Minutes of the meeting

8th meeting of the Pilot Project for the Facilitation of Ship to Shore Reporting

Held in Copenhagen and via Video conference (hybrid solution)

02 December 2021

Date: 16 December 2021

1. Background

The meeting was opened by Mr. Martin Ahl from the Danish Navy Command and chaired by Mr Lazaros Aichmalotidis, Head of Unit for Simplification. Due to the current public health situation, it was held in a hybrid setting to maintain the possibility for those who cannot travel to attend the event online.

13 participants from **Belgium, Denmark, Norway** and **EMSA** attended the meeting in person while additional 15 participants from **Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland** and **Sweden** attended meeting online. Mr. Jacob Terling and Mr. Alexander Hoffmann from Unit D2 "Maritime Safety" represented the European Commission (DG MOVE).

All meeting presentations are available at:

http://emsa.europa.eu/ssn-main/documents/workshop-presentations-a-reports/download/6940/4614/30.html

The meeting agenda is attached in Annex 1.

2. Objective of the meeting

The objective of the meeting was to:

- demonstrate the results of the pilot project operational tests;
- receive feedback from the authorities and ships participating in the tests;
- present a progress report of the VDE Capability project;
- present the new version of the Integrated Report Distribution (IRD) system and plans for its future developments;
- present the updated project roadmap and review the table of contents of the final report.

3. Meeting outcome

3.1 Introduction

Mr. Martin Ahl from the Danish Navy Command and the Chairman welcomed the participants at the first physical meeting of the pilot project after two years. The Chairman recalled that this project is being executed under the Interoperability Project (EU-financed project under the European Maritime Fisheries Funds) and informed that the project has gained lot of visibility, interest and proved to be useful. He noted that the project started as a pilot and will continue after the end of the Interoperability Project with the objective to transform to a service with operational use.

The Commission confirmed that the results of this pilot project are above expectations and informed that there are already actions being taken to transform it into an operational service. A presentation on this issue will be made at the High-Level Steering Group for Governance of the Digital Maritime System and Services (HLSG) taking place on 8-9 December 2021.

3.2 Approval of the agenda and follow-up actions from previous meeting

The Group agreed with the agenda that is provided in Annex 1.

EMSA summarised the status of the follow-up actions from the previous meeting and informed the participants about the on-going actions related to the testing of IRD.

The participants **noted** the information presented.

3.3 Member State feedback on IRD testing

EMSA reminded that the development of the IRD is on-going and that the latest version (1.3) was deployed in production on 15 November 2021. Member States use the IRD to support their daily operation and to provide their feedback on a continuous basis. EMSA stressed the importance of this cooperation as all the improvements are thanks to the information received from testing authorities.

Belgium shared their feedback on the new version following the IRD webinar organised by EMSA on 26 November 2021. Belgian users are satisfied with the improvements since the IRD system is more user friendly, and its performance improved. The Belgian authorities dealing with security are currently building a Coastal Security system and would like to set up a system-to-system connection with IRD to use the Integrated Ship Reports (ISR) for risk analysis of the ships coming to Belgian ports. They wait for the decision of the HLSG on the continuation of the work. There is also a planned tender for a new system in the MRCC which could also be interested in using data coming from the IRD.

France informed that they are willing to use the system-to-system interface to connect in 2022 with the new SEAMIS ICT system for early warnings. There was a positive feedback on the new version of IRD following the webinar. France informed that VTSs which already have a lot of information showed less interest in the IRD.

Norway is also satisfied with the improved IRD but still needs to continue discovering the system's features to better understand what it can bring to the authorities and how the services can be integrated in the national system. Norwegian SSN already has a lot of information coming from EMSA (e.g. SSN data). **EMSA** replied that IRD includes some data (e.g. results of Global Port Call Detection service) which were not yet available through any other EMSA system. In addition, the use of the Ship Data Provider GUI for ship to shore reporting in the SESAME II project could be investigated by Norway who is leading the project.

Denmark informed that the IRD system is being used by Danish customs on daily basis for risk assessment and planning of daily operations. The feedback is very positive, and this Authority would like to continue using it in the future. There are also other authorities in Denmark using the ABM service that could be interested in using the IRD and the system will be shown to them in the coming weeks.

