

Interspill 2015 Science Workshops

HNS Pollutions (SW3)

The workshop was chaired by Thomas Höfer from the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment and two additional presentations were provided by Stéphane Le Floch from Cedre and André Laflamme from Transport Canada.

The biographies of the speakers and their presentations are provided in PDF version.

The workshop was held on Tuesday 24th March at 14:00. The participation was very good with approximately 50 people attending.

During the debate with the attendance, several interesting issues were raised and in particular the following ones:

- One presentation introduced the Polluproof project which is aiming at identifying adequate sensor mixes for remote sensing of HNS marine pollution. At this stage, this project has no link with another project conducted under an OGP JIP and related to the production of a common operational picture;
- Transport Canada and Cedre are currently working on a project aiming at writing an operational guide on HNS pollution response. This action builds upon the production of an educational guide on HNS which was aiming at informing the public about the issue. The aim of the document under preparation is different. It is for responders, not for the public;
- People in the audience were invited to share experiences they had with HNS pollution. The case of MSC Napoli was addressed. The ship was grounded on the southern coast of the United Kingdom to avoid wreckage in the English Channel with the loss of hundreds of containers with dangerous goods at sea. One important issue was the inconsistencies observed between the cargo manifest and the reality. This confirmed that accidents involving HNS in containers are much more difficult to handle than those involving dangerous cargo in bulk. Two other issues were the toxicity of firefighting water and the difficulty to get support (data and expertise) from knowledgeable structures to handle the case. The case of MSC Chitra was also mentioned as an example of accident with both oil and HNS pollution, due to the spill of the bunker fuel of the ship. A participant also mentioned a lot of cases of chemical spills in China, with a lack of preparation to face such situations. Not all countries are prepared to handle chemical pollutions. Finally, the lack of experience of container

carrier crews to respond to chemical spills is becoming critical, as well as the difficulty to precisely and certainly locate containers with dangerous cargos on large container carriers;

- Regarding remote sensing of HNS pollutions, the need for development of new sensors exists. It is however unreasonable to expect a sensor able to detect all kinds of chemical pollutions. The current approach is to identify a specific mix of existing sensors which is adapted to the detection, and potentially quantification, of a spill of a given substance or category of substances;
- The question of transboundary transport of waste collected after a chemical spill was addressed. This waste is indeed dangerous waste and current international conventions make it extremely difficult and long to organize such a transport. This would however be necessary if a chemical spill occurs off the coasts of a country which does not have the capacity to process such waste. There is probably a need there to adapt existing international regulations to make it easier to handle these situations.