



Network of Standby Oil Spill Response Vessels

Drills and Exercises

Annual Report 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to provide additional support to the Member States' pollution response mechanisms in a cost efficient way, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) has built up, in European waters, a Network of contracted Stand-by Oil Spill Response Vessels. The vessels are ready to respond to oil spills at sea caused by ships as well as by offshore installations at the request of a coastal State¹, a "Responsible Party"² and/or the European Commission. By the end of 2014, the Network comprised 17 fully equipped vessels ready for immediate mobilisation and one vessel in the preparation phase.

To achieve the level of performance for pollution response required by the Agency, vessels and their crews participate regularly in training, drills and exercises. The figures for 2014 are summarised in the table below:

Acceptance Drills: Newly Contracted Vessels	Acceptance Drills: Re-contracted Vessels	Acceptance Drills: Improvement projects/new equipment	Quarterly Drills	Operational Exercises	Notification Exercises
3	4	3	61	10	11
Total number of events		92			

Table 1. Summary of Drills and Exercises carried out in 2014

Evaluation of the contractor's performance during drills and exercises by the Agency's staff in line with the "Guidelines on Conducting Drills and Exercises for the EMSA Contracted Vessels" is an effective method to ensure that the level of response preparedness of the Network is adequately maintained. The outcome of drills and exercises carried out during 2014 demonstrated that the service is provided efficiently and in accordance with EMSA requirements.

¹ EU Member States, EU Candidate States, Norway and Iceland as well as those third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the European Union (Regulation (EU) 100/2013).

² Responsible Party means the ship owner or oil and gas installation operator controlling the activity causing the marine pollution or the imminent threat of it. The Responsible Party is responsible for the oil spill cleaning operations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

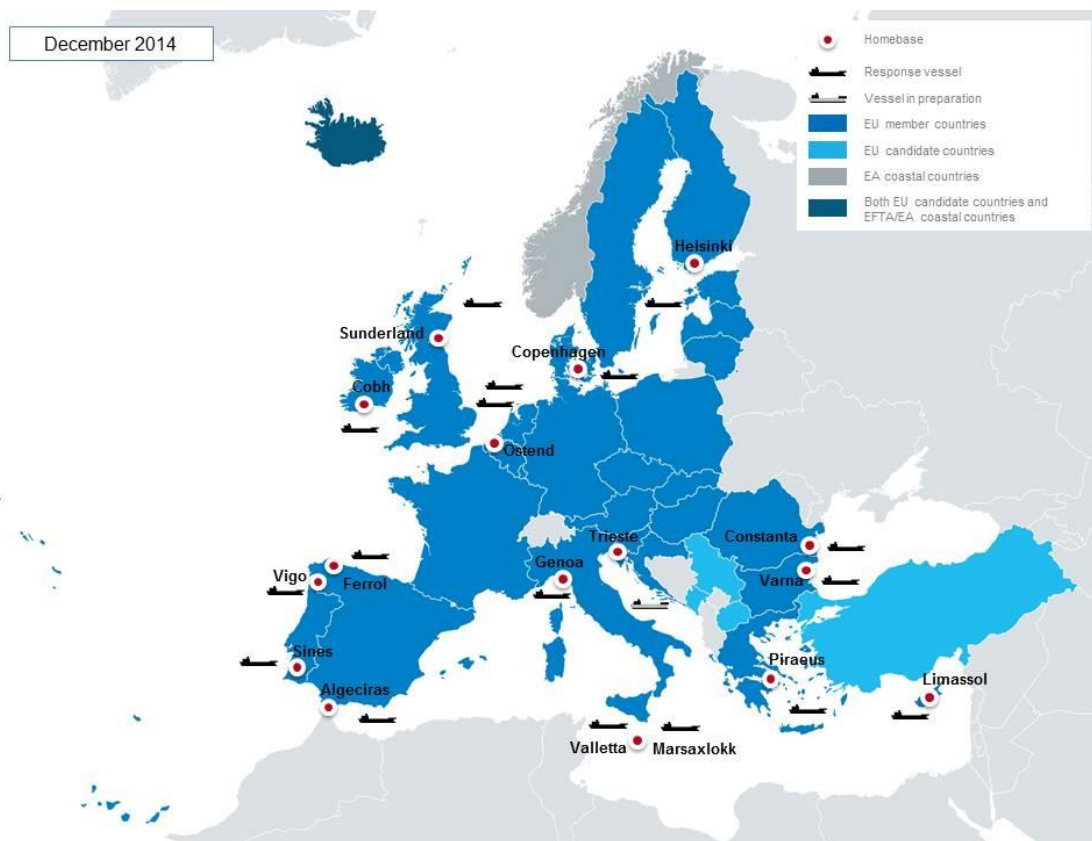
The purpose of this report is to provide an annual summary of the Agency's activities related to drills and exercises conducted by the Network of Stand-by Oil Spill Response Vessels ("the Network").

2014 was the ninth year of implementation of the Vessel Availability Contracts (VAC)³. EMSA contracted vessels were on stand-by in nearly all significant marine pollution risk areas in European waters.

1.1 Vessels and Areas Covered

At the end of 2014, the Network covered all European waters and comprised 17 fully equipped vessels ready for immediate mobilisation and one vessel in the preparation phase. Further information about the Vessel Network can be found on the EMSA website: <http://emsa.europa.eu/oil-recovery-vessels.html>

The distribution of the Network is presented in the map below.



