



## Cedre NEWSLETTER

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Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution

### N° 204 E – News from July/August 2012

#### Emergency Response

Several incidents were particularly closely monitored by Cedre's Emergency Response Department over the summer period, including a fire onboard container ship *MSC Flaminia* (see article below) and the pollution of a paper factory site in Biganos (Aquitaine). On 5th July, the slumping and partial rupture of a tank of liquid waste from wood treatment at the Smurfit factory in Biganos caused 100 to 500 m3 of "black liquor" to flow into the Lacanau stream, a tributary of Leyre river that runs into the sea in the Arcachon Basin. This black liquor, an aqueous solution of lignin, hemicellulose, sulphate, sodium carbonate and caustic soda, is dangerous for the aquatic environment due to its causticity (high pH). Fish mortality was observed in the affected watercourses. The Emergency Response team worked together with Ifremer to study the product's composition in order to assess the impact on the environment and advise the local authorities. Other events also mobilised the department, including several requests to assist in the identification and quantification of pollutants observed at sea or on the shore, as well as various requests for information on hazardous substances.

#### In short

##### Social networks

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##### Dates for the diary

► **Researchers' Night 2012** "Imagine the Future", at Océanopolis, Brest, on 28 September from 7 pm to 11 pm. Come along to meet over 100 researchers and find out about their job and passion. Free entry.

► The Science Festival, organised by ABRET at Brest University's Faculty of Science and Techniques, from 11 to 14 October. Programme available at [www.abret.asso.fr](http://www.abret.asso.fr)

#### MSC Flaminia

On 14 July, in the middle of the Atlantic, a violent explosion occurred onboard container ship *MSC Flaminia*, followed by a major fire and a second explosion, forcing the crew to abandon ship. After around 10 days of fire fighting operations, the vessel was towed towards the European coasts with a view to taking it to a port of refuge where the containers that had not been destroyed could be unloaded. Cedre was called upon by the Belgian authorities as the focal point of the **Mar-Ice** network, whose main aim is to advise the maritime authorities of European countries in case of maritime emergencies. Cedre also responded to enquiries from the French authorities. The Emergency Response Department conducted an in-depth analysis of the environmental risks related to the presence of 150 containers of various hazardous substances onboard the *MSC Flaminia*. In late August, the container ship was being inspected with a view to transferring it to German waters, where the national authorities had offered to receive the German-flagged ship.

#### Brest maritime festival 2012

In July, Cedre ran a stand at the Marine Science and Technology Village at the Tonnerres de Brest festival, where the village's overall theme was "The ocean of tomorrow". In the Arctic, the melting ice caps are opening up new opportunities for human activities. New shipping routes are set to reduce the distances between continents, saving both time and money. The increased surface no longer ice-covered in the summer months will provide the opportunity to exploit energy resources, in particular the oil present in the seabed. Yet these new opportunities come with new risks. With this as a backdrop, visitors were given the chance to consider different response techniques that could be implemented in the event of a spill in cold waters. Cedre presented its spill management know-how to an audience from a wide range of backgrounds (general public, scientific partners, local councillors, members of government). During his visit to the Science Village, French President François Hollande attended a brief presentation of Cedre's missions and the context of its creation, accompanied by several members of government including Jean-Yves Le Drian, Marylise Lebranchu, Stéphane Le Foll, Benoît Hamon and Kader Arif.

#### Balex Delta exercise

Cooperation between the Baltic Sea coastal States in terms of spill response, governed by the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), gives priority to mechanical recovery and limits dispersant use in the Baltic Sea. As each year, an exercise involving all contracting parties was run from 27 to 29 August in the Helsinki region, hosted and led by the

Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE). It was followed by a seminar on spill response on 30 August. The Balex Delta 2012 exercise, co-financed by the EU through its Civil Protection mechanism, was on an exceptional scale, combining national and international exercises and involving specialised response resources such as the oil spill response vessel *Kontio* chartered by EMSA. For the first time, a team of 4 experts and one MIC liaison officer was sent by DG ECHO to assist the Finnish authorities. An engineer from Cedre was part of the team. The incident scenario led to a spill of 15,000 tonnes of REBCO crude oil. The exercise was the opportunity to test the national and international alert procedures, the sharing of information using the new national situation awareness GIS Boris2, open sea and shallow water response with the deployment of 22 specialised vessels and a total fleet of about 60 with assisting boats, protection booming, shoreline assessment, beach clean-up and establishment of a wildlife rehabilitation centre.



*Finnish supply vessel Louhi. This multipurpose vessel built in 2011 is specialised in response to chemical and oil pollution. Here, activation of spraying system for response to chemical pollution and gas cloud - © Cedre*

## Crisis management training course for PSMC Cameroon representatives

From 2nd to 6th July, Cedre received a delegation of 8 representatives of PSMC Cameroon (Cameroon Pipeline Steering and Monitoring Committee) for an oil spill management training course. Several organisations were represented at this course: the PSMC Permanent Secretariat, the *Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures* and 4 ministries: Defence, Environment and Nature Protection, Transport, Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. Over and above the conferences run, this training course was the opportunity to review the implementation of the national oil spill contingency plan, to which Cedre contributed, as well as the organisation of practical training courses and on site exercises in October 2012.

## Cedre accreditations

Two of Cedre's accreditations were renewed over the summer:

- On 16 August, Cedre's accreditation order by the French Environment Ministry (MEDDE) was renewed. This new order authorises Cedre to respond to all types of spills in marine waters and inland surface waters.
- Published in the Official Journal of 28 August, Cedre's interdepartmental accreditation order by the Ministry of the Interior (Civil Protection accreditation) has also been renewed.

## Public consultation

Within the context of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the public consultation on 2012 elements of the marine environment action plans is open from 16 July to 16 October 2012 on the MEDDE website at: <http://www.consultations-publiques.developpement-durable.gouv.fr>

## Illegal discharge

Marseille criminal court has fined the owner of *Bucket* €125,000 for an illegal release of olive oil off the coast of Ile du Levant (Mediterranean) on 3rd February 2008. Meanwhile, the high court of Brest is due to render its verdict on 25 September for an illegal discharge on 3rd May 2011 off Ushant Island (Atlantic) by the *Kaltene*. A €500,000 fine has been called for.

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