



### N° 194 E – News from September 2011

#### Emergency response

During September, *Cedre* received two drift prediction requests, one for the Channel following the wrecking of a trawler and another for the Mediterranean. It also responded to an inquiry from MRCC Corsen on biodiesel releases at sea and was called upon in connection with the arrival onshore of *Sargassum* seaweed in the West Indies, in collaboration with *Ifremer*. Over the past month, several exercises were organised:

- by an oil group reporting a spill from an offshore drilling rig in the Gulf of Guinea, monitored on site by an agent from *Cedre*
- by the EDF terminal at Pointe des Carrières (Martinique)
- "Guardex 2011" involving a ferry on fire and suffering damage, on a crossing between Roscoff and a port in the UK, in which *Cedre* took part as a member of the cargo unit.

Finally, in Bellefontaine in Martinique (EDF terminal), an oil spill was monitored by our onsite delegate.

#### In short

##### MEETINGS

► On 20th September, participation of *Cedre's* Director in the *Interspill* Steering Committee meeting at *ITOPF*, London. We note that the Call for Papers is now open and abstracts must be submitted by 15 November. See [here](#) for more information.

##### TRAINING

► From 12th to 16th, session 2 of the practical course on shoreline response, 21 participants

► From 26th to 29th, 2 pilot information sessions on aerial observation, Fort-de-France

##### DATES FOR THE DIARY

► *Science Village*, Brest, from 12th to 16th October

#### Inauguration of *Cedre's* flume tank

Designed in the late 1990s, *Cedre's* flume tank or "*Polludrome*" has been used to study the behaviour of around forty oils and chemicals, in particular heavy fuel oils with the occurrence of the *Erika* and *Prestige* spills. Over the years, the tank had become corroded by salt, and was in need of replacement. On funding from the French Government and the Region of Brittany, a new version of the *Polludrome* was designed by engineers and technicians from *Cedre* and constructed by a local firm based in Brest. One of a kind due to its size, this experimental tool made of stainless steel is installed in an air conditioned hall and is used to simulate the effect of wind, waves, currents and sunshine, and to study the influence of these factors on the behaviour and properties of products spilt at sea and in inland waters. The new flume tank was inaugurated at *Cedre*, on 22 September by François Cuillandre, President of *Cedre*, Isabelle Thomas, Vice-President of the Region of Brittany and Loic Laisné, Deputy Maritime Prefect, in charge of State action at sea.

#### Researchers' Night

For the 4th consecutive year, *Cedre* took part in Researchers' Night, on 23rd September at Océanopolis. For its 7th edition, the organisers showed a lot of imagination and creativity. The visitors found themselves on the trail of a disappearance in one of the aquariums at Océanopolis, where they were directed towards *Cedre's* station entitled "What is oil?" to uncover hidden clues and get talking to representatives of *Cedre*. Meanwhile, "speed searching meetings" were the chance for interesting encounters between visiting enthusiasts and researchers. The event was a success with around 2,100 visitors (500 more than the previous year) and 120 researchers and staff at the different stations.

#### September training courses: the ORSEC/POLMAR tour of France continues

The "ORSEC/POLMAR land" training courses run by *Cedre* and *CETMEF* upon the request of the *DDTM* or *POLMAR* response and storage centres, for Government agents and local authorities are in full swing once again. A theory course completed by practical workshops was held on 12th and 13th in Cancale, for 42 participants. The following week, the *POLMAR* stockpile in Brest hosted 23 participants for a preparatory training day for the exercise to be held on 11th and 12th October on the river Belon. On the 20th and 21st, 39 participants attended a theory course in Aix-en-Provence, before taking part in exercises run by the *POLMAR* response and storage centres in Port-de-Bouc and the Bouches-du-Rhône fire brigade on the 22nd. Finally, 30 people took part in a half-day of training in Bayonne prior to the exercises held on the 28th in Anglet and the 29th in Ciboure. All these actions were supported by the *DAM*.

