



### N° 173 E – News from October 2009

#### Emergency response

This month of October saw a particularly large number of inquiries: in addition to monitoring the pollution in the Etang de Berre and the spill caused by the *Gülser Ana*, both described in detail below, the Emergency Response Department received several requests concerning the potential risks caused by a cargo of ammonium nitrate breaking loose, a leak of phenol at a purification plant and barrels containing a mixture of copper sulphate and ammonia spilt following a road accident. We also took part in an ICE exercise organised by our Belgian colleagues as well as two Polmar Land exercises (Landes and Calvados) and two Polmar Sea exercises (Reunion and New Caledonia).

#### Collision on the Seine

On 15 October, a collision on the Seine occurred involving a small cargo ship, *Civra*, transporting wheat (7,500 t) from Rouen to Syria, and a barge *Tasmanie*, transporting coal (600 t) from Le Havre to Rouen. The barge sank with a little over 2 m<sup>3</sup> of fuel, grounding on the north bank, upstream of Tancarville Bridge. The collision occurred in a tidal area. The 3 passengers were rescued. The agent from *Cedre* who was running a Polmar training session in Le Havre (see article below) accompanied the manager of the Polmar Interdepartmental Stockpile and Response Centre in Le Havre to the accident area. A floating boom had been deployed to contain any leaks of fuel at ebb tide. A second boom was then deployed on the other side of the barge. The leaks observed by our agent on site were minimal and occasional, more likely to be the result of overflow from vents than from a leak from a breach. Divers were unable to identify any breaches in the barge due to the large amount of sediment in the river near the bank. According to the latest information available to us, there was no significant spill either of cargo or of fuel. The barge is due to be refloated after removal of the coal and fuel.

#### Incident at Berre petrochemical site

From Sunday 20 September, 5 worksites were set up on the banks of the Etang de Vaine following an overflow from the treatment plant belonging to the Compagnie Pétrochimique de Berre, due to repeated, exceptional rain storms ([Newsletter n° 172](#)). The clean-up companies mobilised since the onset of the incident have been cleaning up the affected banks. These worksites required the implementation of pollution response means, following an operational procedure adapted to suit each site, established by *Cedre* and approved by the site during coordination meetings (daily during the first week following the spill, then organised every two to three days as required). These operational procedures specified: the necessary areas marked out, preparation of pathways and working areas, instructions in terms of sorting, storing and transferring waste, collection methods (manual or mechanical) as well as the specific techniques and equipment to be deployed (high pressure washing, scraping, skimming, scything operations...). Clean-up at the various worksites was finished on 20 October and approved during the last two weeks of October. From week 44, clean-up operations only concerned the stilling basin and the internal facilities at the Berre site.

#### Grounding of the *Gülser Ana*, cont.

The two experts from *Cedre* sent on site to analyse the water quality in the coastal wells and to assess sites before clean-up operations began following the grounding of the *Gülser Ana* ([Newsletter n° 172](#)) left Madagascar on Monday 12 October. While oil removal operations continued along the affected coastline, the first observations and analyses did not reveal any particular risks in terms of the use of the water from the sampled wells. Further analyses are currently in progress, including tests to detect the presence of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH) and heavy metals caused by the spill of the cargo of phosphorite and bunker fuel from the *Gülser Ana*. Clean-up on the shoreline, mainly carried out manually, is being conducted under the supervision of a specialised company which recruits, trains, equips and supervises volunteers who live in the affected area. These operations should continue throughout the coming weeks with support from the vessel's insurer and technical advisers.

#### In short

##### DATES FOR THE DIARY

► The **Cedre Information Day 2010** will be held on **Thursday 11 March** at INHES. The chosen theme is "**Pollution response equipment stockpiles**"

##### VISITS

► On 7th, 3 delegates from the Makarov Training Centre in St Petersburg (Russia)  
 ► On 14th, Brest section of the naval officers' association  
 ► On 23rd, students studying law of maritime territories and activities at UBO

##### TRAINING

► On 6th, at *Cedre*, CEPPOP basic pollution response training course, 11 participants  
 ► From 12th to 16th, at *Cedre*, course on oil spill response in coastal areas, 21 participants  
 ► From 19th to 21st, at *Cedre*, course on the observation from aircraft of discharge, 17 participants

##### PUBLICATIONS

► An updated version of the French language operational guide on aerial observation of oil pollution at sea has now been released [www.cedre.fr](http://www.cedre.fr)  
 ► The 2010 training course schedule is available [here](#) (French version).

