



N° 170 E – News from July 2009

In short

Emergency response

The Emergency Response Department was called upon in relation to several incidents: a sample analysis request following the pollution of a beach in Marseille with tar balls, an inquiry from the MRCC Corsican concerning the contents of a drum found at sea, and inquiries concerning arrivals of tar balls on several beaches in the Morbihan area.

The department was also involved in two ICE exercises, one led by the UK and the other by Denmark.

Finally, a specialist from *Cedre* took part in the closure of a clean-up worksite following the spill at Theys ([see Newsletter n° 169](#)).

MEETINGS

► 9th session of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group from 6 to 10 July, followed by a presentation of the work of the Marine Environment Protection Committee from 13 to 16 July in London.

VISITS

► On 2nd, a delegation from the Polmar stockpile in Brest.

► On 15th, a delegation from Oil Spill Response.

TRAINING

► From 6 to 8, practical training course at *Cedre*, for Oil Spill Response (9 participants).

France: spill response exercise at the Normandy refinery

As part of an effort to establish contingency plans for spill response on the sites and refineries under the authority of Total refineries, the Normandy refinery contracted *Cedre*, in 2008 and 2009, to draw up its contingency plan. Several theory and practical training sessions for over 110 supervisors and operators were also organised. To complete this project, two representatives of the Contingency Planning Department participated as observers in a spill response exercise conducted by the refinery on 23 June. The aim of this exercise was to set up a crisis unit, to manage a tier 2 incident involving external agents, and to deploy response equipment purchased at the beginning of the year. This exercise, which mobilised refinery personnel as well as representatives of the Grand Port Maritime du Havre, the fire brigade and private service companies, was conclusive and demonstrated good knowledge of the plan in terms of its technical, strategic and organisational aspects.

Cedre rises from the ashes

Following the fire which broke out in *Cedre's* laboratory causing the loss of all its analytical equipment, *Cedre* has begun to replace some of the damaged equipment. A gas phase chromatograph coupled with detection by mass spectrometry (GC-MS), equipped with a multistage position changer, has now been installed in a temporary building. This equipment is mainly used to analyse water samples, but can also be used to identify oil pollution.



The new GC-MS ©*Cedre*

Préfectures Maritimes: new commissioners appointed

The Chief Commissioner of the French Navy Jean-Loup Velut, who was in charge of the French navy commission school, has recently been appointed General Commissioner of the Navy and posted at the Préfecture Maritime for the Méditerranée where he will be deputy to the Maritime Prefect, in charge of the Action of the State at Sea.

The First Class Chief Commissioner François Martineau will take on the position of head of the "Action of the State at Sea" division of the Préfecture for the Atlantic, replacing the Chief Commissioner of the First Class Cyriaque Garapin.

Total Guadeloupe exercise, Pointe-à-Pitre

"During a delivery of unleaded petrol, the rupture of a pipe caused a spill of a large quantity of petrol which burst into flames and ran towards the water body. Due to this incident, access to the marine terminal was prohibited for an hour and a half, attracting considerable media attention due to the disturbance to traffic between islands during this high tourist season." Thankfully, this was only a fictional plot, presenting the background for a crisis management exercise organised on 10 July by Total Guadeloupe, simulating an accident in a marine terminal, COMAPEGA station, located near the Pointe-à-Pitre marine terminal. A local Total Guadeloupe crisis management unit was set up and the company's head office alerted. *Cedre's* Caribbean delegation was involved in preparing, setting up and running this exercise.

Workshop in Vigo

An engineer from the Emergency Response Department took part in a workshop organised within the framework of the PREVECMA network (Prevención e Resposta ás Verteduras Mariñas), on 25 June at CETMAR (Vigo). The focus of the workshop was response preparedness and intervention in the event of incidents relating to the maritime transport of hazardous and noxious substances.

Belgium: visit to the Port of Antwerp

Two representatives of the Contingency Planning Department visited the Port of Antwerp in late June, in order to investigate the possibilities of cooperation of the port with *Cedre* in terms of planning, training and technical assistance for emergency spill response. A meeting involving the harbourmaster, the environment officer, the legal advisor and the port operations department officer followed by a visit of the site enabled potential areas of collaboration to be identified.

Refloating the wreck of *MSC Napoli*

The stern section of the container ship *MSC Napoli*, grounded over 2 years ago on the south coast of England, has been refloated ([more info here](#)). The bow section had been rapidly refloated and dismantled but the stern section, which was more severely damaged, was left on site. The Dutch company in charge of dismantling the wreck is to maintain a 500 m exclusion zone around the wreck until the end of August, then the recovery metal will be sent to a recycling plant in the Netherlands. The British SOSREP Hugh Shaw officially declared an end to salvage and wreck removal operations on 29 July.

Erika: appeal hearing to begin in October

The appeal hearing following the *Erika* disaster ([more info here](#)) is scheduled to take place at the Paris Court of Appeal from 5 October to 18 November. The vast majority of the hundred-odd claimants presented in the first trial appealed. The State, also claiming damages, chose not to appeal. In terms of defendants, 6 legal or physical persons will appear.

650 sacks contaminated with PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) recovered last May

39 years ago, in September 1970, the barge *Irving Whale* sank north of the Magdalen Islands (Gulf of Saint Lawrence, Quebec), causing an oil spill which arrived on the islands' beaches. At the time, the authorities decided to bag the oiled sand and bury the 200,000 sacks in the dunes. In May 2009, 650 of these sacks were recovered, bringing the number of unearthed sacks up to 7,000. The coastguards are currently conducting analyses to determine whether this waste could contaminate the ground water and whether their recovery could cause greater damage due to the fragile nature of the site.

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