



Cedre NEWSLETTER

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Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution

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Emergency response

Over and above a mobilisation in response to the *YM Uranus* incident described below, no major events occurred this month. We therefore take this opportunity to present the improvements in drift modelling of pollutants and objects on the sea surface. Version 3.2 of the MOTHY model includes:

- The atmospheric forcing of the new fine-mesh regional atmospheric model Arome: after Arpège (global model) and Aladin (Western European model), the model Arome constitutes the third link in Météo France's digital forecast "chain". With a mesh of 2.5 km, its scope is limited to mainland France for timeframes of up to 30 hours and it includes certain complex, local meteorological phenomena (sea breezes, winds related to relief...). [See here for details](#).
- Improvement of the resolution of the global atmospheric forecast model Arpège: the global model Arpège now has a resolution of 10 km for the whole of Europe and the near Atlantic (instead of the previous 25 km) and 50 km for the rest of the world (instead of 110 km).

The *YM URANUS* incident



The YM Uranus in difficulty off the south of Ushant Island.
© Marine nationale

On 8 October 2010 at around 5:30 am, the Maltese chemical tanker *YM Uranus* was travelling from Porto Marghera (Italy) to Amsterdam (Netherlands) when it collided with the bulk carrier *Hanjin Rizhao*. Following this collision, the chemical tanker, transporting 6,500 tonnes of pygas (pyrolysis gasoline), found itself in great difficulty with a major leak, 30 nautical miles west of Ushant Island, Brittany and contacted the Corsen MRCC. *Cedre* was alerted 15 minutes later. Confronted with a worrying situation, the 13 crew members rapidly abandoned ship on a life raft were airlifted by helicopter at around 7 am and taken to the naval air station in Lanvéoc-Poulmic. An assessment and response team was arranged by the Maritime Prefect and airlifted onto the vessel.

The collision had caused a crack 8 m long by 5 m high in the rear portside but the cargo tanks and bunker tanks remained intact. At around midday, the tug *Abeille Bourbon* attached a towline to the *YM Uranus* and the vessel was towed at a speed of 4 knots to Brest, where it arrived late at night. *Cedre's* response centre was in heavy demand and made contact with many local, national and international organisations. It answered many enquiries on the nature of the product and the associated risks. Meanwhile, *Cedre's* GIS specialists ran modelling software (ChemMap) to study the behaviour of pygas when spilt on the water surface, as well as 60 and 100 m deep, in case the tanker were to sink. Pygas evaporates easily and is highly flammable. Fortunately, this accident did not result in a spill thanks to the ship's design (double hull, ice capable), its good condition as well as the favourable weather conditions and the rapid response by the authorities.

In short

MEETINGS, CONFERENCES

- ▶ On 7th, meeting between the Director and Senator Roland Courteau within the framework of the study on "Pollution of the Mediterranean: state and prospects in 2030"
- ▶ On 14th, conference at the "Journées annuelles des hydrocarbures" in Paris, AFTP
- ▶ On 21st, conference on *Cedre* and Deepwater Horizon for the PROPELLER Club in Nantes
- ▶ On 27th and 28th, at *Cedre*, Bonn Otsopa workshop on hazardous and noxious substances (HNS)

TRAINING

- ▶ From 4th to 8th, 4th training session then from 18th to 22nd, 5th training session on oil spill response in coastal areas (20 and 23 participants)
- ▶ From 11th to 14th, 2nd session marine pollution crisis management training course (18 participants)
- ▶ On 15th, training within the framework of the inter-institution diploma in crisis and environmental veterinary medicine, at ONIRIS, Nantes

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- ▶ Within the framework of "Brest, maritime capital of biodiversity", *Cedre* invites you from 13th to 17th December 2010 to an exhibition entitled "Pollution and biodiversity", on its premises

Hungary: flood of toxic sludge

On 4 October, cracks in the dam holding back liquid residues from the bauxite mine at the aluminium plant in Ajka (Hungary), operated by Magyar Aluminium Ltd (MAL), caused the dam to burst, resulting in a flood of 0.7 to 1 million tonnes of red toxic sludge in the watershed of the Danube. This sludge polluted 40 km², including 4 villages in which 9 people were killed and 150 injured. Nine days after the spill, the Hungarian authorities decided to fund the reconstruction of the burst dam and take control of the company, to ensure the plant resumed operation (1,100 jobs) as quickly as possible. The European Commission sent a team of experts onsite and opened the door to structural aid.

Cross-Channel Forum, UK

An engineer from *Cedre* took part in the Cross-Channel Forum on 19 October in Exeter, Devon, UK, which aimed to inform participants of the progress of the Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy (CAMIS) project funded through the INTERREG IV.A. programme. The aim of the project is to initiate the consultation process on the issues related to an integrated maritime strategy for the Channel area and to identify the main challenges to be taken into account in future work. *Cedre* took this opportunity to present certain challenges in the field of accidental pollution caused by shipping in the Channel.

European project Arcopol

The 3rd coordination meeting of the Arcopol project, part of the Transnational Atlantic Area Programme (Newsletters 174 and 179), was held at the beginning of October in the offices of CIECEMA (*Centro Internacional de Estudios y Convenciones Ecológicas y Medioambientales*) in Almonte, Spain. This meeting was followed, on 6 and 7 October, by a conference entitled "Oil, HNS and inert spill response in Andalusia's coast 2010". During these events, the 3 representatives of *Cedre* present were able to present to the project partners and participants their work carried out through their contract with the French regions (Aquitaine and Brittany) involved in the project. The following elements were presented: a popularisation/awareness-raising film on the main principles of shoreline clean-up, as well as 3 operational guides focusing on volunteers, sea professionals and local authorities.

Nancy: ecotechnological days

In a bid to diffuse their results, the projects VALDECO (economic valuation of ecological damages caused to the marine environment following an oil spill) and AMPERA (European Concerted Action to foster prevention and best response to Accidental Marine Pollution) were presented at the French National Research Agency's ecotechnological days on 20, 21 and 22 of October in Nancy. This event was the opportunity to present the progress of these 2 projects led by *Cedre*, which are both part of the French National Research Agency's Ecotechnologies and Sustainable Development Research Programme.

Training

The head of *Cedre's* Training Department and the Caribbean delegate ran two training courses in October in Martinique and French Guiana. The first, organised at the initiative of SARA (*Société Anonyme de Raffinage des Antilles*), was held from 12 to 15 on the premises of the Lamentin refinery. 19 participants from the sites of SARA in Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana, as well as from EDF, Total Guadeloupe and Total Caribbean were trained in oil spill response on land, in channels and on the shoreline. Practical exercises were conducted using the equipment and personnel of the refinery's safety team.

The second course was organised at the initiative of the Guiana Equipment Directorate from 19 to 21 October. 10 participants representing French administrations and military bodies were trained in the specific French marine pollution contingency provisions as well as the organisation of shoreline clean-up sites. Practical exercises were organised by *Phares et Balises* which provided its own personnel and equipment from the Polmar stockpile.

California: exploration of the *Montebello* shipwreck

The wreck of the oil tanker *Montebello*, torpedoed by a Japanese submarine on 23 December 1941 with 1,100 tonnes of crude oil onboard, which lies 7 nautical miles off Cambria in waters 275 m deep, is the suspected culprit of arrivals of oil on the coast. In anticipation of a future operation, the wreck was explored during the summer by a ROV from Monterey Bay Aquarium. This exploration confirmed the need to intervene.

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