#### Rehabilitation of over forty-year-old storage trenches

The three open-topped trenches on the island of Er (Plougrescant), dug over 44 years ago on private land requisitioned in an emergency to store the oiled waste from a spill of crude oil from the wreck of the *Torrey Canyon*, then probably from the crude oil from the *Amoco Cadiz*, are soon to be rehabilitated. Particular attention has been paid to the site definition due in part to the difficulty in accessing it and its sensitivity, being classed as a *Natura 2000* site. The media attention attracted by these trenches required close collaboration over the past years between the State

(through the subprefecture of Lannion) and its departmental and regional services on the one hand and site owners, the area of Plougrescant, local and regional environmental associations and other technical organisations on the other. The Pays-de-Loire environment and energy agency, assisted by *Cedre*, is the contracting authority. BURGEAP is the prime contractor, and Bureau Veritas the health and safety coordinator. Soléo-services, which was awarded the tender, came to *Cedre* in September to be trained in *in situ* stone washing techniques. Between 400 m<sup>3</sup> and 500 m<sup>3</sup> of waste (clusters of oil in the form of pastes, oiled stones and various debris that has accumulated over time) is to be evacuated. Some of the stones will be cleaned on the island and returned to the shingle bar on the foreshore. The other original aspect is recourse to helicopter transport (by the company Bretagne Hélicoptère) to transfer men, equipment and waste.

## Uganda: establishment of the oil spill contingency plan

From 28th August to 4th September, an engineer from *Cedre* was in Kampala (Uganda), as well as North East of Lake Albert, on Block 1, for which a permit has been granted to Tullow Oil for oil exploration and appraisal operations. Following the acquisition of a 33% contribution for this block (as well as blocks 2 and 3A), TOTAL Exploration & Production Uganda (TEPU) should become the operator of this block in late September 2011. The main purpose of this assignment was to collect both the organisational and operational information required to establish the Ugandan branch's Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP). During the onsite visit, the following aspects were reviewed in detail: the sites concerned, the risks related to exploration and test operations, the relevant scenarios for establishing the plan, the main response strategies to be put forward, the required equipment available or to be acquired to implement these technical choices. An initial draft of the plan has been submitted to TEPU. The final version should be available in October. A second trip will take place in November to present the final document as well as to train those involved in implementing the plan.

## Workshop in Egypt

From 13 to 15 September, a regional training workshop took place in Hurgada (Egypt) on the risks generated by marine spills of hazardous substances. This workshop was organised by the Regional Intergovernmental Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), created at the Jeddah conference (Saudi Arabia) in 1982 under the authority of UNEP. Representatives of the six nations bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden attended a course run by *Cedre*.

## Visit from a delegation of the North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum

The North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum (NACGF), for which France currently holds the rotating presidency, met at the end of September in Brest. A major international exercise, whose theme was assistance to a passenger vessel on fire, was held off Roscoff. On 28 September, the Director took the leaders of delegations participating in the forum on a visit of *Cedre's* facilities.

## Volunteering in civil protection

*Cedre* has held a civil protection accreditation since 2008. Within the context of a major consultation process conducted by the French Ministry of the Interior, Overseas Territories and Immigration among associations with a civil protection accreditation, *Cedre's* Director took part on 29 September in a roundtable held on the premises of the *Inspection Générale de l'Administration* in Paris on the theme of "Civil protection accreditations, internal control and governance of associations".

## The Deepwater Horizon saga

A year after the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, BP has resumed drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Meanwhile, many reports on the pollution have been published. BP and its contractors have been judged responsible for the accident due to "failure of the production casing cement job". According to the latest studies, an estimated 5 million barrels of oil and 3 million BOE of gas were released, with around 5% of the crude oil burnt. Assessment of the impact of the pollution on the living environment continues to be conducted.

## Oil spills in the Bohai Sea, north-east China (cont.)

The US firm ConocoPhillips China is shouldering full responsibility for the crude leaks that caused successive cases of oil pollution in June in the Bohai Gulf (*Newsletter n° 193*). Following an inquiry, China's State Oceanic Administration, unsatisfied with clean-up operations, completed on 31 August according to COPC, suspended production at the Penglai 19-3 platform from 4 September. Furthermore, the Chinese Government has ordered all oil companies to conduct safety checks on their offshore exploration and production sites. Meanwhile, COPC has created a special fund to deal with the spill and handle the first compensation claims.

## Hungary: toxic red sludge

On 14 September, the Hungarian authorities fined Magyar Aluminium Ltd 500 million euros, for the country's worst industrial and ecological accident (*Newsletter n° 184*). The firm has a fortnight to pay up, in compensation for environmental damages. The toxic sludge polluted the inland waters around the factory, as far as the Danube. Almost a year later, abnormally high concentrations of arsenic are still found in the red sludge.