Germany thanked for the work already done and informed the Group that there is on-going work on the new IEC standard for ship to shore reporting. **EMSA** replied that the IRD has been developed using the standards available from the outset. It started with ISO 28005 and then EMSA closely followed work on the IMO reference dataset for ship reporting through IMO EGDH. This work will be included in the IMO compendium which should be presented to IMO FAL 46 for validation. The participants highlighted the importance of compliance of all standards with the IMO compendium to ensure interoperability. Germany confirmed that the new IEC will comply with the IMO compendium.

Finland reported that the IRD system is becoming handy and easy to use. The operational tests are on-going in Finland (GOFREP system) with one ship. The number of reports received was limited but good enough to take some conclusions. The reports were successfully delivered and easy to read. To fully benefit from the electronic exchange of data in the future, these reports should be integrated in the Finish system by using the system-to-system interface. There were some difficulties with the authority responses which are already corrected by EMSA. Finland stated that since data is already available in the SSN/IRD system, they should aim at reducing the number of reports from ships in EU waters. **EMSA** replied that the work on harmonisation and simplification of reporting procedures in EU waters will continue after the Interoperability Project. The objective of the project was to show that it is technically possible and now work on the administrative and legal part is required.

3.4 Presentation of SOUNDREP system and feedback on operational tests

EMSA informed that, thanks to Danish colleagues participating in the pilot project, it was possible to involve two ships in the operational tests for reporting of MRS data to authorities by electronic means. These tests are taking place in the Ship Reporting Systems (SRS) in the Sund (SOUNDREP system) and in the Gulf of Finland (GOFREP system). Tests are focused on submitting reports by ships to coastal stations by electronic means using the IRD service developed within the project. The IRD allows ships to re-use information available in the SSN Ecosystem and the authorities receiving the report to interact with the reporting ships by submitting response messages which can be either used to accept a report or to request additional information.

The **Danish Head of Sound VTS** made a presentation on the Sound VTS and apologised that due to the current COVID-19 pandemic it will not be possible to visit the VTS centre in Malmö. He informed that the Sound VTS is operated by Sweden and Denmark and that the Ship Reporting System SOUNDREP monitored by this VTS was

approved by IMO in 2011. There are on average 100 ships reporting to SOUNDREP per day. They try to be a "silent VTS" as much as possible and to use voice communication only when necessary (e.g. to verify if a vessel is using correct channel, to check draught of the ship). This allows the VTS operators to focus on safety of navigation rather than on reporting. Currently around 80% of SOUNDREP reports are transmitted using a dedicated Soundrep website and in around 20% of cases the report is provided over VHF. During the operational tests there were two ships reporting data to SOUNDREP via the IRD system and it was confirmed by the VTS operators that it works. The reports are delivered to VTS by e-mail and there is a possibility to provide the authority response. The Head of VTS said that data received via e-mail had to be manually inserted in the VTS database and therefore in the future a system-to-system connection should be established to insert it directly in the database. The VTS operators suggested that the IRD web user interface should be upgraded to have the possibility to display a list of last received reports, regardless of the date (currently be default it is limited to current date) and that it would be nice to have a possibility to indicate that the vessel is in the area. **EMSA** will investigate the technical feasibility for implementing these changes **(Action Point 1)**.

The **Head of Tallinn VTS** shared similar feedback as Denmark and Finland, confirming that reporting from ships via the IRD works. However, to fully benefit from this solution a system-to-system interface shall be established and received reports integrated in the VTS database.

The participants stated that it would be relevant to review the existing reporting obligations for ships in the SRS and try to remove information which is not anymore necessary. This works should aim at harmonisation of reporting at EU level and on the re-use of data between different ship reporting systems **(Action Point 2).**

3.5 Feedback from ships participating in operational tests

Two ships are actively participating in the operational tests of the IRD, aiming at the reporting of MRS data to authorities by electronic means.

The representative of the Danish Shipping company Molslinjen attended the meeting to share some information about his company and to provide feedback on the use of the IRD system for ship to shore reporting. This company operates on 8 different routes around the country, mostly domestic. The Ro-Ro/Passenger ferry Hammershus operates on the Rønne-Køge route and sails trough SOUNDREP system twice a day. Since 18 October 2021 all reports are submitted by this ship to SOUNDREP by using the IRD system.