Map 1. Distribution of Network of EMSA contracted vessels at the end of 2014

³ "Vessel Availability Contract": This contract is concluded between the Agency and the ship operator and it ensures the availability of the vessels at any time. In particular, under this Contract, the ship operator is obliged to respond positively to a request for assistance transmitted by EMSA. Failure to do so would result in financial penalties. In addition, it addresses technical modifications made to the vessels with respect to pumping, heating and any oil recovery equipment as well as organising drills and participating in exercises.

Detailed information on the contracted vessels and the areas covered at the end of 2014 can be found in the table below.

Contractor/Contract N°/Area	Ship/s	Comment
Arctia Icebreaking Ltd VAC 09/NEG/01/2009 Lot 1 Northern Baltic Sea	<i>Kontio</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
OW Tankers A/S VAC NEG/01/2011 Lot 1 Southern Baltic Sea	<i>OW Copenhagen</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
DC Industrial S.A. VAC 08/NEG/03/2008 Lot 2 North Sea	<i>DC Vlaanderen 3000, Interballast 3</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
James Fisher Everard Ltd VAC 07-NEG/01/2007/Lot 1 Atlantic Coast	<i>Forth Fisher, Mersey Fisher, Galway Fisher</i> (possibility to mobilise 2 vessels simultaneously)	Contract expired on 20/04/2014
James Fisher Everard Ltd EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 1 Northern North Sea	<i>Mersey Fisher, Thames Fisher</i> (pool of vessels, 1 vessel fully equipped)	Vessels entered into service on 14/08/2014
James Fisher Everard Ltd EMSA/NEG /1/2013 Lot 2 Atlantic North	<i>Galway Fisher, Forth Fisher</i> (pool of vessels, 1 vessel fully equipped)	Vessels re-entered into service on 13/06/2014
Ibaizabal VAC NEG/01/2012 Lot 3 Bay of Biscay	<i>Monte Arucas</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Remolcadores Nossa Terra S.A. VAC 08-NEG/07/2008 Bay of Biscay	<i>Ria de Vigo</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Mureloil VAC NEG/1/2012 Lot 1 Southern Atlantic Coast	<i>Bahia Tres</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Naviera Altube EMSA NEG/1/2011 Lot 4 Western Mediterranean Sea	<i>Monte Anaga</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Ciane EMSA/NEG/34/2012 Western Mediterranean Sea	<i>Brezzamare</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Tankship EMSA NEG/1/2011 Lot 2 Central Mediterranean Sea	<i>Balluta Bay</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
SL Ship Management Ltd EMSA NEG/1/2012 Lot 2 Central Mediterranean Sea	<i>Santa Maria</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Castalia EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 4 Adriatic Sea	<i>Marisa N</i>	Preparation Phase. Acceptance planned for January 2015.
Environmental Protection Engineering S.A. VAC 07-NEG/01/2007 Lot 3 Aegean Sea	<i>Aktea OSRV</i> (<i>Aegis I</i> as a back-up vessel)	Expired on 22/02/2014

Contractor/Contract N°/Area	Ship/s	Comment
Environmental Protection Engineering S.A. EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 3 Aegean Sea	<i>Aktea OSRV</i> <i>(Aegis I as a back-up vessel)</i>	The vessels re-entered into service on: Aktea - 13/03/2014 Aegis I - 22/05/2014
Petronav EMSA NEG/1/2010 Lot 1 Eastern Mediterranean Sea	<i>Alexandria</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Bon Marine Ltd EMSA NEG/1/2011 Lot 5 Black Sea	<i>Enterprise</i>	In service for the whole year 2014
Grup Servicii Petroliere VAC 08-NEG/03/2008 Lot 1 Black Sea	<i>GSP Orion</i>	In service for the whole year 2014

Table 2. Summary of the contracted vessels and areas covered at the end of 2014.

1.2 Purpose and Types of Drills and Exercises

The vessels contracted by the Agency are all equipped with state of the art oil slick detection, containment and recovery equipment. They are technically capable of achieving high recovery rates and have a sizeable on board storage capacity.

Once the technical requirements of each contract are satisfied, the most important factors determining success of the system are the skills of the vessel's crew for the operation of the equipment and the capability of the oil spill response coordinator on board to lead the response action. Regular training, drills and exercises are essential to achieve and maintain the appropriate level of performance.

Every VAC defines the types and number of drills and exercises to be carried out by each associated vessel. Detailed instructions on conducting drills including their methods of evaluation are provided in the "Guidelines on Conducting Drills and Exercises for the EMSA Contracted Vessels". These Guidelines constitute a component of all contracts.

The VAC defines two types of drills: 1) Acceptance Drills and 2) Quarterly Oil Pollution Response Drills; and two types of exercises: 1) Notification Exercises and 2) At-Sea Operational Exercises.

In 2014, a total of 61 Quarterly Drills and 10 Acceptance Drills were performed by the vessels under contract to the Agency. The Acceptance Drills are of particular importance as they are the major milestone for new vessels and/or equipment to enter into the Stand-by Phase of a contract.

