meeting.

4c Update on the ongoing work on how to make the pollution response toolbox future-proof

Ms Tomassini recalled the discussions from the Board Meeting in November concerning the "Concept Paper on making the EMSA Pollution Response Services (PRS) toolbox future proof".

The questionnaire circulated to all Member States, including Norway and Iceland, had a high response rate with 19 replies already. She further informed the Board that a final reminder would be sent again in the coming weeks in order to proceed with the analysis of the substantial feedback received.

She also took the opportunity to remind the Board of the next agreed steps and their indicative dates:

Week 5 - 8 May: First Consultation Workshop with the Member States and the CTG MPPR experts to discuss and streamline the feedback and preliminary results of the stakeholder consultation, to be held back-to-back with the annual PRS User Group meeting (online).

16 - 17 June: EMSA Administrative Board meeting when the Board will be updated on the results of the stakeholder consultation, including identification of possible preliminary proposals, possibly through a dedicated AB workshop.

Week 8 - 12 September: Second Consultation Workshop with the Member States and the CTG MPPR experts to discuss the Draft Report to be prepared by EMSA on the possible way forward, to be held back-to-back with the annual CTG MPPR meeting (in-person meeting).

10 October: Report made available to the Administrative Board (1 month before meeting).

Week 10 - 14 November: EMSA Administrative Board meeting with discussions on the possible way forward.

The Executive Director suggested the possibility to hold in the margins of the June Board meeting a dedicated workshop on this issue, allowing the Board to steer this issue. The Chairman requested feedback on this from the Member States within two weeks.

Ms Tomassini also recalled the ongoing work of the correspondence group on **data and risk assessment**. Following the completion of the first phase of this exercise by the end of 2024 dedicated to the identification of the data needed for risk assessment and identifying potential data gaps, the second phase had been agreed aiming at defining a common ground and terminology for risk assessment. Unfortunately, despite several requests by the Agency, very few countries had indicated their interest in participating in this second phase. This level of participation was not sufficiently representative to collect EU wide views on this sensitive topic.

The Agency would send a final reminder to the Member States' experts, with the Administrative Board in copy, hoping for more endorsements that would allow the Agency to pursue its efforts towards a product that could then be broadly supported and accepted.

4d Next generation of ROV services

Mr Kirov, recalled that the ROV service started in 2023. Since then, there have been 11 deployments across practically all EU sea basins, from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean.

Despite the novelty of the service, during the ROV deployments and stakeholders' fora, in particular the Permanent Cooperation Framework (PCF) for accident investigation and the ROV User Group, stakeholders expressed positive feedback and interest in more demanding use cases that could satisfy the needs of other user communities: environmental protection, ship safety & security, including support to the monitoring/protection of critical maritime infrastructures.

To establish the future underwater services, by end of March the Agency would launch a dedicated procurement for services that may include larger ROV and advanced sensing capabilities, a multi-mission approach in support of various use cases, the capability to embed mission-specific sensors, etc.

Mr Kirov further provided examples of possible future use cases that included intervention on targets at high depth, capacity to recover debris requiring dextrous manipulators, inspection of subsea critical infrastructures, pollution monitoring on wrecks, seabed bathymetric surveys, etc.

The Administrative Board took note of the information provided by the Agency on the next generation of EMSA underwater services.

4e Information on the TRAINALTER study

Ms Tomassini informed the Board that the [TRAINALTER study](#) was available on the Agency's website. In the light of alternative fuels and energy systems available or being increasingly explored for use by ships, it resulted that the existing training and competence standards established in the STCW Convention and Code do not cover all the specific aspects regarding knowledge, understanding and proficiency (KUP) for seafarers on board ships using these alternative fuels and energy systems. Industry has expressed the need for technical and detailed guidance on training of such seafarers, leading the IMO to take initiatives in this respect, both in the interim and longer terms. It was against this background that EMSA commissioned TRAINALTER. This substantial document looked at alternative fuels from the perspective of specific seafarer competences, with a focus on additional training that seafarers on board ships using alternative fuels and systems need to undergo to ensure the safe and efficient operation and maintenance of these ships, not yet covered in all aspects by the existing training and competence standards in the STCW Convention and Code.

