



Cedre NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication
by the Centre of Documentation, Research and
Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution

N° 198 E – News from January 2012

Emergency response

One of the main focuses during the first weeks of January involved monitoring the actions of *Cedre* agents in the field as part of the response to the *TK Bremen* incident. These actions revolved around different aspects: meetings at the command centre, surveys on shore and at sea, supervision of the opening and completion of different clean-up sites in the Ria d'Étel, drafting of technical recommendations for surfwashing operations in the coastal area around the wreck, drafting of daily and weekly reports...

Particular attention was also paid to the *Costa Concordia* accident: research on the type of fuel onboard, exchanges with REMPEC, launch of *MOTHY* drift modeling, replying to many questions from journalists... Alongside these major events, *Cedre* was called upon by an oil company during a pollution response exercise and questioned on the risks relating to the maritime transport of biodiesels, in particular FAMES (fatty acid methyl esters).

In short

VISITS AND MEETINGS

- ▶ On 17th, a group of pupils from Sainte-Pulchérie high school (French-speaking school in Istanbul)
- ▶ On 18th, SHELL France, (Oil exploration - Guiana)
- ▶ On 25th, Mr Rose, Principal Private Secretary of the Prefect of Finistère

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- ▶ *Cedre Information Day*
"The future of dispersant use"
20 March 2012, INHESJ, Paris.
[Programme and registration form](#)
- ▶ *Interspill*, preliminary programme online,

13 - 15 March 2012, London

Oil spills in icy waters

An engineer from the Research and Development team was invited to take part in a meeting on the issue of "Oil in Ice" held by Norway's FRAM Center on 23 and 24 January. The aim of this meeting was to identify priority research areas on the fate and impact of oil accidentally spilt in such specific ecosystems, and on the possible response techniques. While the events in the Gulf of Mexico have highlighted the effectiveness of chemical dispersion and in situ burning, the exchanges nevertheless emphasised the lack of data on the ecotoxicity of these methods. During these sessions, the impact assessment of the oil or response techniques on the ecosystem was also identified as a research priority. Research should also address issues such as slick detection and mechanical recovery, for which the environmental parameters need to be taken into greater consideration.

Launch of the ANR DECAPAGE project

Within the framework of its knowledge enhancement activities on oil persistence in sediment, *Cedre* has joined the ANR DECAPAGE project, for a 4-year period, under the coordination of Pau University. This project, which follows on from the ANR DHYVA project conducted from 2006 to 2010 with the same partners, aims to study the adaptation of bacterial communities present in mudflats when exposed to oil pollution. To do so, an original experimental system has been set up in *Cedre*'s trial hall to recreate a tidal mudflat for several months. The installation of this equipment was also the opportunity to host a 3-day visit from all the project partners as well as an ANR representative.

Hoverspill project

Cedre is a partner in the European RTD Framework Programme project *Hoverspill*, which aims to design and build a small-scale hovercraft prototype for spill response on difficult access sites. To do so, assessment tests are currently being conducted on *Cedre*'s premises on low-rate recovery equipment: 7 skimmers (weir, disc, grooved drum and brush skimmers) and 2 pumps (lobe and vane pumps).

Appointment: Secretary General of the Sea

Mr Michel Aymeric, Principal Private Secretary of the Minister of Transport since 2010, was appointed Secretary General of the Sea at the cabinet meeting on 25 January 2012. He takes over from Jean-François Tallec, who held this position since 2008. Born in 1951, Michel Aymeric, Inspector General, was Director of Maritime Affairs from 2003 to 2008.

MOTHY statistics update

As is the custom at the beginning of each year, the statistics on the Météo France drift prediction model **MOTHY** have been updated. In 2011, the MOTHY drift prediction model was activated 427 times from the National Météo France Forecast Centre. No major spills resulted in the activation of the model. Three-quarters of all requests concerned floating objects or MOB events and a quarter involved oil. From a geographical point of view, 46% of requests concerned the "Bay of Biscay, Channel, North Sea" zone, 36% overseas French territories and 14% the Mediterranean. For more information see: www.meteorologie.eu.org/mothy/statistiques/

Illegal discharge at sea

On 27 January, a slick 12 km long by 200 m wide was detected in the Strait of Bonifacio, in the wake of Maltese-registered ship *Trefin Adam*, during a naval air force patrol flight. An inquiry on suspicion of pollution was opened by the court of Marseille and the vessel was detained until a 350,000 euro bank guarantee was paid. This same court also issued a one million euro fine in the *SD Rain* case.

Rena, New Zealand

Under the onslaught of 7 m waves, the *Rena* (Newsletter n°195) broke in two on 8 January. The bow of the ship remained on the reef while the stern section sank. 300 containers fell overboard, some of which later washed up on the shore with a lot of debris. Meanwhile, oil slicks were detected at sea. For more information, see the webpage on the *Rena*.

Shipwrecking and vessel stability

Two inquiries were published in January highlighting the problem of ship stability. The French Marine Accident Investigation Office (BEA mer) issued its conclusion on 4 January on the incident involving cargo ship *Union Neptune* off the coast of Gironde (Newsletter n°193) and the *Waldhof* inquiry commission (Newsletter n°188) published its interim report mid-January on the incident that occurred on the Rhine in January 2011.

Erika: compensation paid to the French regions

Twelve years after the *Erika* oil spill, the French regions have received damages: 6.6 million euros for Brittany, 8.5 million euros for Pays de la Loire and 2.39 million euros for Poitou-Charentes. The President of the Poitou-Charentes region announced on 10 January that the compensation paid out in December by the classification society Rina, following the shipwrecking of the *Erika*, would be used to "support coastal development actions in Charente-Maritime".

Donges: Total fined 300,000 euros

On 17 January, the oil company Total was issued a 300,000 euro fine by the criminal court of Saint-Nazaire for the pollution of the Loire River in March 2008, due to the rupture of a tanker loading pipe at **Donges** terminal (Newsletters n° 154 to 158). The court dismissed the request of several associations, having filed claims, to recognise the ecological damage. Total must nevertheless pay out compensation to around twenty civil claimants, for a sum total of 330,000 euros. The General Council of Vendée and the region of Pays de la Loire each received 50,000 euros. We note that, at the time of the incident, Total recognised its liability and covered 50 million euros worth of clean-up costs.

Shell: production resumes at Bonga oil field, south of Nigeria

On 1st January, Shell resumed production at Bonga oil field, temporarily interrupted due to an oil leak of an estimated 40,000 barrels (6,360 m³) which occurred on 20 December, the worst in 13 years. The spill in the Atlantic Ocean was caused by a faulty pipe during transfer to an oil tanker around 120 km off the Nigerian coast. The oil company expressed its apologies, plugged the leak on 26 December and deployed vast response resources including dispersants. The firm indicated on 1st January that the oil spilt had been recovered and denied any responsibility for the tarballs that washed up on beaches in late December.

La Rochelle: international workshop in April

On 5 and 6 April, EIGSI is set to organise its 4th joint workshop for researchers and operational personnel on various aspects of spill response. For more information: frederic.muttin@eigsi.fr

Unsubscribe from the *Cedre* Newsletter

Think green - don't print out your emails!

Legal information

Contact us