The ship representative informed that the interface is fast and intuitive, which is very important for them. Safety of navigation is priority on board of the ships and the time that they spend on reporting should be reduced to the minimum. The report is generally prepared in advance by another person than the one sending it. It would be nice to have a possibility to save a draft of the report. There were some issues and ideas for improvements detected when filling in the report (e.g. Excel spreadsheet includes all designators, total number of PoB to be automatically calculated, etc.). The complete list is provided in Annex 2.

The ship representative said that no extra cost has been detected for the ship after using the IRD, since there is a fixed price for the Internet connection on board this ship. It was also reported that an automatic acknowledgment (i.e. silent approval) would be enough and there is no need for receiving a specific authority response. **Denmark** explained that same "silent clearance" mechanism is also implemented in the Danish Maritime National Single Window (MNSW).

The second ship participating in the operational tests is the Ro-Ro ship Finnkraft, operating on the Helsinki – Aarhus – Rostock route. On this route, this ship must report to GOFREP (Tallin Traffic and Helsinki Traffic) and to SOUNDREP (Sound VTS) ship reporting systems. All reports are currently submitted by this ship using the IRD system. Feedback on behalf of this ship was provided by the Danish Navy Command. It was reported that the reports are successfully received in three VTS centres, which proves that this communication works. The ship can benefit from the information previously sent and re-use it when reporting to the next SRS. The system seems to be intuitive and easy to use. There was one message from the ship, reporting some difficulties in accessing the application which could be caused by a weak Internet connection.

EMSA will investigate the technical feasibility for implementing changes provided in Annex 2 and will inform the group on progress at the next meeting **(Action Point 3).**

3.6 IRD phase 3 – VDES on-board application – progress report

EMSA presented the state-of-play of the VDE-SAT developments. Testing of the VDE-SAT is being executed in close cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA) and Space Norway (SPN), with whom EMSA has reached an agreement to participate in a VDE-SAT Application and Services Platform (VASP[1]) demonstration project using a Norwegian satellite as a testbed. EMSA is responsible for the development of a specific ship On-Board Application (OBA) to allow sending VTS/MRS reports to shore and consulting responses from authorities.

EMSA highlighted the importance of addressing the initiative for the use of VDES technology at the European level, considering the expected impact that this development will have on shipping. The development of the OBA took place between May and September 2021 and this application is currently being tested by EMSA and project partners.

The OBA offers two main functionalities:

- A graphical user interface (GUI) for ship data providers, to consult, submit and update VTS/MRS reports and consult authorities' responses;
- Backend services to orchestrate message exchanges with the VDE-SAT terminal installed on board the ship.

The Factory Acceptance Tests (FAT) were completed in November 2021 and the project partners are currently working on communication tests via satellite.

Operational testing is expected to be carried out around the BAREP reporting area with 7 vessels flying the Norwegian flag. The VDE-SAT equipment has already been installed on three Norwegian vessels (MS Polarsyssel, Advent Supplier, Ocean Space Lab). One set of VASP service demonstration equipment has been allocated for installation at EMSA premises in Lisbon.

On 01 December 2021 a demonstration meeting was held in Trondheim and project participants had opportunity to see pictures from this event. In addition, there was a presentation of the on-board application. This application was designed to follow the same logic as the IRD GUI for MRS reporting. The information will be received by the IRD system and treated in the same way as MRS reports from the IRD GUI.

Denmark asked whether they could test the onboard application. **EMSA** will investigate whether MS can test using EMSA's setup when it is ready (e.g. through remote desktop connection) **(Action Point 4).**

Norway asked if there is any limit on the size of messages being exchanged. **EMSA** replied that there is a limitation of bandwidth at this stage, as there is only one satellite. The agreed maximum size of the file for the tests is 50 kb. EMSA is not aware of the actual theoretical file size limit.

EMSA clarified that at the current stage only a single use case is being tested (i.e. MRS reporting). The VDES technology is open to any other kind of use cases and consultation with MS on additional functionalities of VDES is planned for next year according to EMSA's work programme for 2022. EMSA also recalled the decisions related to VDES taken by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 103), which are of high importance and shall accelerate all developments related to VDES technology from an IMO regulatory and industry point of view. Such IMO regulatory developments are set to start during the next IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR 9) meeting in June 2022.