The study identified and described specific competences and training areas in terms of knowledge, understanding and proficiency for seafarers to ensure safe operations of ships using alternative fuels and energy systems and also identified and justified methods for demonstrating competence and descriptions of training programmes and syllabi for seafarers and instructors. The study also provided an example of a training course both for seafarers on board ships using ammonia as a fuel and for their respective trainers.

The study showed that there was a wide range of maturity levels concerning existing training and competence requirements for the different fuels and fuel systems, with LNG, for example, being quite mature, while hydrogen is less mature.

The report also identified cyber security as an area of "horizontal" potential competence need, relevant to some degree to all the fuels/fuel systems. This area was nevertheless not covered in the study.

Ms Tomassini looked forward to opportunities to raise further awareness on this report, both at EU and global level, especially in the light of the ongoing work within IMO, both in relation to the specific subject and to the wider exercise of the Revision of the STCW Convention and Code.

Germany expressed appreciation for the TRAINALTER study as a very good and evidence-based piece of work. She suggested that the Commission look into options to incorporate this study in the ongoing work at IMO, through a lunchtime presentation or an information document.

DG MOVE confirmed that they were looking into the best possible ways to raise awareness on the study, possibly through an information paper for the next MSC.

The Administrative Board took note of the information provided by the Agency on the TRAINALTER study.

Cyprus requested an update on the state of play of negotiations on the proposed new EMSA mandate. In response and at the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Knobloch Sieradzka (Poland, expert) took the floor to update the Board, on behalf of the Polish Presidency, on the negotiations in relation to the revision of the EMSA mandate, with some differences between the positions of the Council and the Parliament. She further stated that the Polish Presidency was working on a possible compromise to be discussed in the next weeks.

5. Draft Administrative Arrangements

Ms Tomassini explained the invitation by the JRC to explore potential areas of collaboration on the Global Green Shipping Corridor (GGSC) that aimed at creating sustainable shipping routes connecting Europe to the rest of the world, offering opportunities for developing countries to become hubs for green shipping and for ports to play a crucial role in energy import to Europe. The project, while coordinated by DG INTPA, included also involvement of several other DGs (MOVE, CLIMA, ENV, ENER, MARE, RTD).

In its role of identifying strategic ports and corridors globally, assessing the supply and demand for low carbon fuels such as methanol, ammonia and hydrogen in the medium and long term, JRC believed that EMSA could provide both valuable expertise and data to support the initiative.

The subject matter of the Agreement was the collaboration between the two parties supporting the JRC's research and development of methodologies and tools for the analysis of maritime transport activity and its resulting fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions with the objectives of advancing scientific knowledge in the field(s) of maritime transport; and ensuring that the results obtained are used to support policy-making.

Under the agreement, EMSA would share Thetis-MRV data on reported annual total fuel consumption per ship and global AIS detected port call (MARINFO data source) data. Fuel consumption data was restricted to the MRV scope, i.e. voyages to or from the EEA, intra EEA and in port at berth in the EEA. AIS detected port call data that match the period covered by Thetis-MRV will be provided for the period 2018-2024. In addition, detailed satellite AIS ship position data and AIS detected port calls (MARINFO data source) which will be provided for 4 months (3 for training + 1 for testing).

JRC will use datasets provided by EMSA for the development of data-driven methodologies and tools that can improve the monitoring of maritime transport activity and its impacts, in support of EC policies related to maritime transport.

The planned duration of the agreement was of 18 months and could be extended with the agreement of both parties. In terms of costs, each party shall bear the cost of any expenditure it incurs relating to the performance of the Agreement.

Mr Banel as Chairman of the Administrative and Finance Committee confirmed its positive opinion.

Ms Ioannidou also confirmed the importance of the project for the Commission as well as its full support. She also recalled the importance of the Agency consulting the Commission prior to submitting such agreements to the Board for its consideration allowing for a proper assessment of resources as a matter of principle.

The draft Collaboration agreement with JRC was circulated in the 1st set of documents for this meeting, on Thursday February 13th. In line with the 4 weeks consideration period required by the Founding Regulation, the Board was requested to 'consider' the draft agreement by Thursday March 13th, after which, if no objections are received, the Executive Director will be in a position to sign the agreement. No objections were received by Thursday March 13th.