2. DRILLS PERFORMED IN 2014

The total number of drills (Quarterly and Acceptance Drills) has increased over the years as the Network has developed and expanded. A summary of the drills performed by EMSA contracted vessels during the period 2006-2014 is displayed in the chart below.

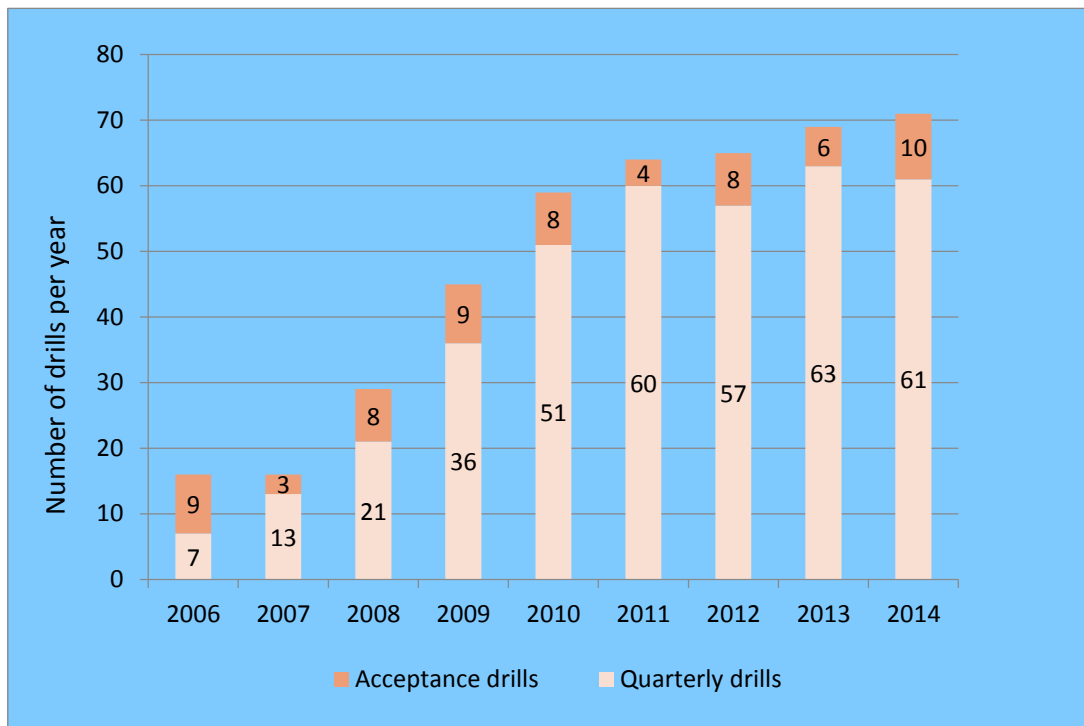


Chart 1. Number of Drills 2006-2014

2.1 Acceptance Drills

Ten Acceptance Drills were conducted in 2014. Detailed information regarding the subject and results of these drills is summarised in the table on the next page.

Contract	Contractor	Vessel	Home port	Subject	Acceptance Test Date	Results
EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 3 Aegean Sea	Environmental Protection Engineering S.A.	<i>Aktea OSRV</i>	Piraeus, Greece	Provision of the replacement capacity in the Aegean Sea. Re-contracted vessels.	12/03/2014	Entered into operational service on 22/03/2014.
		<i>Aegis I (back-up vessel)</i>		Acceptance Test for re-entry into service of two vessels.	21/05/2014	
EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 2 Atlantic North	James Fisher Everard Ltd	<i>Forth Fisher</i>	Cobh, Ireland	Provision of the replacement capacity for the North Atlantic. Re-contracted vessels (pool of vessels). Acceptance Test for re-entry into service of two vessels.	07/06/2014	Entered into operational service 13/06/2014
		<i>Galway Fisher</i>			13/06/2014	
EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot 1 Northern North Sea	James Fisher Everard Ltd	<i>Thames Fisher</i>	Sunderland, UK	Provision of the new capacity for the Northern North Sea. one re-contracted and one new vessel (pool of vessels). Acceptance Test for re-entry into service of one vessel and for the pre-fitting of one vessel.	27-28/07/2014	Entered into operational service 14/08/2014
		<i>Mersey Fisher</i>			12-13/08/2014	
EMSA/NEG/1/2013 Lot4 Adriatic Sea	Castalia	<i>Marisa N</i>	Trieste, Italy	Provision of the new capacity for the Adriatic Sea Acceptance Test for pre-fitting and equipment.	15-16/12/2014	A partial repetition of the Acceptance Test was requested due to technical failure. Test to be conducted in January 2015
Amendment N° 3 to Contract EMSA EMSA NEG/1/2011 Lot 5b Black Sea	Bon Marine Ltd	<i>Enterprise</i>	Varna, Bulgaria	Improvement of the pollution response capacity of the <i>Enterprise</i> . Test of a weir boom 180 system installed on board.	25/02/2014	Entered into the service 26/02/2014.
Amendment N° 1 to Contract VAC NEG/01/2011 Lot 1 Southern Baltic Sea	OW Tankers A/S	<i>OW Copenhagen</i>	Copenhagen, Denmark	Improvement of the pollution response capacity of the <i>OW Copenhagen</i> . Test of the high capacity skimmer Normar 250 TI installed on board.	04/06/2014	Entered into the service 25/06/2014.
Amendment N° 6 to Contract VAC 08 NEG/07/2008 Bay of Biscay	Remolcadores Nossa Terra S.A.	<i>Ria de Vigo</i>	Vigo, Spain	Improvement of the pollution response capacity of the <i>Ria de Vigo</i> . Test of a weir boom 180 system installed on board.	17/06/2014	Entered into the service 26/06/2014.
TOTAL				10 Acceptance Drills		

