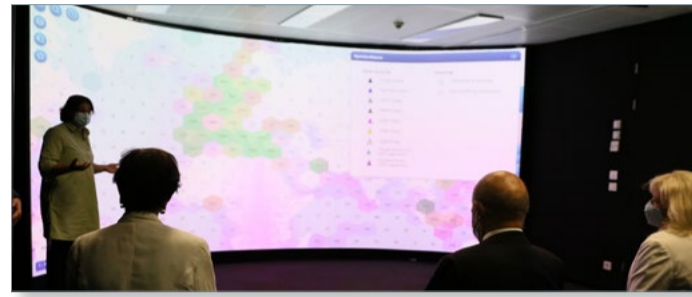


FRENCH MINISTER FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS PAYS VISIT TO EMSA

EMSA was honoured to welcome to its premises the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, on 15 September. This visit gave Mr Le Drian a chance to get an in-depth look at EMSA and its role in the European maritime sector, how EMSA supports the member states and its contribution to a safe, secure and sustainable maritime transport. During the visit, the French minister learned about the pollution response toolbox that EMSA has set up to support the member states and the Agency's extensive maritime surveillance capabilities that facilitates the work of national authorities and other EU agencies, such as Frontex and EFCA. Just ahead of the launch of **two missions in France**, Mr Le Drian got an insight of the way the Agency employs state-of-the-art technology such as Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) to monitor ship-source pollution. Last but not least, Mr Le Drian had the opportunity to visit EMSA's new Virtual Reality room and to experience a new generation of skill building tools, such as a simulated ship inspection. At the end of the visit, Mr Le Drian acknowledged EMSA's "remarkable and concrete contribution to Europe's maritime sovereignty, to the fight against pollution and all types of traffic, in conjunction with other European agencies, such as Frontex".



EMSA CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF RIYADH MOU AND TOKYO MOU

Following the green light of the Administrative Board, EMSA has signed an agreement with the Riyadh Memorandum of Understanding (Riyadh MoU) and Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (Tokyo MoU) on Port State Control to access the Agency's tools for capacity building. Both the Tokyo and Riyadh MoUs will have access to RuleCheck, offering a state-of-the-art decision support tool to PSCOs and thus contributing to further global harmonization of the implementation of the international conventions. With Tokyo and Riyadh MoU joining the "club", seven out of nine Port State Control regimes in the world will be using the same repository of regulations. In addition, the Riyadh MoU will have access to the eLearning platform MaKCs developed by EMSA in support of qualification and training of PSCOs.

VISITS AND INSPECTIONS ACTIVITY RESUMED

In September, in line with scenarios prepared by the Agency in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, EMSA resumed its visit and inspection activities to member states, third countries and Recognised Organisations. In full respect of the safety protocols required by the Agency, Portugal and the host States, this month saw field visits conducted in three member states, with others in the pipeline for the coming three months. These visits made the best use possible of available communication technology which allowed officers at EMSA to support their colleagues on the ground. In case field activity is not possible due to restrictions, remote visits and inspections are being prepared and conducted. Two member state visits and a RO inspection have already been carried out in this manner, based on new methodologies and procedures established in EMSA's Visits & Inspections Quality Management System for this purpose and similarly making maximum use of communication technology and platforms to optimise the effectiveness of the exercise. While field work related to more practical elements, like witnessing ship inspections, would still need to be conducted in due course, remote auditing techniques contribute to minimising the impact of the current pandemic on the Agency's programme of visits and inspections.



EMSA TRAINING AVAILABLE NON-STOP THROUGH COVID-19 LIMITATIONS

Despite travel restrictions and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EMSA delivered capacity building services almost as planned. In a live broadcasting synchronous mode, seven tailor-made training courses were offered on the implementation of relevant EU and international legislation (Ship Recycling Regulation, the MRV Regulation, RO monitoring, Accident Investigation, MLC and Institutional Training) and seven operational trainings on different EMSA tools and services. Moreover, the Agency in cooperation with the Paris MoU secretariat developed and delivered three live broadcasting sessions for new entrant PSCOs, covering the theoretical elements of the PSC Seminars. Feedback from participants confirmed the added value of these sessions held via different platforms.

COPERNICUS MARITIME SURVEILLANCE USER GROUP MEETING

EMSA hosted the third Copernicus Maritime Surveillance (CMS) User Group on 1 October, which was attended by 42 representatives of 16 EU member states, Iceland, Montenegro, EU NAVFOR Atalanta, UNODC and the Commission (DG DEFIS). DG-DEFIS presented the outlines for the next Copernicus programme that will cover activities from 2021-2027. EMSA presented the CMS overview and 2020 results, showing a significant rise in terms of organisations served, images delivered and emergency activations. User presentations focused on several topics, such as the CMS support to maritime emergencies; support to intelligence and surveillance in activities in the Indian Ocean; the detection of fish and shellfish farms in Iceland and the use of CMS for monitoring polar regions. Users highlighted the relevance of CMS support to their operational activities and emphasised the importance of combining Earth Observation added value products with information from EMSA's Integrated Maritime Services. The event also allowed for the valuable exchange of knowledge concerning the use of the service in the face of new challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, users highlighted the importance of performing systematic analysis of satellite information over certain areas of interest towards identifying hotspots, enabling risk analysis and detecting patterns of life.

THIRD RPAS USER GROUP MET ONLINE

The third RPAS user group on 30 September was held remotely due to the COVID pandemic and connected representatives from 21 EU member states, Norway and Iceland, six agencies (EFCA, FRONTEX, EDA, EASA and European GNSS Agency) and the Commission. RPAS service users in the member states and EFCA participated with presentations providing an overview of past and ongoing RPAS operations in Croatia, Italy, Finland, France, Romania, Denmark, Bulgaria. Speakers from EASA explained the new regulations applicable for RPAS operations over the Sea. Three new EMSA RPAS services started in September 2020 were also presented during the User Group. Based on all services launched since 2019, participants from all EU member states at the User Group meeting had the possibility to gather lessons learned and to discuss ways ahead.