6. HR Matters - Update on the implementation of the HR Strategy

Ms Dominika Lempicka-Fichter, Head of Department 4 – Corporate Services, recalled the adoption of the HR Strategy on 31 March 2023 with its 5 key pillars "S.T.A.F.F.", each of which contained a series of established objectives and relevant identified actions.

Initially, 80 actions across the five pillars had been identified, but in 2024, following the all-staff survey, the Geographical Balance Report, and the Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the number of actions expanded to 104, of which 79 were classified as continuous and 25 as one-off.

The Agency already implemented 75% of all actions, as follows under each pillar:

Sustainable Engagement

Following the first EMSA all-staff satisfaction survey launched in the beginning of 2024 a presentation to all staff took place at the end of April, compiling and assessing its results. Through a workshop where staff were divided into groups, staff was able to brainstorm on possible actions based on the survey results.

An Exit Questionnaire was also developed to understand the reasons behind staff departures and identify areas for improvement.

Also, Team Dynamics Training for Units had been organised for Departments 3 and 4 in September 2024. For the remaining Departments this would take place during 2025.

The Agency started using surveys as a method of consulting staff on various topics: cafeteria satisfaction surveys, CO₂ offsetting surveys, and commuting pattern surveys.

Talent

Following the defining of Job Families and standardising Job Titles, the Agency published the Job Descriptions of all staff on its intranet, ensuring transparency, clarity, and consistency across all roles and allowing everyone to understand responsibilities and expectations.

Regular meetings among Heads of Units were established allowing for strengthened collaboration, improved decision-making and better alignment across Units.

Through the Career Advancement Exercise an internal process allowing Contract Agents to apply for positions in higher function groups was introduced.

Finally, staff members who take on coordination roles were formally acknowledged and this role is now reflected in their job descriptions and performance appraisals.

Attractivity

With the goal of strengthening staff interviewing skills and raising awareness of unconscious bias in order to ensure a more objective and inclusive selection process, a training session for panel members involved in recruitment was organised in October 2024.

In the context of the Gender Action Plan, over the period from 2022 to 2024, several initiatives, including awareness campaigns and participation in external networks, were successfully executed.

A major milestone was the adoption in July 2024 of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy as a result of the dedicated workshop in March 2024 to engage staff in discussions on inclusion. Additionally, in November 2024, the EUAN Charter was signed, reinforcing the Agency's commitment to diversity at a broader level.

Ethics and Integrity Training sessions were conducted in November 2024 to ensure that all staff understand and uphold EMSA's ethical standards.

The Geographical Balance Report was completed with a dedicated action plan developed in order to address any identified possible gaps.

Flexibility

The Hybrid Way of Working was successfully implemented, with both flexibility and productivity maintained. A follow-up assessment has been conducted and led to a six-month report to evaluate its impact and make any necessary adjustments.

To further support staff well-being, the Agency increased the presence of its in-house doctor by adding an extra day per week. Health campaigns to promote preventive care and overall wellness were also held.

Through the Well@EMSA initiative and through a dedicated internal communication campaign with numerous actions focused on well-being, various measures were implemented to support staff health, engagement, and overall work-life balance.

Future

In order to assist EMSA in becoming more effective at achieving its strategic goals and responding to changes in tasks and technology, as well as helping EMSA staff to remain a knowledgeable, skilled and flexible workforce, better serving the European Union and its citizens, a new learning and development policy needed to be put in place.

In addition, the Agency initiated the transition to MIPS+ for mission processes as part of the modernisation of HR ICT tools.

The Chairman thanked the Agency for the information on this very important topic and recalled that at March Board meetings the Agency would provide updates on the follow up of the action plan for the implementation of the HR Strategy.

The European Commission underlined the need to provide documents related to HR issues in advance to the Administrative Board and Administrative and Finance Committee meetings, such as the PowerPoint presentation that had been prepared for this meeting.

The Administrative Board took note of the update on the implementation of the HR Strategy.

7. Anti-Fraud Strategy 2025-2027

Mr Van Hees, Internal Control Coordinator, recalled that in 2025, the Board adopted the Agency's first Fraud Prevention and Detection Strategy, fully based upon the European Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) with the overall objective to improve prevention, detection and conditions for investigations of fraud and achieve appropriate reparation and deterrence.