Table 3. Acceptance drills carried out in 2014

2.2 Quarterly Drills

In order to maintain the appropriate level of readiness during the Stand-by Phase of the contracts, the companies and vessels concerned carry out different types of activities. The primary activity is the vessel/crew drills, which take place on a quarterly basis. In 2014 EMSA contracted vessels performed 61 quarterly drills. Each drill verifies that the capability of the vessel and specialised equipment, and the skill of the crew, is at an appropriate level. The acceptance of the contractor's quarterly drill report by the Agency is a condition for the payment of the Availability Fee. The summary of the quarterly drills carried out in 2014 is presented in the table below.

Contract	Contractor	Vessel/s	Drill	Date	Results
09/NEG/01/2009 Lot 1 Northern Baltic Sea	Arctia Icebreaking Ltd	<i>Kontio</i>	1Q	01/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	21/05/2014	
			3Q	16/09/2014	
			4Q	26/10/2014	
NEG/01/2011 Lot 1 Southern Baltic Sea	OW Tankers A/S	<i>OW Copenhagen</i>	1Q	20/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	06/06/2014	
			3Q	18/09/2014	
			4Q	08/10/2014	
08/NEG/03/2008 Lot 2 North Sea	DC Industrial S.A.	<i>DC Vlaanderen 3000</i> <i>Interballast 3</i>	1Q	11/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	30/06/2014	
			3Q	29/09/2014	
			4Q	02/10/2014	
07-NEG/01/2007/Lot 1 Atlantic Coast	James Fisher Everard Ltd	<i>Forth Fisher, Mersey Fisher, Galway Fisher</i> <i>(possibility to mobilise 2 vessels simultaneously)</i>	1Q	11/03/2014	Drill performed by the <i>Forth Fisher</i> was accepted. Only one drill required due to the contract expiration on 20 /04/2014.
			2Q1	n/a	
			2Q2	n/a	
			3Q1	n/a	
			3Q2	n/a	
4Q	n/a				
NEG/1/2013 Lot 1 Northern North Sea	James Fisher Everard Ltd	<i>Thames Fisher</i> <i>Mersey Fisher</i>	1Q	n/a	Vessels entered into the service on 18/08/2014. Only two drills were required. Both drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	n/a	
			3Q	28/09/2014	
			4Q	14/11/2014	
NEG /1/2013 Lot 2 Atlantic North	James Fisher Everard Ltd	<i>Galway Fisher</i> <i>Forth Fisher</i>	1Q	n/a	Vessels entered into the service on 13/06/2014. Only two drills were required. Both drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	n/a	
			3Q	30/08/2014	
			4Q	25/10/2014	
NEG/01/2012 Lot 3 Bay of Biscay	Ibaizabal	<i>Monte Arucas</i>	1Q	27/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	27/05/2014	
			3Q	26/08/2014	
			4Q	12/11/2014	
08-NEG/07/2008 Bay of Biscay	Remolcadores Nossa Terra S.A.	<i>Ria de Vigo</i>	1Q	20/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	17/06/2014	
			3Q	17/09/2014	
			4Q	20/11/2014	

Contract	Contractor	Vessel/s	Drill	Date	Results
NEG/1/2012 Lot 1 Southern Atlantic Coast	Mureloil	<i>Bahia Tres</i>	1Q	06/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	23/04/2014	
			3Q	27/08/2014	
			4Q	09/10/2014	
NEG/1/2011 Lot 4 Western Mediterranean Sea	Naviera Altube	<i>Monte Anaga</i>	1Q	11/02/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	15/05/2014	
			3Q	23/09/2014	
			4Q	19/11/2014	
NEG/34/2012 Western Mediterranean Sea	Ciane	<i>Brezzamore</i>	1Q	26/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	17/06/2014	
			3Q	16/09/2014	
			4Q	16/10/2014	
NEG/1/2011 Lot 2 Central Mediterranean Sea	Tankship	<i>Balluta Bay</i>	1Q	19/02/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	06/06/2014	
			3Q	02/09/2014	
			4Q	18/11/2014	
NEG/1/2012 Lot 2 Central Mediterranean Sea	SL Ship Management Ltd	<i>Santa Maria</i>	1Q	26/03/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	18/06/2014	
			3Q	02/09/2014	
			4Q	19/11/2014	
NEG/1/2013 Lot 3 Aegean Sea	Environmental Protection Engineering S.A.	<i>Aktea OSRV</i>	1Q	n/a	Vessels entered into the service on: <i>Aktea</i> - 13/03/2014 <i>Aegis I</i> - 22/05/2011 6 drills required annually. 4 drills conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	20/05/2014	
		<i>Aegis I</i>	3Q	16/09/2014	
			4Q	17/10/2014	
			4Q1	21/11/2014	
NEG/1/2010 Lot 1 Eastern Mediterranean Sea	Petronav	<i>Alexandria</i>	1Q	19/02/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	18/06/2014	
			3Q	22/09/2014	
			4Q	15/10/2014	
NEG/1/2011 Lot 5 Black Sea	Bon Marine Ltd	<i>Enterprise</i>	1Q	27/02/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	12/06/2014	
			3Q	18/09/2014	
			4Q	28/11/2014	
08-NEG/03/2008 Lot 1 Black Sea	Grup Servicii Petroliere	<i>GSP Orion</i>	1Q	21/02/2014	4 drills required annually. All drills were conducted and accepted by EMSA.
			2Q	01/04/2014	
			3Q	27/08/2014	
			4Q	20/12/2014	
TOTAL			61 Quarterly Drills		