3.7 Presentation of new version of IRD

The 5th meeting the project participants agreed that EMSA would further work on the IRD to address issues and feedback received during the testing. The contract for IRD phase 4 was signed in June 2021 and the development started in July 2021. The form of the contract ("time and means") provides more flexibility in the definition of requirements and in setting priorities allowing EMSA to address issues reported by Authorities in a more efficient way.

[1] More information about VASP project can be found at: https://business.esa.int/projects/vasp

EMSA informed the Group that the first release of IRD phase 4 was delivered to EMSA on 08 October and installed in Production on 15 November 2021. The following features were added and presented to participants in a live demonstration:

a. Connection to new sources of information. The Integrated Ship Report (ISR) includes data from the Port Call Detection service;
b. Display of details coming from SSN (e.g. Hazmat) in a user-friendly way;
c. Use of new ABM algorithms. It is possible to configure ISR based on two new types of ABM: Entering Area and Line Crossing;
d. Update of ISR messages to include indication about the trigger (e.g. ABM, Hazmat received, etc.) and name of the distribution service;
e. Feature that repeated ABM alerts will not generate duplicated reports;
f. Improved system performance;
g. Other improvements requested by the users (e.g. keep last filter, name of the distribution service always visible, additional attributes for e-mail subject configuration).

The feedback from the participants on the new release was positive. **EMSA** invited the MSs to test the IRD and to request additional user accounts or webinars if needed **(Action Point 5).**

EMSA informed participants that there is one more release foreseen within this contract that should be available to MSs in February 2022. This release will include improvements to the Ship DP GUI (i.e. mandatory elements shall be marked, possibility to choose format of geographical position, possibility to have a list of predefined routes per MRS area/system; search by ShipType attribute under designator U to be improved, possibility to configure comments for Bunker information under designator X) and to the Authority GUI (connection to the new Central Ship Database (CSD), possibility to select attributes for ISR at block of data level and display of active information only).

3.8 Project roadmap and possible continuation of the work

EMSA presented the updated schedule of the pilot project:

Expected schedule	Tasks
July 2021 – January 2022	Development of IRD phase 4 Testing of IRD – operational tests
November 2021	First release of IRD phase 4 (ver. 1.3) available to Member States.
December 2021	8th meeting organised in Denmark to demonstrate use of IRD
January – February 2022	Second release of IRD phase 4 (ver.1.4) available to Member States 9th meeting in EMSA to summarize the pilot project.

Table 1: Project Roadmap

The participants **agreed** with the presented project schedule.

Considering that the project has gained visibility and that there are growing expectations, **EMSA** has already taken some actions to ensure its continuation. The EMSA Single Programming Document (SPD) 2022-2024 has been updated to include the following task: *EMSA will continue to work with the Member States to further develop facilitation services for coastal stations for ship-to-shore reporting.* This document was approved during the last EMSA's Administrative Board meeting.

In addition, establishment of the SSN Working Group (WG) on Facilitation of ship to shore reporting was proposed to the HLSG for approval in December 2021. The following tasks were proposed for the WG:

a. Review the reporting procedures currently in place for Ship Reporting systems in the EU with the objective of reducing administrative burden, better re-using data and harmonising reporting processes;
b. Share best practices between EU Ship Reporting systems;
c. Review the guidelines for exchanging MRS notifications through SSN;
d. Explore opportunities to continue the development of the IRD and test its suitability for additional ship-shore reporting processes (e.g. port reporting obligations);

e. Prepare documentation and operational procedures for implementing IRD as fully operational service;
f. Propose improvements to the IRD web interface and system interface;
g. Further test new technologies (e.g. VDES) for the exchange of data between ship and shore;
h. Work on technical specifications for displaying Integrated Ship Reports (ISR) in SEG.

The participants **noted** the information presented.

3.9 Final report – table of contents

As per the grant agreement for the Interoperability Project, the final report on implementation of the action ('final technical report') shall be submitted to the Commission DG MARE following the conclusion of the project. Considering the results achieved in the Facilitation of ship to shore reporting pilot project and plans for its continuation, **EMSA** proposed to issue a detailed report of the pilot project which will be focused on operational and technical aspects. The draft of table of contents is provided in Annex 3.

The table of contents was agreed and **EMSA** will draft and distribute a first version of the report by the end of February 2022 **(Action Point 6)**.

