



N° 172 E – News from September 2009

Emergency response

September was a busy month in terms both of inquiries and on site intervention. In addition to the spill on the Etang de Berre and the grounding of the *Gülser Ana* in Madagascar described below, *Cedre* continued to monitor the pollution at Plaine de la Crau (see Newsletter 171), with support from the Mediterranean Delegate present on site, in particular during periods of heavy rainfall. We also took part in the Cotentex exercise led by the *Préfecture Maritime de Cherbourg*. Several inquiries were processed by the Department concerning the toxicity of oil in fresh waters, the potential impacts of a spill of iron sulphate at sea, the risks related to a spill of milk in the natural environment, a spill of 1000 litres of sodium hydroxide 50% solution near a stream in the Indre-et-Loire, as well as an overturned tanker truck containing 10,000 litres of fuel oil on a road with a risk of the fuel running into a stream in Lozère. Finally, four requests for drift simulations at sea were processed with support from Météo France and their Mothy software, two of which were in relation to spills east of Corsica.

Grounding of the *Gülser Ana*

In August's Newsletter we mentioned the grounding of the *Gülser Ana*, transporting 40,000 tonnes of rock phosphate and 560 tonnes of bunker fuel, near the south coast of Madagascar. Two advisers from *Cedre* were sent on site upon request from the Minister of Transport of the Republic of Madagascar. The first arrived on Sunday 27 September to analyse the quality of the water consumed by local populations from the coastal wells as well as that of the seawater in the area where fishing had been banned. The second has been on site since Wednesday 30 September to conduct a survey before operations begin. He will then assist the State of Madagascar in controlling completed shore clean-up sites. We will keep you updated on the progress of this incident in the following *Cedre* Newsletters.

Incident at Berre petrochemical site

On Friday 18 September, due to successive violent storms, the water level rose in the waste water storage tanks on Berre petrochemical site, causing oil-polluted water to overflow towards the lake, despite various preventative measures, including the deployment of floating booms and the mobilisation of 10 large skips. A crisis unit was activated and measures were immediately taken in collaboration with local government, the fire brigade, the regional environment directorate (DREAL) and various other competent services. On the Saturday morning, aerial reconnaissance, together with an on-foot survey, was organised. The site contacted *Cedre's* duty engineer and an adviser was sent on the Saturday to assist with response strategies to be implemented. Clean-up companies were immediately mobilised to pump the floating accumulations as well as to recover polluted sediments, following *Cedre's* recommendations. Authority representatives visited the site, where the fire brigade and site management presented an outline of events and of the means implemented. The responsiveness of all those involved, the means deployed, the openness of the site operator and the excellent coordination between the different services are worthy of note.

In short

DATES FOR THE DIARY

► The **Cedre Information Day 2010** will be held on **Thursday 11 March** at INHES. The chosen theme is "**Pollution response equipment stockpiles**"

VISITS

► On 14 September, visit to *Cedre* by officers who took up their post at the *Préfecture Maritime* for the Atlantic during the summer

MEETINGS

► On 29th and 30th, participation of the Director in the symposium organised by Ifremer at the National Museum of Natural History for its 25th anniversary on the theme "Alliance for sciences of the sea: from a national network to a global network"

► On 29th, participation in the 5th Researchers' Night at Océanopolis www.cedre.fr

TRAINING

► From 7th to 11th, at *Cedre*, course on oil spill response in coastal areas, 21 participants

► From 14th to 18th then from 21st to 24th, training for VNF (Voies Navigables de France), at CFP in Plouzané, 19 participants

► From 28/09 to 01/10, at *Cedre*, crisis management training course (Orsec Maritime), 14 participants

PUBLICATIONS

► The Chemical Response Guide on methyl ethyl ketone has just been published in French www.cedre.fr

► The Operational Guide "Use of Sorbents for Spill Response" is now available online in English www.cedre.fr

► As part of the *Cedre* editor collection, a brochure recounting *Cedre's* 30 years of activity is available at www.cedre.fr



Training in Turkey

Turkey is setting up its national organisation for response to water pollution by oil. Following two visits to *Cedre* in 2007 and 2008, Chemistry and Environment Institute at the Marmara Research Center (MRC), in charge of this programme, asked us to lead a training course for the main organisations involved. Twenty-four representatives of maritime affairs, the ministries in charge of the environment and forestry and MRC attended a training course, from 8 to 11 September on the MRC premises in Gebze, on spill crisis management, focusing on feedback from past major accidents.