Table 4. Summary of the quarterly drills carried out in 2014

The outcome of the quarterly drills carried out during 2014 demonstrated that the service is operated efficiently and in accordance with EMSA expectations. Overall, the Network achieved a satisfactory level of preparedness for oil pollution response. In all quarterly drills crew and equipment performance was always within the standards required by the “Guidelines on Conducting Drills and Exercises for the EMSA Contracted Vessels”. The mobilisation of the vessels, i.e. equipping them for the drill, was assessed as satisfactory. Sufficient logistical arrangements to prepare vessels for the drills were in place. The time taken to deploy the major components of the oil recovery equipment was satisfactory and the knowledge of on board arrangements was good.

Checking the technical status and completeness of the oil pollution response equipment on board the vessels is an important element of each drill attended by EMSA observers.

For a better management of EMSA’s oil spill response equipment, a new “Equipment Policy” was adopted in 2014. New management tools to strengthen the control and ensure safe and reliable equipment operation over the lifetime of the equipment were established. During each drill and exercise attended by the Agency, the condition of the equipment was closely assessed and recorded following the guidelines laid down in the Policy. In 2015, the Agency will continue with the implementation of the Policy and will take the necessary actions in order to improve services and reduce the probability of equipment failure.

Moreover, the annual verification of the equipment stockpiles indicated that in general the equipment is well maintained and in operational condition. Some older equipment pieces show signs of ageing and may require overhauling and/or replacement in 2015.

On the basis of observations from drills and exercises, the Agency keeps a record of technical issues related to the oil pollution response equipment on board EMSA’s contracted vessels. This record allows the Agency to obtain a broader overview of the performance of different types and brands of equipment. Identification of the most frequent technical problems leads to prevention of failures during actual pollution response and also helps the acceptance process for equipment arrangements in the framework of the vessel tenders and improvement projects.



Figure 1. Quarterly drill on board *OW Copenhagen* - deployment of the NorMar 250 TI skimmer