A second version, which covered the period 2021-2024 was adopted in 2021.

This third version, covering the period 2025-2027, took into account the latest methodology and guidance for the anti-fraud strategies of EU decentralised Agencies, issued in June 2024 by OLAF.

The strategy also considered several other elements such as the results of previous risk assessments, previous audit results, the assessment of the Agency's Internal Control Framework as well as the evaluation of the 2021 Anti-Fraud Strategy.

The document, which formed part of the Internal Control Framework already in place, set out the objectives and measures to prevent or minimize the risks of fraud in EMSA's area of responsibility and the steps it will take in response to reported or suspected fraud cases.

Mr Banel (France) as Chairman of the Administrative and Finance Committee conveyed a positive opinion and stressed the importance of the being kept informed on the implementation.

Ms Montagnon thanked the EMSA colleagues for consulting the Commission on the revised guidelines.

The Administrative Board adopted the Anti-Fraud Strategy 2025-2027.

8. Adoption of the list of "A" items

Mr Banel, Chairman of the Administrative and Finance Committee, reported that the necessary quorum for the meeting of the Administrative and Finance Committee held in preparation of this meeting online on 10 March had been in place with the participation in the meeting of the representatives from France, Germany (with a proxy from Belgium), Poland, Sweden, Spain and the Commission. Relevant EMSA staff members and management were also present. The Committee had reviewed all the "A" points and could recommend that the Administrative Board approve or take note of them as appropriate, "en bloc".

The Administrative Board took note/adopted of the following "A" items en bloc, following the report and positive recommendation of the Administrative and Finance Committee:

8a EMSA Financial Statement 2024 – took note

The Agency's accountant, Ms Katalin Duarte, informed the Committee of the total balance for 2024 of 73.2 M, up 7% compared to the previous year, mainly due to 1) the increase in intangible assets (+1.8 M) and decrease in equipment (-2.5 M) and 2) the decrease in short-term pre-financing (-1.1M) and increase in cash (+5.9 M). The economic outturn of the year is of -0.8 M (vs. 0.09 M in 2023).

Other key figures were provided namely:

- *The budgetary outturn of the year was 1.3M (vs. 0.6M in 2023);*
- *Total revenues are up + 3.71% due to increase in Commission subsidy and prefinancing for project financed activities (+3.7 M); both represent 99% of the total revenues;*

- Total expenditures have increased by 4.5% mainly due to the increase in the operational expenses (+1.8 M), staff expenses (+1.1M), fixed assets expenses (+0.7M) and other administrative expenses (+1.4M).

Budgetary execution for C1 (credits of the year) was again high: 99.2% of commitment execution and 97.1% of payment execution. After taking into account automatic carry-overs of PA (i.e. C8 funds: appropriations carried over automatically), the Agency reached 98.6% of payment execution.

At the June Board meeting, the Board will be requested to approve the final accounts subject to the final ECA report. This statement, however, is still subject to the outcome of the final report of the Court which will be adopted in October, therefore in November the document will be submitted for final approval, taking into account the final report of the Court of Auditors regarding the certification of the Accounts.

The Commission congratulated EMSA for the high budget execution.

The Agency clarified that follow-up on the unsuccessful vessel tender from last year would be provided at the Board meeting.

Comments in plenary:

In response to Mr Castioni (Italy), the Agency's Accounting Officer Ms Duarte explained that the economic outturn of the year of -0.8 M (vs. 0.09 M in 2023) was mainly due to anticipated payments of large amounts for licenses as well as payments, where possible, from the last quarter of 2024 to the first quarter of 2025.

The Commission congratulated EMSA for the high budget execution.

The Commission also took the opportunity to recall the transfers that took place in 2024 from Title 3 to Title 1 and the need to monitor the situation in 2025, and to enquire about the possible impact of the 2025 vessel tenders on the budget for 2025.

The Executive Director recalled the justification for the transfers in 2024, which to date had not materialised for 2025. As for the outlook concerning the 2025 vessel tenders, all available information had been provided under agenda item 4b and as explained under that agenda item, further information would be provided if possible in June on the tenders, and certainly in November following their evaluation.