Experimentation in the North Sea

An agent from *Cedre* took part in an experimental programme in the North Sea carried out from 28 September to 1st October, for which scientific leadership was ensured by the Dutch organisation NIOZ. This trial involved two spills of crude oil, of 1 and 5 m³ respectively. The first slick was immediately treated with dispersants while the second was monitored for 2 days. Water samples containing dissolved oil fractions were regularly taken for analysis using different chemical and biological techniques. *Cedre* suggested analysing dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons using the SBSE technique as part of this study.

NATO-Russian Federation workshop

On 24 and 25 September, an engineer from *Cedre* took part in a "NATO-Russian Federation" workshop on the theme "Oil spills: risk management and decision support systems". This two-day workshop, organised by the Komi Republic Academy of Sciences with support from the Norwegian company Akvaplan-Niva, was followed by a survey of Pechora River, affected by repeated pipeline ruptures in 1994. This survey, organised by Lukoil, showed that the river, for the twenty-odd kilometres inspected, no longer presented any visible traces of pollution. Finally, an exercise was organised using Lukoil's skills in response on rivers and bank clean-up.

SCLOG assignment, Republic of Congo

Two members of from the Contingency Planning Department were sent to the Republic of Congo from 9 to 19 September to carry out a preparedness review for SCLOG (Société Commune de LOGistique). The assignment began at Mpila oil depot located in Brazzaville on the banks of the Congo River. *Cedre's* agents suggested to SCLOG suitable response systems for transferring oil products in the event of a spill occurring during loading or unloading operations. The second part of the assignment took place at the Pointe Noire. Here SCLOG uses an oil wharf known as "bulk dock". Many meetings with port representatives, representatives of the Republic of Congo and local industrial stakeholders provided the opportunity to discuss contingency planning efforts undertaken by SCLOG. The organisation of mutual assistance and equipment lending arrangements appears possible in the near future.

UK: *MSC Napoli*, the end

A year after the bow part was removed and 22 months after the grounding of the container ship *MSC Napoli* on Branscombe Beach, its stern part, a 3,888-tonne block, was removed and taken by barge to 's-Gravendeel (Netherlands) for scrap.

Strait of Malacca: collision and fire

On 18 August, the Taiwanese oil tanker *Formosa Product Brick*, flying a Liberian flag and transporting 58,000 tonnes of naphtha, went on fire after colliding with the British bulk carrier *Ostende Max* in the Strait of Malacca traffic separation scheme. The Malaysian emergency services managed to control the fire by deploying 11 boats and 2 helicopters, but 9 of the oil tanker crew lost their lives in the fire. No significant pollution was reported and the vessel was towed out of the traffic separation scheme.

Australia: leak from offshore well

On 21 August, a blow out occurred on West Atlas drill rig, operated by the Norwegian company Seadrill Ltd and under contract to Thai headquartered PTTEP Australasia. The rig is located in the Timor Sea on Montara oil field, off the Kimberly region of Australia. The 69 engineers and technicians on the rig were evacuated and a response team has been working ever since to attempt to reduce the oil leak. The leak is estimated by the Australian authorities at between 500 and 2000 m³ a day, and has generated a slick 25 miles wide by 85 miles long that AMSA (Australian Maritime Safety Authority) response teams are treating with dispersants by plane (Hercules C130). PTTEP brought the mobile offshore drilling rig West Triton to drill a relief well. This well will join up with the existing well, 2600 m below the seafloor, and the leak will be plugged by injecting mud. West Triton arrived on site on 21 September with an aim to stem the leak by the end of September. A 37 km exclusion zone was set up around West Atlas rig. So far no oil has arrived on the coast but possible impact on Ashmore Reef, an important area for whales, dolphins and turtles, is feared due to drifting slicks.

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