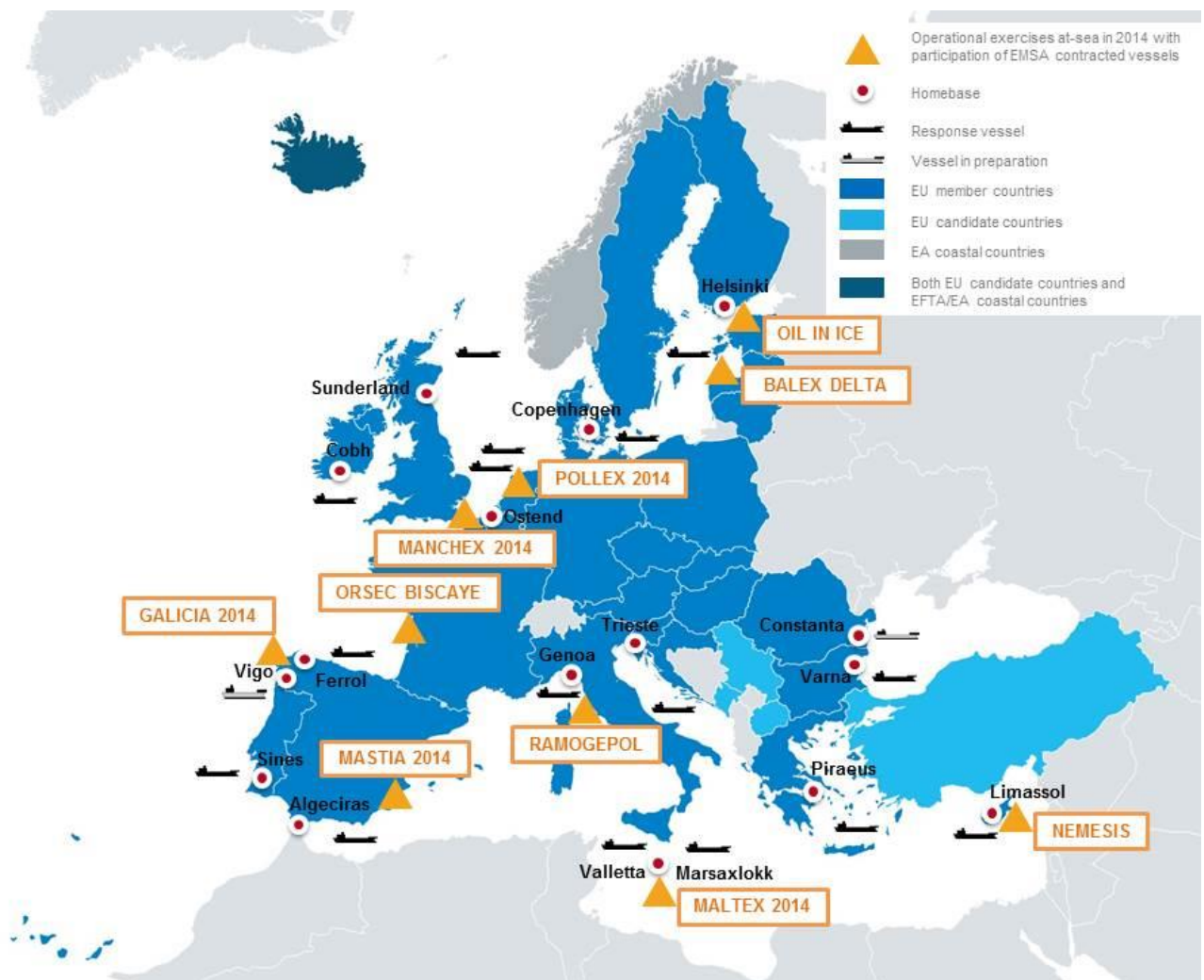
3. EXERCISES PERFORMED IN 2014

At-sea operational exercises assist the integration of EMSA's resources within the response mechanisms of Member States, improving the necessary coordination and cooperation of the EMSA vessels with the coastal State response units.

3.1 Operational Exercises

In the course of 2014, 12 different EMSA Stand-by Oil Spill Response Vessels participated in 10 at-sea operational exercises, organised in cooperation with EU Member States and/or Regional Agreements. These events took place in the Baltic Sea, North Sea, Bay of Biscay, Atlantic Coast, Mediterranean and Black Seas.

The geographical spread of operational exercises in Europe with EMSA vessel participation is shown in the following map:



Map 2. Operational Exercises 2014

It should be noted that the operational exercises at sea are organised by the Member States within the framework of national or regional contingency plans. EMSA, as a guest to these exercises, usually has only a limited influence on their content.

In 2014, Agency staff attended the operational exercises that involved the participation of EMSA contracted vessels, except in two cases. In general, the results of these exercises showed that EMSA vessels were well integrated into the pollution response mechanisms of Member States and Regional Agreements.

Reports of EMSA observers indicate that all vessels participating in the operational exercises successfully completed the tasks assigned by the pollution response command of the country hosting the exercise.

The summary of operational exercises performed by EMSA contracted vessels during the 2014 is shown in the table below.

Name	Date	Location	Participating Parties	EMSA vessel/s
OIL IN ICE	27/03/2014	Kotka, Finland	Finland, EMSA	<i>Kontio (arctic skimmer)</i>
NEMESIS, CYPRUS	10/04/2014	Cyprus	Cyprus, Israel, Greece, USA, EMSA	<i>Alexandria</i>
BALEX DELTA 2014	11/06/2014	Ventspils, Latvia	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and EMSA	<i>OW Copenhagen</i>
GALICIA 2014	18/06/2014	Ria de Arousa, Spain	Spain, EMSA	<i>Ria de Vigo</i>
ORSEC BISCAYE 33	19/06/2014	Arcachon, France	France, EMSA	<i>Monte Arucas</i>
MALTEX 2014	03/09/2014	Valetta, Malta	Malta, EMSA	<i>Santa Maria, Balluta Bay</i>
RAMOGEPOL	17/09/2014	Elba Island, Italy	Italy, France, Spain, Monaco, EMSA	<i>Brezzamare</i>
MASTIA 2014	25/09/2014	Cartagena Roads, Spain	Spain, EMSA	<i>Monte Anaga</i>
MANCHEX 2014	30/09/2014	Calais, France	France, EMSA	<i>Thames Fisher</i>
POLLEX 2014	02/10/2014	Vlakte van de Raan, The Netherlands	The Netherlands, Belgium, EMSA	<i>DC Vlaanderen 3000</i> <i>Interballast 3</i>
10 Exercises			16 Member States	12 Vessels

Table 5. Operational Exercises carried out in 2014

A detailed overview of the operational exercises carried out in 2014 is presented in Annex 1.

3.2 Notification Exercises

Notification exercises are usually conducted in conjunction with operational exercises. In addition, ‘standalone’ notification exercises are occasionally carried out. The aim of these exercises is to test and implement agreed procedures and lines of communication for reporting incidents and for requesting and providing assistance.

Based on EMSA’s mandate, the Vessel Network can be activated by the following Requesting Parties:

- EU Member States;
- EU Candidate Countries;
- European Free Trade Association (EFTA)/ European Economic Area (EEA) coastal Member States;
- Third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the Union;
- Responsible Parties⁴.

Notification exercises involve EMSA, the contractor, one or more Requesting Parties, EMSA’s vessel contractor(s) and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), operated by DG ECHO. The main criterion for the evaluation of the notification exercise is the time needed for the Incident Response Contract-Vessel (IRC-V)⁵ to be signed by both the EMSA contractor and the Member State requesting assistance.

In 2014, the Agency participated in 11 notification exercises, involving activation of EMSA contractors 14 times. For the first time a “Responsible Party” was involved in a Notification Exercise with EMSA which was an excellent opportunity to verify a newly developed procedure.