8b School Arrangement – Annual Report 2024 – took note

The Agency informed the Committee that for the academic year 2024/25, a total of 122 children of staff members had been enrolled in the different schools for a cost of approximately 832,000 EUR for the budgetary year 2024. This was still lower than the average cost per pupil in the European School system.

The Agency clarified that further progress towards a European School in Lisbon was out of the Agency's hands and not expected in the coming months. However, the portfolio of schools on offer to the Agency staff, which had increased in 2024 by one additional school across the river where an increasing number of staff lived in view of housing costs in Lisbon, was more than adequate to meet the needs of staff and support as best possible the Agency's geographic diversity.

8c 2025 Appropriations cashed – took note

The Agency recalled that specific sources of revenue, at the beginning of the year are recorded as 'p.m.' (pro memoria or token entry) since these funds can only be loaded once cash payment has been received by the Agency in the bank account.

A total of 4,976,250 EUR since the beginning of 2025 has been received as a second pre-financing payment executed in the framework of the Specific Agreement No. 10/2025 implementing the SLA signed between EMSA and Frontex for the provision of surveillance tools and services in support of Frontex activities, including for the implementation of EUROSUR framework.

This amount is due in accordance with Art. 7 of the Service Level Agreement and follows the 1st pre-financing tranche received in December 2024 (EUR 1.66M), to cover fixed and variable costs for 2025 activities under Specific Agreement 10.

Final amounts received by the Agency will as usual be recorded and adopted by the Administrative Board through the final budget amendment after 31st December of this year. Until then and in the interest of transparency, the Administrative Board will as usual be informed at each meeting of the assigned revenue received by the Agency in the bank account.

In response to a specific question, the Agency explained that extending the use of EMSA applications to third countries may or may not generate marginal costs, depending on whether or not additional, tailored functionalities were needed. Any marginal costs generated would be charged. In the specific case of RuleCheck, the functionalities used by the various PSC memoranda were the standard ones. No marginal costs were generated, and no charges imposed. In addition, any requests for the use of EMSA applications were always brought to the Board before being granted.

8d Monitoring of findings and recommendations from internal & external audits & EMSA follow up – *took note*

The Agency presented the usual summary table outlining the recommendations/findings and the EMSA actions planned or undertaken.

The documentation provided to the Administrative Board included the final IAS report on human resources and ethics at EMSA that was issued on 20 January 2025.

The overall conclusion of the audit was positive, and the IAS concluded that the management and internal control system in EMSA for managing its human resources and ethics activities are adequately designed and effectively and efficiently implemented in compliance with the regulatory framework and guidelines for EU bodies.

Three recommendations were issued, all classified as important, which is the lowest level of recommendation:

- *one covering the ethical framework, related staff awareness and the Anti-Fraud Strategy;*
- *one concerning staff wellbeing, the working environment and HR Management IT tools;*
- *one concerning efficiency gains and synergy plans.*

The Agency has developed an action plan to address all recommendations. This action plan has been sent to IAS for final review and adoption by IAS. The IAS has informed EMSA that this action plan is adequate to mitigate the risks identified. It should be noted that some actions have already been implemented and some recommendations are already addressed (such as the update of the anti-fraud strategy and the updated guidelines).

The committee was also informed that the audit on the EMSA Quality Management System that was performed very recently did not result in any findings or recommendations.

In line with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, the Internal Auditor has the obligation to confirm the organisational independence of the internal audit activity to the Administrative Board on an annual basis. On 24 January 2025, IAS issued its annual statement

regarding its organisational independence. The statement is included in the documents provided to the Administrative Board.

The Commission looked forward to receiving further details concerning efficiency gains and synergy plans, particularly in the context of the legislative developments bringing new tasks to the Agency, at the next Administrative Board meeting in June.

The Committee recalled that the Administrative Board can request the IAS to provide further clarifications on their audit reports.

8e Implementing Rules to the Staff Regulations – *adopted*

The Agency recalled the Decision of the Administrative Board of 20 November 2009 currently in place concerning the appraisal of the Executive Director. That Decision was outdated in several aspects as it preceded the latest revision of the Staff Regulations which entered into force on 1 January 2014 with a probationary period foreseen of only six-month, rather than nine months as for all other staff.