## OSCAR-MED exercise

From 13 to 15 October, REMPEC organised, in cooperation with the *Préfecture maritime* for the Mediterranean, the first international coordinated surveillance operation to combat illicit discharge in the Mediterranean. Named OSCAR-MED, this operation involved the continuous surveillance of one of the main shipping routes using Spanish, Italian and French aircraft. In addition to these means, EMSA supported the operation by providing access to the satellite imagery system *CleanSeaNet*. Experts from the Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network (MOON) provided slick drift predictions. The aim of this operation was to catch ships illicitly discharging red-handed and to share operational methods and procedures. Conferences were organised for the observers, two of which were given by the *Cedre* delegate for the Mediterranean: one on satellite surveillance and the other on legal action in France since 1996.

## Polmar training courses and exercises

In October *Cedre* was heavily involved in Polmar training courses and exercises.

- On the coastline of the Channel, an engineer from the Training Department was involved in providing training courses intended for State services and local authorities, organised by CIFP Rouen, CNFPT Basse-Normandie and local equipment directorates, upon the initiative of the Polmar Interdepartmental Stockpile and Response Centre of Le Havre, on 6 and 7 October in Hérouville Saint-Clair then from 13 to 15 in Rouen and Le Havre. A similar course took place on 28 and 29 September in the Manche area, this time involving the manager and a technician from the Training Department. An engineer from the Spill Follow-up Department also took part in a Polmar exercise on 21 October in Port-en-Bessin.
- On the Atlantic coastline, *Cedre* was mobilised for practical training on floating boom deployment, worksite organisation and shoreline clean-up techniques. This training was organised by the Landes equipment directorate during the Polmar exercise on 13 and 14 October, for 3 communes and an intercommunal union (SIVOM).
- In the Mediterranean, an engineer from the Training Department led a course for State services and local authorities in the Bouches-du-Rhône. Held from 5 to 7 October, this course preceded a Polmar exercise organised on 8 in La Ciotat and Cassis.

Almost all of these actions were carried out in collaboration with CETMEF and the local Polmar stockpile, thus ensuring that a unified and consistent approach is transmitted to all coastal local governments.

## IMO audit

From 12 to 19 October, France was subject to an audit by the International Maritime Organization which mainly focused on the prerogatives of the coastal State. Within this framework, and upon request from the Maritime Affairs Directorate, *Cedre* received Mr Moain Al-Zoubi and Mr Ib Matthesen, experts of the IMO audit team.

## 5th symposium *Entretiens de Port-Cros*

The Total Foundation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Port-Cros national park organised the 5th edition of the symposium *Entretiens de Port-Cros* from 7 to 9 October in Porquerolles on the theme of "Biodiversity and maritime transport". This event, held every two years, gathered together over sixty experts from around the world, specialised in fields related to the symposium's theme. The director of *Cedre* led a session on the threats of shipping to marine biodiversity.

## Australia: West Atlas rig, cont.

Despite four attempts, the well where West Atlas rig was operating, in eruption since 21 August ([Newsletter n° 172](#)), off the Kimberley coast (Timor Sea), had still not been plugged by 27 October. Estimations of the leak range between 200 and 500 m<sup>3</sup> per day, i.e. a total of between 18,000 and 33,500 m<sup>3</sup> since the beginning of the eruption. This is the largest spill Australia has ever known. 300 people, 17 vessels and 9 aircraft have been mobilised by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), which took on the coordination of response operations from the very first day, to monitor, disperse or contain and pump the spill ([see here for more details](#)). Information on the pollution is becoming increasingly varied between sources. For PTTEP Australasia, the only current impact is thought to be the oiling of 25 seabirds, of which 16 have died, and the results of analyses on fish are all negative. For the WWF, on the basis of a 3-day survey at sea near the Ashmore Reef, a rich ecosystem is a grave danger, including a large number of dolphins, turtles, sea snakes and sea birds. On the Indonesian side, the press reports that 300 operators on Rote Island (East Nusa Tenggara) have had to stop harvesting a thousand hectares of seaweed, no longer suitable for consumption. Fishermen observed slicks off the coast of Pasir Island and reported that landings of red sea bream had dropped from a hundred to a handful per night. An Indonesian delegation was sent to Darwin to monitor response operations.

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