The number of notification exercises carried annually over the years 2006-2014 is shown on the chart below.

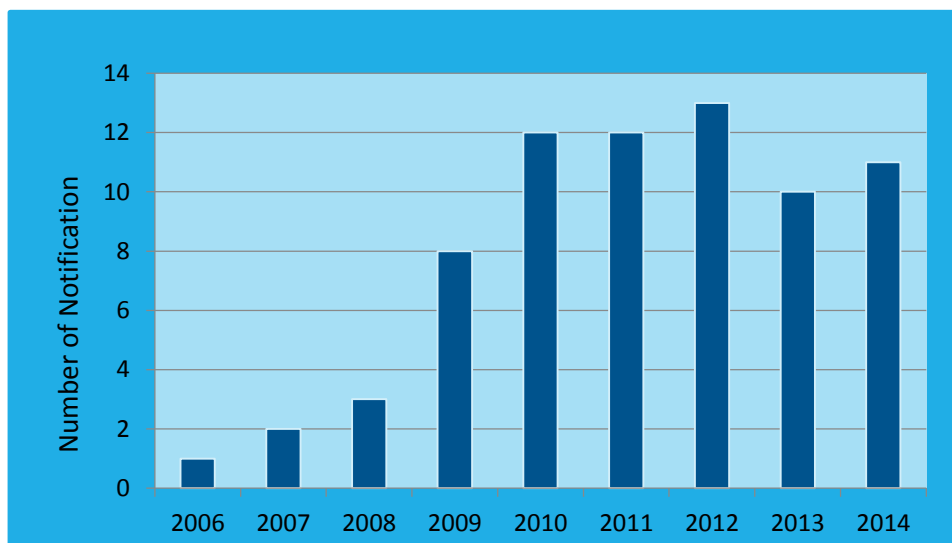


Chart 2. Number of Notification Exercises 2006 – 2014

⁴ “Responsible party” means the shipowner or oil and gas installation operator controlling the activity causing the marine pollution or the imminent threat of it.

⁵ “Incident Response Contract”: This contract is to be concluded between the ship operator and the affected State. This pre-established model contract addresses the actual oil recovery operations. It covers the terms and conditions of the service and includes the associated daily hire rates. Following a request for assistance, EMSA will activate or even pre-mobilise the vessel to facilitate the operation. The command and control during an incident rests with the coastal State using the vessel.

During the Notification Exercise, the timing begins at the moment the formal assistance request is received by EMSA. Taking into account variables such as the time of day, the day of the week, the contractor's location, time difference between Portugal and other Member States, etc., six hours is seen as an acceptable target deadline for all parties to sign. During the exercise, the Agency provides any assistance necessary to the Member State to help them in the process of completing and signing the IRC.

It must be noted that of the 11 notification exercises carried out in 2014, 7 exercises included the full procedure of EMSA vessel mobilisation by way of the signature of the IRC and in total 8 IRCs were concluded between Member States and EMSA contractors. This is comparable with 2013. On four occasions, Member States hosting the exercises did not test their internal channels and procedures for the mobilisation of EMSA's contracted oil recovery vessels by going through the process of signing the IRC.

In 2014, the CECIS⁶ system operated by DG ECHO became the common tool for conducting the notification exercises in the field of response to marine pollution. However, not all notification exercises were conducted with the use of CECIS. EMSA should strongly encourage the use of this system during notification exercises and real incidents. Additionally, Member States must be fully aware of their legal obligation to notify any incident that may affect other countries via the SafeSeaNet system.

A summary of these exercises can be found in the table below.

Exercise Name/Date	Participating Parties: MS/Contractor/ Vessel/s Involved	Results	Comments
NEMESIS 2014 08/04/2014	Cyprus, EMSA/ Petronav Ship Management/ <i>Alexandria</i>	The IRC form was filled in properly and signed by EMSA's Contractor and by the Member State in about 3 hours from receiving request for assistance.	Positive result of the exercise. Very good time for the completion of the IRC signing.
STOROVELSEN 29/04/2014	Norway, EMSA/ DC Industrial, OW Tankers/ <i>DC Vlaanderen 3000,</i> <i>Interballast III, OW Copenhagen</i>	The exercise was concluded without signature of the relevant IRCs between the requesting party and the Agency's contractors. The Agency submitted an offer of 3 vessels around 2 hours after receiving the request.	Norway indicated that the IRCs should be signed by the Norwegian Clean Seas Association for Operating Companies (NOFO). According to the "Guidelines for Authorising the Use of EMSA Pollution Response Resources by a Responsible Party", the contract signature would require consent of with the affected MS. Before these consultations could be completed, Norway announced the end of the exercise.
BALEX DELTA 2014 10/06/2014	Latvia, EMSA/ OW Tankers/ <i>OW Copenhagen</i>	The IRC form was filled in properly and signed by EMSA's Contractor and by the Member State about 4 hours from receiving request for assistance.	Positive result of the exercise. Acceptable time for the completion of the IRC signing.

⁶ The Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) is a web-based alert and notification application created to facilitate emergency communication. It provides a platform to send and receive alerts and details of assistance requested and offered.