The Commission provided EMSA with a template to be used for the purpose of adopting implementing rules concerning the probationary period, management trial period and the annual appraisal of the Executive Director of EMSA.

The Staff Committee gave their agreement on 27 May 2024 to the proposed way forward.

EMSA further recalled the Decision of the Administrative Board of 6 June 2024 giving a mandate to the Executive Director to request the Commission's agreement for adoption of implementing rules by the Administrative Board concerning the probationary period, management trial period and the annual appraisal of the Executive Director of EMSA.

On 28 June 2024, the Executive Director submitted such request to the Commission.

On 15 November 2024, the European Commission gave its agreement to the adoption by EMSA of implementing rules giving effect to the Staff Regulations and to the CEOS concerning the probationary period, management trial period and the annual appraisal of the Executive Director of EMSA.

The Administrative Board is therefore invited to adopt the new implementing rules concerning the probationary period, management trial period and the annual appraisal of the Executive Director of EMSA.

It should be noted that the new decision does not entail any changes in practice to the annual appraisal procedure for the Executive Director, in particular there is a Reporting Panel, composed of two members of the Administrative Board as is currently the case, with one of the reporting officers representing the European Commission and the Appeal assessor will again be the Chair of the Board.

9. Any Other Business

Mr Abad (Spain) raised the issue of rising accommodation costs and the level of reimbursement established by the "EMSA Rules on Reimbursement of Expenses to Experts".

The Executive Director promised to look into the matter in the coming months, in consultation with the Commission and taking into account relevant rules and practices concerning both the daily allowances and the reimbursement of accommodation costs, and report back at the June Administrative Board

meeting. She nevertheless informed the Board that the Agency was closely following the rules and practices of the Commission, and that any future decision would have to be taken with the Commission but also would impact the budget of the Agency.

Following a specific request by the Commission, the Agency also confirmed that the status of implementation of actions in the field of cybersecurity would be provided at the June Board meeting with an update once per year thereafter, unless something significant needs to be raised with the Board beforehand.

On cybersecurity, Ms Montagnon (Commission) recalled the seminar held with all the SRD Agencies on this important topic, resulting - after assessment of all risks – in an agreed list of cross-cutting risks for the EU and the Agencies. The subject, needed to be taken into account within the framework of the implementation of the new cyber regulation which included clear deadlines and plans to be respected. She further reiterated the request made at the Administrative and Finance Committee meeting to have an information point on this topic for regular discussions.

The Executive Director stated the importance of cybersecurity issues for EMSA, both in relation to the maritime applications and at the corporate level. She further confirmed that the implementation of the new cyber regulation was high on the Agency's agenda, announcing the outcome of the scope exercise according to the timeline on 8 April, as well as the continuous awareness campaigns on the issue with respect to the Agency's staff. She added that appropriate resources were going to be required as additional investments will be needed.

The Chairman also confirmed the importance of cybersecurity and, given the sensitivity of the issue requested the Agency to present this topic at an in-person Board meeting, starting in June with an update once a year thereafter.

Mr Zdanowicz requested possible comments on the format of the newly introduced Summary of the Administrative and Finance Committee by the 26 March.

France recalled the event celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the EQUASIS system to be held in Paris in June that would be organised jointly with the support of EMSA.

Poland recalled the information to the EMSA Administrative Board already sent on behalf of the Polish Presidency of the European Union Council on the International Maritime Congress to be held on 15 and 16 May 2025 in Szczecin.

Furthermore, Szczecin is also planned to host the second European Maritime Space Forum on 16 May 2025, during the second day of the International Maritime Congress.

These events will be preceded by the Maritime Directors Meeting on 14 May 2025 in the headquarters of Maritime Office in Szczecin, Poland.

