

Course "Response at sea and on the shoreline to accidental oil pollution "

European Commission/*Cedre*
14 – 18 May 2002, *Cedre* (Brest, France)

INTRODUCTION

The training course "Response at sea and on the shoreline to accidental oil pollution", funded by the European Commission in the framework of the three-year rolling plan for Community action in the field of response to marine pollution was organised by *Cedre*, in Brest, France, from 14 to 18 July 2002. This course was meant for personnel recently appointed in the field of marine pollution or who will have to participate in this kind of activities without having any previous experience. It was indeed a first approach to the subject. Its main objective was to make the delegates familiar with several aspects of response at sea and on the shoreline, allowing them to gain basic knowledge through classroom sessions, lectures, demonstrations and practical exercises. Besides, it was an opportunity to help create professional links between the delegates and the lecturers with a view to share experience on the matter.

PARTICIPANTS

19 trainees and 2 observers from OSRL, from 11 countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK) attended this workshop. The participants came from coastguards, government agencies, administrations, ministries, operational structures, harbour area authorities, local administrations and private companies.

Though the course was meant for those inexperienced, many delegates were indeed experienced in the field and they all showed deep interest in the subject which made the debates all the more fruitful.

PROGRAMME

The initial programme included twenty (20) lectures, grouped within seven (7) themes: *behaviour and impact of oil spilled at sea, general guidelines for response at sea, regional and European co-operation in dealing with oil pollution, general guidelines for response on the shoreline, waste management, response planning and organisation and impact assessment and damage compensation*. The presentation entitled *Damage and compensation: what is actually meant by "damage related to oil pollution"? How is it assessed?*, by Dr Tosh Moller, ITOPF, had to be cancelled at the very last minute due to an air-traffic controllers strike which prevented Dr Moller from coming to Brest. Ms Chiara Della Mea, from ICRAM, Italy, in fact dealt with part of the subject.

Whenever it was possible presentations were based on case studies, particularly the *Erika*, *Sea Empress* and *Baltic Carrier* incidents to make the participants well aware of what they could be facing in real pollution. Nevertheless, *Cedre* was very careful that basic knowledge was actually given to trainees.

Demonstrations of spill behaviour and drift forecast models used at *Cedre* were carried out. The Community Information System was also presented.

On the morning of day 2, a discussion was organised during which the delegates were kindly asked to answer the following questions:

What is, in your country, the actual or predictable evolution as regards the general strategy for response at sea, and especially the preference given to one or the other of the two main response options: chemical dispersion and containment / recovery?

What are, in your country, the plans as regards investment and/or chartering of surveillance and response ships/aircraft?

These questions had been previously e-mailed to the delegates allowing them to prepare a short speech on the subject. As they were supposed to be newcomers in their jobs, this session aimed at making them gather information on their own country to share it among the group.

The delegates visited *Cedre* “polludrome” and Command Centre; Brest Polmar stockpile, which gave them the opportunity to see the equipment actually used during shoreline clean-up operations, including the most recent equipment bought for cleaning up the *Erika* spill. They also visited Oceanopolis, the Ocean Discovery park located near *Cedre*.

Demonstrations with oil included the deployment of booms, skimmers and other pieces of equipment on *Cedre* technical facilities. Trainees used such equipment during hands-on exercises with oil to clean up rocks, pebbles and a sand beach.

SPEAKERS

Speakers were :

- Mr Eric Donnay, from UGMM, Section Gestion de l'Ecosystème Marin, Belgium
- Mr Alun Lewis, oil spill consultant, United Kingdom,
- CF Pinlou, from the French Navy,
- Mr Bert Backus, from Rijkswaterstaat, North Sea Directorate, The Netherlands,
- Mr Jorn Allan Pedersen, from Danish Emergency Management Agency, Denmark,
- Mr Kevin Colcomb, from the Maritime and Coast Guard Agency, United Kingdom,
- Dr Vassilios Mamaloukas-Frangoulis, from Environmental Protection Engineering SA, Greece,
- Ms Chiara Della Mea, from ICRAM, Italy,
- Mrs Le Roux and Quintin, and Messrs Guéna, Laruelle, Merlin, Peigné, Gouriou, Cabioc'h, Kerambrun, Lavenant and Girin, from *Cedre*.

Demonstrations and exercises were organised and supervised by *Cedre*'s technical department.

RESULTS

On the whole, the delegates found the course very satisfactory even though its level was perhaps not quite adapted to those with a several-year experience in the field. Many of them did appreciate to discover some aspects of oil pollution they had not encountered so far.

The demonstrations with oil and hands-on exercises were particularly appreciated. Some delegates, who had not so far been involved in real operations, said they felt a little relief thanks to this kind of practical experience.

Brest Polmar stockpile: the delegates found a particular interest in visiting the national stockpile of a country recently affected by a major spill and to hear about the new strategies as regards equipment.

Joint presentations of topics were also well received. The delegates insisted on the fact that they had learned a lot from case studies and felt they could better make out what might be in store for them, particularly as regards waste management.

Finally, experience sharing on incidents and discussions on research projects were very fruitful. The delegates enjoyed the discussion on national policies and solutions found in various European countries. They underlined the worthiness of such meetings which are opportunities to debate, share views and experience during round-tables and breaks.