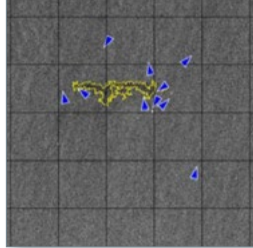
VR ROOM INAUGURATED DURING FRENCH MINISTER VISIT

The Virtual Reality room set up at EMSA as part of its toolbox in support of capacity building activities was inaugurated during the visit of the French Minister for European Affairs, on 15 September. EMSA staff will soon be developing or updating the content of eLearning modules or delivering online webinars using the infrastructure available at this multipurpose space. Thanks to the newly established eLaboratory, training course participants will be able to experience a simulated ship inspection using Virtual Reality Environment for Ship Inspection.



EMSA'S SATELLITE SERVICES HELP IN ACCIDENT WITH OIL TANKER AND PRODUCTION PLATFORM

At the beginning of September, EMSA supported the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) following the accidents of two vessels with crude oil on board. The crude oil tanker New Diamond caught fire off Sri Lanka, carrying 270,000 MT of crude oil, and the floating production storage Nabarima was flooding and listing in the Gulf of Paria (Venezuela), with 163,680 MT on board. EMSA provided satellite services to monitor the situation and possible oil spills, and also offered oil pollution response equipment and dispersants, but no major spill was registered.



EAS HANDS-ON TRAINING SESSION FOR MEMBER STATES IN ROTTERDAM

Between 8 and 10 September, at its Equipment Assistance Service (EAS) stockpile located in Rotterdam, EMSA conducted a hands-on training session for representatives from the EU member states. During these three days, the participants trained with combined containment and recovery systems, oil trawl nets, floating oil storage barges as well as dispersant spraying systems. This type of training enables equipment operators from the EU/EFTA member states to become more acquainted with EMSA's oil pollution response equipment and become more confident in using it during drills, exercises or real operations. EMSA's EAS stand-alone equipment systems are meant to top-up existing national and regional resources within the EU. More information on the EAS service is available [EMSA's website](#).



EMSA PARTICIPATES IN EU SECURE GOVERNMENTAL SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

A new European initiative supporting further development of secure satellite communication responding to governmental needs (GovSatCom) and named ENTRUSTED was officially launched on 15 September. The online kick-off meeting gathered almost 20 partner institutions including EU agencies, i.e. EMSA, and EU member states' institutions. ENTRUSTED is a dedicated research project funded under Horizon 2020 and will accomplish multiple tasks over the next 30 months in order to prepare the future secure GovSatCom capacity, ranging from the development of a common understanding of governmental user needs and the definition of consolidated and prioritised requirements to the analysis of available and planned capabilities offered by commercial operators and governments and the identification of needs for standardisation of equipment and services. EMSA is a member of ENTRUSTED and participates in two work packages, addressing the definition of user needs and requirements, Use Cases definition and the analysis of the technology in the maritime safety and security domain.

NEW OPERATIONS OF EMSA'S RPAS SERVICES

EMSA reached full operational capacity in September with the launch of new RPAS operations for multipurpose maritime surveillance and emission monitoring in France and Romania. The general maritime surveillance operation in France covers the Gulf of Lyon. The aircraft chosen is a fixed wing RPAS provided by REACT consortium equipped with optical and radar sensors. Also in France, EMSA is providing an RPAS based emission monitoring operation over the English Channel supporting the Directorate for Maritime Affairs. The configuration is the same as the current mission provided to Denmark and operated by Nordic Unmanned, a Schiebel helicopter equipped with an Explicit sniffing sensor to measure the sulphur content in the plumes. The Romanian border police publicised recent patrol operations using of the lightweight RPAS from Nordic Unmanned which is also part of the EMSA RPAS portfolio. Before the start of the operations a virtual training on the RPAS DC was provided in English or French to explain how to access the live data collected from the RPAS and to request specific operations in real time using a chat shared between the users and the RPAS operators.



CISE STAKEHOLDERS KEEP ACTIVE IN A SERIES OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

The continuous engagement of CISE stakeholders and the steady progress of the transitional phase of CISE were demonstrated in a number of virtual meetings in September. One of the working groups convened to finalise the draft Cooperation Agreement, the key legal framework which will set the rules for the sharing of information in CISE. Another working group also reached a milestone by defining the main principles on which the Responsibility to Share Audit should be built. This audit scheme will support participants in CISE to implement the "responsibility to share" principle (a progression from the traditional "need to know" principle, based on the idea that stakeholders will voluntarily share information with any other stakeholder because they deem it will be useful). On 23 September, stakeholders met to initiate the second CISE Test Campaign, in which the connection of all currently existing nodes in the CISE network will be assessed. Back-to-back on the same day, the Configuration Board had its third meeting to get updated on technical issues. Stakeholders then came together again on 24 September for a brainstorming session on possible new services in CISE.

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VACANCIES: Project Officer for Coastguard Cooperation (13/10/2020); Project Officer for Training and Capacity Building (19/10/2020); Project Officer for Technical Assistance to ENP Partner Countries (22/10/2020); CISE ICT Security Expert (26/10/2020).

PROCUREMENT: Study on inventory of existing policy, research and impacts of continuous underwater noise in Europe (16/10/2020); Creation of a reference Dataset for EMSA Earth Observation services (23/10/2020); Study on the economic impact of COVID-19 on the maritime transport sector (27/10/2020). Check [website](#) for more.