



Cedre NEWSLETTER

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Emergency response

During August, the activity of the Emergency Response Department mainly revolved around the follow-up to an oil spill caused by a ruptured pipeline (details below). The team was called upon for drift predictions following the observation of slicks at sea, for an ICE exercise launched by the Czech Republic, for a request for information on how to respond to sheen on the Seine and for a slick of rapeseed oil in the port of Dunkirk. The end of the month was marked by the grounding near the south coast of Madagascar of a vessel transporting 40,000 tonnes of rock phosphate and 560 tonnes of bunker fuel. On 30 August, the vessel broke in two, releasing part of its cargo and its bunker fuel, which drifted in the open sea. The Madagascar authorities have not, as yet, requested assistance from France.

In short

MEETINGS

- ▶ On 27th and 28th, participation of the Mediterranean delegate in an InterRisk meeting in Hamburg

Crude oil leak from a pipeline

A leak in the **South European Pipeline (SPSE)**, on 7 August 2009, led to a spill of a large volume of crude oil, contaminating an area of approximately 5 hectares in the Plaine de la Crau nature reserve (Bouches-du-Rhône). Excavation of the polluted soil is currently in progress. In periods of storms or heavy rainfall, the oil may be remobilised by runoff from rainwater and thus increase the affected area. After a visit of the site, *Cedre* participated, alongside SPSE and the administrations and partners involved in monitoring operations, in developing strategies and defining the initial response measures to implement. Quantification methods of the degree of pollution in the different areas affected were put forward as well as rainwater management solutions for throughout the duration of operations. An agent from *Cedre* will be sent on site during the next period of significant rainfall to check the efficiency of the systems set up and adapt them if necessary.

Study for EDF Chinon

The EDF nuclear power plant in Chinon decided to consult *Cedre* to study the feasibility of a "siphon dam" in the discharge channel of operating units, to prevent any spill of oil in its industrial facilities from entering the environment after accidentally passing through the oil separators positioned upstream in this channel. A certain number of preventative measures concerning this discharge already exist, however, over the past few years, two incidents have shown that the oil collection system in the channel is not fully efficient. On these two occasions, oil spills reached the cooling water discharge channel and then the Loire river. EDF Chinon asked *Cedre* to come up with possible solutions to prevent possible spills of pollutant from entering the Loire in the event of an incident affecting the oil separators, and to discuss these solutions so as to propose and justify a feasible and operational solution. As part of this assignment, two engineers from the Contingency Planning Department visited the nuclear plant on 27 and 28 August, along with three hydraulic engineers from LNHE (National Hydraulics and Environment Laboratory) and Techniconsult.

New director for CETMEF

CETMEF (Centre d'Etudes Techniques Maritimes et Fluviales) is set to change director. The new director, Jean-Yves Le Ven, currently holds a position at the Grand Port Maritime du Havre and will take on his new role on 1st October. The former director, Geoffroy Caude, is called to take on new responsibilities within the CGEDD (General Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development) under the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea. CETMEF is one of *Cedre's* major partners due to its missions in terms of response to shoreline pollution.

EMSA: Maritime Accident Review 2008

At the beginning of the summer, EMSA published its annual review of maritime accidents in European waters. 754 vessels were involved in 670 accidents, compared to 762 vessels in 715 accidents in 2007. The most significant cases resulting in a spill were:

- the sinking of the general cargo ship *Ice Prince* (UK), off Portland, with over 400 tonnes of bunker fuel, on 15 January
- the spill of 200 tonnes of oil at a terminal in Copenhagen (Denmark) during a transfer from the oil tanker *Minerva Helen*, on 18 January
- the leak from a pipe at the Donges refinery (France) resulting in the release of around 400 tonnes of oil into the Loire estuary, on 16 March
- the grounding of the *Fedra* off Europa Point, Gibraltar, with 500 tonnes of fuel on board, on 10 October
- the grounding of the *Tawe*, in Algeciras Bay (Spain), with 200 tonnes of fuel on board, on 12 October.

Crisis communication course: a few places left!

The great emotion generated by oil spills and, to a lesser extent, by chemical spills, makes media communication about this type of event difficult. This training course aims to share the experience gained in this field, during the recent major spills in France and abroad. It is intended for operational personnel who are not specialised in communication but are liable to have to face the media in the field. Throughout this two-day course, exercises such as writing press releases and conducting radio and television interviews will give participants the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired on the course. This session will be held in French at *Cedre* from 2 to 4 December 2009. For further information, please contact our Training Department.

Website: expansion of the spills section

In a bid to reinforce the themes of "Chemical spills" and "Containers lost at sea" on *Cedre's* website, the **Spills** section has been fleshed out with some 25 new spill summaries. The cases added were selected on the basis of the extent of the pollution caused, the toxicity of the pollutant involved or the originality of the response technique implemented.

Mediterranean: a network of prosecutors

A seminar held at *Cedre*, in 2005, within the framework of the Bonn Agreement for the North Sea, introduced the principle of a network of prosecutors in different countries party to the Agreement, designed to facilitate the prosecution of those responsible for illegal discharge at sea. In June, the French Ministry of Justice put the possibility of creating a similar network for the Mediterranean to its counterparts in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Malta and Lebanon. This network could be responsible for identifying stakeholders in the geographical area, organising training sessions for them, coordinating prosecution procedures and homogenising fines. This approach has become necessary, given the disparity in penalties. For instance, a spill which may cost between half a million and one million Euros in French waters would cost only 15 thousand Euros in Turkish waters.

European Union twinning project - Egypt

As part of the EU twinning project designed to help Egyptian authorities improve their fresh water management (Newsletter n° 169), a member of the Training Department was sent to Egypt from 28 June to 2 July. This second assignment, carried out jointly with representatives of the International Office for Water, was intended to improve understanding of the spill response organisation on a regional scale. Meetings in Aswan with the High Aswan Dam Authority, the River Transport Authority and the Lake Nasser Development Authority helped to improve comprehension of local problems and organisation, pollution risks and potential impacts. These fruitful exchanges were also the opportunity to begin training representatives of these authorities on spill response techniques and means.

Santa Barbara: natural oil seepage

The inhabitants of the Santa Barbara coastline (California) are used to seeing arrivals of oil from natural seeps at sea. Chumash Indians used this oil to waterproof their canoes and moccasins. However this seepage and its impacts had never been quantified until now. Two authors, Christopher Ready and David Valentine, decided to take on this task. Their results, published in the 15 May 2009 issue of *Environmental Science and Technology*, are impressive. They claim that the oil, drifting under the influence of the currents, is broken down to make it denser than water. It then sinks and infiltrates the floor sediment, over a thickness of between 50 cm and 5 m. The quantity of sedimented oil is estimated by the authors at 8 to 80 times the volume of oil spilt by the *Exxon Valdez*.

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