Exercise Name/Date	Participating Parties: MS/Contractor/ Vessel/s Involved	Results	Comments
Oil Spill Ria de Arousa 16/06/2014	Spain, EMSA/ Remolcanosa/ <i>Ria de Vigo</i>	The IRC form was signed by EMSA's Contractor and by the Member State in about 3.5 hours from the delivery of the assistance request.	Good result of the exercise. Efficient and quickly completed procedure for launching the vessel mobilisation. The IRC form not filled properly by MS.
ORSEC BISCAYE 33 19/06/2014	France, EMSA/ Ibaizabal/ <i>Monte Arucas</i>	The IRC form was filled in properly and signed by EMSA's Contractor and by the Member State in about 4 hours.	Positive result of the exercise. Acceptable time for the completion of the IRC signing. CECIS used only for launching the exercise. Other correspondence was via e- mail and phone.
BALEX BRAVO 2014 14/08/2014	Finland, EMSA/ Arctia, OW Tankers/ <i>Kontio, OW Copenhagen</i>	The IRC was not signed. Finland requested <i>Kontio</i> which was not available due to the annual maintenance. EMSA offered <i>OW Copenhagen</i> which was rejected due to the distance to the incident site.	The aim of the exercise – signature of the IRC between MS and the contractor was not achieved. CECIS was not used. All correspondence was carried out via phone and e-mail.
MALTEX 2014 02/09/2014	Malta, EMSA/ Tankship Management, SL Ship Management/ <i>Balluta Bay, Santa Maria</i>	The IRC form was filled in properly and signed by both EMSA Contractors and by the Member State in about 2 hours.	Very good result of the exercise. Efficient and quickly completed procedure for launching the vessel mobilisation.
RAMOGEPOL 2014 16/09/2014	Italy, EMSA/ Ciane/ <i>Brezzamare</i>	EMSA assistance offer submitted. No reply from MS.	The aim of the exercise – signature of the IRC between MS and the contractor was not achieved. MS lost an opportunity to exercise mobilisation of the EMSA vessel.
MASTIA 2014 24/09/2014	Spain, EMSA/ Naviera Altube/ <i>Monte Anaga</i>	The IRC form was filled in properly and signed by EMSA's Contractor and by the Member State in about 2 hours from the delivery of the assistance request.	Good result of the exercise. Efficient and quickly completed procedure for the vessel mobilisation. Some difficulties with CECIS system delayed provision of the request for assistance to EMSA.
MANCHEX 2014 29-30/09/2014	France, EMSA/ James Fisher Everard/ <i>Thames Fisher</i>	The IRC form was not signed. EMSA sent an offer of assistance within one hour after receiving the assistance request. The exercise was terminated before acceptance of the offer.	The aim of the exercise – signature of the IRC between MS and the contractor was not achieved.
Collision in Bourgas Bay- BULGARIA 2014 22/10/2014	Bulgaria, EMSA/ Bon Marine/ <i>Enterprise</i>	The IRC form was filled in properly and signed by EMSA's Contractor and by the Member State in about 1.25 hours.	Very good result of the exercise. Efficient and quickly completed procedure for launching the vessel mobilisation.
11 Exercises	14 Contractor Activations	15 Vessels Involved 8 Signed IRC	

Table 6. Notification Exercises carried out in 2014

4. CONCLUSIONS

- The overall outcome of the Drills and Exercises carried out during 2014 demonstrated that the service is provided efficiently and in accordance with EMSA requirements. Overall, the Network achieved a highly acceptable level of preparedness for oil pollution response. Of the 61 quarterly and 10 acceptance drills performed, all but one were assessed positively and accepted on schedule.
- In 2014 there were a number of Notification Exercises where the aim of the exercise – signature of the IRC between MS and the contractor was not achieved. The Agency should continue to encourage strongly Member States to conduct full Notification Exercises for the mobilisation of EMSA's vessels, including the conclusion of the IRC.
- Notification Exercises proved that the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) is a useful tool to simplify and facilitate mobilisation of assistance to a Member State affected by a pollution incident. However, not all Member States use this system during the Notification Exercises. In 2015, EMSA will put more effort into promoting the use of CECIS.
- Besides the use of CECIS the Member States must be fully aware that it is their legal obligation to notify SafeSeaNet about any incident that may affect other countries. In 2015, EMSA will insist on using SafeSeaNet and CECIS during each exercise.
- In 2014 the Agency has reviewed guidelines regarding EMSA's procedures for the mobilisation of vessels by "Requesting Parties". These guidelines were distributed to the relevant counterparts at the Member States and to the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, in order to support timely signature of IRCs. The reviewed guidelines contain the newly developed procedure for the mobilisation of a vessel from the Vessel Network by a "Responsible Party". The further implementation of these guidelines is set as a target for 2015.
- More benefit could be achieved from the Operational Exercises if Member States would apply a more in-depth exercise evaluation and provide the Agency with comprehensive feedback on the performance of the EMSA vessels. The Agency, when responding to any invitation to participate in an operational exercise, should emphasise the advantages of a thorough exercise evaluation and of having subsequent feedback to the Agency. EMSA will develop and implement in 2015 an exercise feedback template to be sent to the organiser of each exercise.
- Some equipment sets in service since 2006-2007 show signs of ageing and/or deterioration. The Agency will continue to examine closely the condition of the equipment and the maintenance plans applied by contractors in order to identify any signs of deterioration which might require equipment overhauling or replacement.

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