



Cedre NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication
by the Centre of Documentation, Research and
Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution
ISSN : 1961 - 9553

N° 158 E - News from July 2008

Emergency response

In addition to its involvement with the *Princess of the Stars* incident (see article below), Cedre's Emergency Response Centre responded to a request for information, on 15 July, on the risks involved with benzaldehyde (UN 1990) as part of an ICE exercise initiated by Italy. Furthermore, Météo France was called upon for several drift forecasts following the shipwrecking of a trawler on 31 July in the bay of St Brieuc, as the result of a collision with another fishing vessel. Response involved pumping out the diesel and refloating the vessel.

Princess of the Stars, Philippines

Upon request from the French Civil Defence, an engineer from Cedre led an assignment commissioned by the European Community (MIC) and the United Nations (UNEP/OCHA) to assist the Philippine authorities following the shipwrecking of the *Princess of the Stars* ferry on 21 June in a typhoon, resulting in the loss of 800 lives. In addition to the 100 m³ of bunker fuel, the vessel, which remains overturned on a reef in waters around 50 m deep, holds two containers of toxic phytosanitary products. The risk of a leak of dangerous chemicals caused the operations on the wreck to be temporarily suspended. The aim of the mission, which took place from 9 to 20 July, was to gather as much information as possible to assess the risks presented by the products contained in the wreck for the population, responders and the environment, in order to guide future response operations and to adjust any potential international aid.

Pollution at Donges Refinery

The final response worksites at Donges refinery were completed on 4 July. The monitoring of the environmental impact of this pollution on the estuarine environment continues. Following the clean-up operations, significant regrowth of the reed beds has been observed, on banks that had been heavily polluted over several kilometres, as shown in the photographs below.



27 mars 2008 © Cedre



13 juin 2008 © Cedre

Contingency plan for the Normandy refinery

From 21 to 25 July, the team leader and an engineer from Cedre's Contingency Planning Department visited the port of Le Havre as part of the elaboration of a contingency plan in case of pollution for the Total refinery in Normandy. This assignment was intended to assess the risks connected to loading/unloading operations for petroleum products on the wharfs located on the Tancarville canal, to make an inventory of the response equipment existing onsite, to recap on the different possible scenarios and to collect the environmental, economic and technical data needed to

In short

MEETINGS

► On 11th, Cedre's Board of Directors on Cedre's premises.

VISITS TO CEDRE

► On 17th, Jim Clark, Exxon.

TRAINING COURSES

► From 1st to 4th, training course on oil spill response for agents from ITOPF (UK), with practical phases and equipment deployment exercises on the technical facilities at Cedre, 15 participants.

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PUBLICATIONS

► Cedre annual report 2007 is available in French in PDF format from the website

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draw up this plan. The mission was also the opportunity to promote the synergies between the Normandy refinery and the local stakeholders liable to be involved in the management of response operations implemented following an oil spill: administrations, port autonome du Havre, fire service etc. The information gathered will help to establish an initial version of this plan which will be presented to the managers of the Normandy refinery in the last week of September.

Cedre's Strategic Committee

The 27th session of *Cedre's* Strategic Committee was held in the offices of the directorate of Civil Defence in Asnières. The review of the activities carried out by *Cedre* over the past semester and those planned for the coming months led to discussions on *Cedre's* position in the event of interventions liable to generate conflicts of interest between its public and private partners, as well as on its priorities in terms of research. Furthermore, *Cedre* was encouraged to become more involved in following up on pollution incidents. The meeting held in Asnières was the opportunity for presentations on the national resources of the Civil Defence, and in particular of the **COGIC** (an operational crisis management centre), as well as the evolution of France's crisis management planning.

Feedback from the Donges pollution

The Prefect of the Loire Atlantique called upon *Cedre* to assist the departmental fire service in the preparation of a response guide for pollution of the Loire, through return on experience from the spill at the Donges refinery in spring 2008. A meeting was held at *Cedre* in mid July, involving four fire officers and six engineers from *Cedre*, present in the Loire Atlantique area during the Donges incident, in a bid to produce a first review document for September 2008 and to establish an action plan and a strategy for the future. This meeting was also the chance for the delegation of fire officers to visit *Cedre's* premises.

Preparation of the Polmar Channel exercise

On 23 July, an engineer from *Cedre* participated in a preparatory meeting for a Polmar exercise, held at the town hall of St Vaast la Hougue. Many organisations and local authorities were represented. At this meeting, *Cedre* offered to provide ITOPF to carry out practical training and give technical advice on worksites on embankments and riprap, to help to lead an operational centre and an advanced response centre and to monitor operations in the water, during this exercise due to take place on 16 September.

Environmental responsibility

On 18 July, the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for Ecology arrived in Brest for a visit on the theme of environmental responsibility and the corresponding government bill. During this day, they took part in a meeting intended to inform and exchange with professionals of the sea at the high court on operational discharge at sea, and the monitoring and conviction of such practices. *Cedre* was represented by its director.

USA: Exxon Valdez, the end?

In the wake of a series of legal battles moving from court to court (see newsletters n°78, 104), the enormous 5 billion dollars punitive damages originally awarded for the pollution caused by the grounding of the *Exxon Valdez* in Alaska came to what seems to be a conclusion on 25 June, 19 years after the incident, in the US Supreme Court. The amount, already reduced to 2.5 billion by a succession of appeals, was deemed excessive by the Supreme Court and cut to 507.5 million dollars, a tenth of the original award, by a 5-3 vote. Through this ruling, the Supreme Judges aimed to bring the compensation for this pollution in line with the prevailing situation in international maritime transport. Nevertheless, with 2.1 billion dollars of clean-up expenses, a civil settlement of 900 million dollars and 303 million dollars paid by Exxon to private parties, the bill for this spill for the Exxon group, totalling over 3.8 billion dollars, still holds by far the world record,

Europe: Marine Directive

The European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive entered into force on 15 July. It represents the marine environment counterpart of the Water Framework Directive for inland waters. The marine directive sets out a roadmap for the member States in order to achieve sound ecological status in the marine environment by 2020 at the latest. This sound ecological status will be determined by common indicators, which will be published in 2012. Some of these indicators will be fundamental in establishing the return to a situation of good status in an area affected by major pollution. The *Cedre* newsletter will closely follow negotiations between the concerned parties.

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