

NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENT SIGNED WITH EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO ENSURE TIMELY ACTION IN THE FACE OF MARITIME EMERGENCIES

On 2 February our Executive Director Maja Markovčić Kostelac, Deputy Director-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) Maja Bakran Marcich, and acting Director for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) Julia Stewart-David signed a new working arrangement aimed at strengthening the maritime emergency response capacity in Europe and worldwide. The new arrangement reflects the various lessons learnt and services added since the previous arrangement was signed in 2014, and reinforces the role of DG MOVE in the emergency response coordination process. The arrangement will help to ensure a timely and efficient response to requests for assistance, and extends coverage to maritime safety and security incidents as well as any maritime emergency to which EMSA might provide support in assisting national authorities carrying out coast guard functions. The response mechanism entails a swift exchange of information, a reinforced coordination role for the ERCC in the event of international assistance, and enables assistance planning within 8 hours of the initial consultation. A dedicated section of the arrangement also clarifies the potential role experts from EMSA may undertake, particularly in the provision of remote or on-site support.



19TH INTER-SECRETARIAT MEETING BRINGS TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM REGIONAL AGREEMENTS, EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EMSA IN LONDON

The 19th Inter-Secretariat meeting between the European Regional Sea Conventions, the European Commission and EMSA was hosted by the Bonn Agreement Secretariat on 31 January and 1 February 2023 in London and chaired by EMSA's Executive Director Maja Markovčić Kostelac. The meeting was attended by 33 participants, both in-person and online, from the Bonn Agreement/OSPAR Secretariat, the HELCOM Secretariat, REMPEC, the Copenhagen Agreement Secretariat, the Lisbon Agreement, the Black Sea Commission Secretariat, DG ECHO, DG MOVE and DG Environment from the European Commission, and EMSA. Since 2005, these annually held and well-established Inter-Secretariat meetings provide a unique forum promoting the informal exchange of information and good practice among the various regions, aiming to foster dialogue and cooperation in pollution prevention and response work. The agenda included exchanges on ongoing and planned activities and priorities in the field of marine pollution prevention, preparedness and response and addressed topics of common interest across the various regions, such as work on air emissions monitoring, developing a framework for sharing key lessons learnt from incidents, regional risk analysis work and updates on EMSA's pollution response and surveillance services. Next year will see the 20th Inter-Secretariat meeting taking place in February 2024 in Lisbon.



ECGFF CYBERSECURITY WORKING GROUP HOLD WORKSHOP AT EMSA

On 6-7 February, EMSA hosted the workshop of the ECGFF Cybersecurity Working Group with representatives from the European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF), the European Commission's DG MARE and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in attendance. During the meeting, the chairperson presented the activities of the ECGFF Cybersecurity Working Group and analysed past incidents, focusing on GNSS and AIS interference. EMSA shared the initiatives undertaken by the Agency on cybersecurity, predominantly the development of a cybersecurity training course as part of the EMSA Academy and the publication of a guidance document on how to address cybersecurity during ship security audits, verifications, controls and inspections from EU Member State maritime and national administrations. Relevant EU Horizon 2020 projects were also presented. The next meeting of the ECGFF Cybersecurity Working Group is expected to take place in Brussels on 22-24 May 2023 under the Belgian Chairmanship of the ECGFF.

MEDITERRANEAN AIS EXPERT WORKING GROUP HELD IN ROME

The 19th Mediterranean AIS Expert Working Group (MARES EWG) meeting took place in Rome on 25 January. This was the opportunity to get an update on the activities underway as well as the progress achieved to date. The current status of the national AIS networks and technical matters related to AIS data exchange in MARES were also on the table. The meeting was chaired by EMSA and attended by representatives of the MARES participating Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia), Norway (as the country hosting the NSATL and HELCOM regional AIS regional servers) as well participants in the BCSEA, SAFEMED and IPA projects (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Türkiye and Ukraine). A second meeting took place on 26 January with the participation of Italy and the BCSEA, SAFEMED and IPA countries with the objective of increasing the awareness of the beneficiaries on their participation in MARES and SafeSeaNet activities in accordance with the conditions set by the High Level Steering Group. Egypt, Moldova and Türkiye expressed their interest in starting with phase 1 (exchange of AIS) while Georgia, Montenegro, Morocco and Ukraine confirmed their interest to participate in Phase 3A (exchange of basic SafeSeaNet information).



EMSA HAS DEVELOPED AND RELEASED THE FLAG STATE INSPECTION FUNCTIONALITY IN RULECHECK

Within the context of the support offered to Member States, Candidate Countries and ENP countries to build their national capacity as Flag States, EMSA has developed and released the Flag State Inspection functionality in RuleCheck. The objective of this innovative functionality is to support the work of flag state inspectors performing periodic flag state inspections (not statutory). The feature allows users to generate customised checklists for individual ships taking into consideration ship type and keel laying date which are the main factors to define the applicable EU and international mandatory instruments, rules, and regulations. Additional factors such as Gross Tonnage, Deadweight, Freeboard Length, Overall Length, Passenger Number (in the case of a passenger ship) could be used to customise further the search results and the final output. In addition, the functionality allows users to further customise the produced checklists by selecting the relevant inspection area. More than 2 000 Flag State Inspectors who are existing users from EU Member States, Candidate Countries and ENP beneficiaries have been provided with access to the new functionality and training will be incorporated into all ship inspection learning services developed by the EMSA Academy. This new service will further enhance Flag State control inspections and is expected to increase the levels of safety, security, pollution prevention and working and living conditions on board ships.



Screenshot from RuleCheck showing the new functionality for Flag State inspections.

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VACANCIES: Project Officer for Ship Safety (28/2/23); Project Officer for Visits and Inspections - SNE (20/2/23); See website for more.

PROCUREMENT: Supply of portable emergency offloading pumping system for oil and liquid HNS (10/2/23); Service contract for intermediate storage vessel (17/2/23); See website for more.