Dates of the next Administrative Board meeting:

June 2025

Administrative and Finance Committee: Week 2 to 6 June tbc (online meeting)

Administrative Board: Monday 16 June afternoon and Tuesday 17 June morning (Lisbon)

9 April 2025

November 2025

Administrative and Finance Committee: to be agreed (online meeting)

Administrative Board: Week 10 to 14 November (Lisbon)

Signed:



Wojciech Zdanowicz

Chairman of the EMSA Administrative Board

Done at Lisbon, 12 March 2025

List of participants

72nd Meeting of the Administrative Board, Lisbon, online meeting 12 March 2025

MEMBER STATES	
BELGIUM	
Peter Clayessens	Board Member
BULGARIA	
Ventsislav Ivanov	Board Member
CROATIA	
Siniša Orlić	Board Member
Toni Maričević	Alternate Member
CYPRUS	
Ioannis Efstratiou	Board Member
CZECH REPUBLIC	
Evzen Vydra	Board Member
DENMARK	
Malene L. Mundt	Alternate Member
Jesper Christensen	Expert
ESTONIA	
Kristjan Truu	Board Member
FINLAND	
Sanna Sonninen	Board Member
Eero Hokkanen	Alternate Member
FRANCE	
Eric Banel	Board Member – Chairman of the Administrative and Finance Committee
Anne Legrégeois	Alternate Member
GERMANY	
Martina Kohlhaas	Board Member

GREECE	
Andreas Spanos	Board Member
Nikolaos Matoulas	Alternate Member
HUNGARY	
Csaba Bellyei	Board Member
IRELAND	
Noelle Waldron	Alternate Member
ITALY	
Enrico Castioni	Board Member
LATVIA	
Jānis Krastiņš	Board Member
LITHUANIA	
Linas Kasparavičius	Board Member
LUXEMBOURG	
Marc Siuda	Alternate Member
MALTA	
David Bugeja	Board Member
NETHERLANDS	
Jeroen Witter	Alternate Member
POLAND	
Wojciech Zdanowicz	Board Member - Chairman of the EMSA Administrative Board
Sonia Knobloch-Sieradzkaa	Expert
PORTUGAL	
Paolo Pamplona	Alternate Member
ROMANIA	
Razvan-Gabriel Trafandir	Board Member
Lacrima Hornet	Alternate Member

SLOVAKIA	
Josef Mrkva	Board Member
SLOVENIA	
Jadran Klinec	Board Member
SPAIN	
Gustavo Santana Hernández	Board Member
Javier Fernandez Abad	Alternate Member
SWEDEN	
Pernilla Wallin	Board Member
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	
Anne Montagnon	Board Member
Fotini Ioannidou	Board Member
Barbara Sellier	Alternate Member
Cristina Cuadra Garcia	Alternate Member
Isabel Baez	Expert
Kristel Jurado	Expert
Rosa Antidormi	Expert
ESA – EFTA SURVEILLANCE AUTHORITY	
Lemonia Tsaroucha	Alternate Member
EFTA STATES	
ICELAND	
Jon Gunnar Jonsson	Board Member
Geir Por Geirsson	Alternate Member
NORWAY	
Einar Vik Arset	Alternate Member
PROFESSIONAL SECTOR	
Henrik Ringbom	Board Member

EMSA	
Maja Markovčič Kostelac	Executive Director
Manuela Tomassini	Head of Department 1, Sustainability & Technical Assistance
Peter Kirov	Head of Department 2, Safety, Security & Surveillance
Leendert Bal	Head of Department 3, Digital Services & Simplification
Dominika Łempicka-Fichter	Head of Department 4, Corporate Services
Andrea Tassoni	Head of Unit Executive Office, Board Secretariat
Radina Russeva	Policy Adviser
Frédéric Hébert	Head of Unit 1.1
Mario Mifsud	Head of Unit 1.2
Georgios Christofi	Head of Unit 1.3
Santiago Encabo	Acting Head of Unit 2.1
Pedro Lourenço	Head of Unit 2.2
Lukša Čičovački	Head of Unit 3.1
Cristina Romay-Lopez	Head of Unit 4.1
Andrea Iber	Head of Unit 4.2
Tom Van Hees	Internal Control Coordinator
Michael Risley	Co-Chairman EMSA Staff Committee
Simone Balboni	Co-Chairman EMSA Staff Committee
Katalin Duarte	Accountant
Marco Ingrosso	Budget and Finance Specialist – Planning and Monitoring
Soraya Obura	Senior Assistant for Planning and Reporting – Planning and Monitoring
Selena Matić	Senior Administrative Assistant – Planning and Monitoring