4. Summary of the follow up actions

The Chairman thanked the Danish Navy Command for hosting the meeting and all participants for their active participation. He noted the interest in the proposed solutions and indicated that the meeting was again very productive and constructive.

The follow up actions are presented in Annex 4.

The next meeting is tentatively planned for the second half of February 2022 with the objective of discussing on the final report and next steps **(Action Point 7)**. In the meantime, the Group will work by correspondence.

EMSA will draft the minutes of the meeting and will provide the participants with copies of the meeting presentations **(Action Point 8)**.

Annex 1 – Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Speakers
09:00 – 09:15	Registration	
09:15 – 09:45	Opening / Introduction 8.1 Agenda 8.2 Follow-up actions	Denmark EMSA
09:45 – 10:15	Member State feedback on IRD testing	Member States
10:15 – 10:30	Coffee break	
10:30 – 11:00	Presentation of SOUNDREP system and feedback on operational tests	SOUNDREP VTS representative
11:00 – 11:30	Feedback from ship(s) participating in operational Tests	Ship representatives
11:30 – 12:00	8.3 IRD phase 3 – VDES on-board application – progress report	EMSA
12:00 – 13:15	Lunch break	
13:15 – 13:45	8.4 Presentation of new version of IRD	EMSA
13:45 – 14:15	8.5 Final report of the pilot project – discussion on list of contents	EMSA Member States
14:15 – 14:30	Discussion and summary of the follow up actions	EMSA Member States

Annex 2 – List of possible improvements and new features for the IRD

No	Description	Type
1	Possibility to indicate that the ship is in the area of VTS.	New feature
2	Possibility to display MRS/VTS reports regardless on the date (e.g. last 100 reports received).	Improvement
3	Direct link to access the tool for reporting MRS data (i.e. no need to go through portal).	Improvement
4.	Change name of the Ship Data Provider GUI tile in the portal.	Improvement
5.	Possibility to save MRS/VTS report as a draft.	New feature
6.	Spreadsheet for MRS currently requires all data. The spreadsheet shall be per SRS.	Improvement
7.	Field number of passengers is limited to 100 passengers.	Improvement
8.	Total number of PoB to be automatically calculated from number of passengers and number of crew.	Improvement
9.	Search function or adding groups (e.g. Hazmat) move the user to the top of the page. It should stay at the designator level.	Improvement
10.	Automatic acknowledgment from the authority.	New feature
11.	When updating the report or re-using it to create the new one the information that was already changes shall be highlighted.	Improvement

Annex 3 – Final report – table of contents

I. **Background**

II. **Objectives of the pilot project**

III. **Activities performed**

- i. Project approach – High level tasks
- ii. Stakeholders involved
- iii. Meetings
- iv. Presentations on different forums

IV. **Results**

- i. Integrated Ship Report content
- ii. Ship to Shore Reporting message (EGDH…)
- iii. Technical developments
  - Integrated Report Distribution (IRD)
  - Exchange of data using VDES technology
  - Connection to STM VIS
  - Global Port Call Detection Service

V. Operational tests

- i. Use cases
- ii. Testing activities
- iii. Feedback from the authorities and ships participating in tests

VI. Remaining issues

- i. Operational/Policy
- ii. Technical

VII. Conclusions and benefits

VIII. Next steps

Annex 4 – Follow up actions

Action Point	Topic and Action	Responsible
1	Investigate the technical feasibility for implementing changes reported by the Sound VTS.	EMSA
2	Review the existing reporting obligations for ships in the SRS and try to remove information which is not anymore necessary. This works should aim at harmonisation of reporting at EU level and on the re-use of data between different ship reporting systems	EMSA/COM Member States
3	Investigate the technical feasibility for implementing changes provided in Annex 2 and inform the group on progress at the next meeting	EMSA
4	Investigate whether MS can test VDES using EMSA's setup when it is ready (e.g. through remote desktop connection)	EMSA
5	Test the IRD and to request additional user accounts or webinars if needed	Member States
6	Draft and distribute a first version of the report by the end of February 2022	EMSA
7	Plan next meeting in February 2022 with the objective of discussing on the final report and next steps.	EMSA
8	Draft the minutes of the meeting and provide attendees with copies of the meeting presentations.	EMSA

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