

MARITIME TRANSPORT STAKEHOLDERS GATHER IN LISBON AS EMSA'S NEW HQ OPENS ITS DOORS

16 June saw the official opening of EMSA's brand new



headquarters in Lisbon's city centre, on the banks of the river Tagus. Ceremonies began with the naming of the building's Conference Centre in honour of Loyola de Palacio, former Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of relations with the European Parliament, Energy and Transport. Mr Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr Georg Jarzembowski, [European Parliament](#) and Ms Ana Palacio, sister of the late Commissioner, attended the ceremony.

A welcome address by Mr Willem de Ruiters, Executive Director of EMSA and Mr Mario Lino, Portuguese [Minister of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunications](#), was followed by a two-hour conference on maritime surveillance. Keynote speakers included: Mr Tajani, Vice-President of the [European Commission](#); Rear Admiral Salerno, [US Coast Guard](#); Mr Tallec, [Secrétaire général de la Mer](#), France; Mr Briggs, Head of Earth Observation Science applications and future technologies at the [European Space Agency](#); Mr Louis-Dreyfus, President of [ECSA](#); and Mr Hammer Hansen, Chairman EMSA's Administrative Board. The event included a practical demonstration of EMSA's [maritime surveillance services](#).

THE RIBEIRA DAS NAUS: A GLORIOUS SHIPPING PAST

The Ribeira das Naus ('Ships' embankment'), takes its name from Lisbon's historical shipyards, located on the site of [EMSA's new HQ](#). A vestige of the site's maritime history is the



'Antigo Relógio' (old clock), where captains once set their navigational instruments. Today, the port has moved along the river Tagus. Yet the Cais do Sodré district retains maritime links, with the nearby Portuguese Admiralty, shipping agents, chandlers and a ferry terminal.

The Ribeira das Naus has a strong history of ship building, as illustrated in a decorative tile panel at the IMO headquarters in London (donated to IMO by the [Government of Portugal](#)).

THE LOYOLA DE PALACIO CONFERENCE CENTRE

EMSA's conference centre is named in memory of Loyola de Palacio y del Valle-Lersundi (1950-2006), former Vice President of the European Commission (1999-2004) who had a significant impact on maritime safety and protection of marine environment.



The conference centre will play host to maritime safety meetings, and will also be used by the [EMCDDA](#), the EU's drug agency.

Ms de Palacio played a pre-eminent role in Spanish politics until 1999, serving as minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in José María Aznar's Partido Popular government. She was elected as an MEP in the 1999 European elections. She joined the European Commission in September 1999, as Commissioner for Energy and Transport in the Prodi Commission, where she also served as Vice President, and took charge of relations with the European Parliament. She pushed forward the Galileo satellite system and enhanced maritime safety legislation. She was in charge when the Commission pushed for far-reaching maritime regulations after the sinking of the tanker Erika, including the creation of a European Maritime Safety Agency. After leaving the Commission in November 2004, Ms de Palacio became a director in the banking sector. Sadly and unexpectedly, she died at the early age of 56 in Madrid in December 2006.



Loyola de Palacio enhanced maritime safety following the Erika sinking in 1999.

ON THE EMSA WEBSITE

The official opening of the new EMSA HQ provided the occasion to launch the [Maritime Accident Review 2008](#). The second in an annual series launched in 2008, the latest review provides an overview of shipping accidents in-and-around EU waters.



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