

Mediterranean Oil Industry Group for Oil Spill Response

NEWS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I would like to wish you a belated Happy New Year to you and your families. Thank you for your continued efforts and hard work that you have all shown in 2000 and I hope we can continue this same enthusiasm in the year 2001.

RECENT MOIG MEETING

The latest MOIG meeting took place on the 26-28 October 2000, in Malta, in conjunction with the REMPEC (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea) Focal Points meeting (25-28 October).

Key items on the MOIG agenda were:

- Information Exchange on oil spill response arrangements in Egypt, Palestine and Croatia
- Round Table Discussion on training, conferences, and oil spills in the Mediterranean Region
- Review of MOIG members, structure and action plan
- REMPEC Focal Points Meeting
- Operation Blanche Exercise in Tunisia
- Oil Spill Contingency Planning

The meeting also included an exercise organised by the Maltese authorities, a debriefing session for the exercise and a special session on the Erika incident, including short films on the pumping operation and the bird rescue programmes. For further information on the Erika incident please refer to the CEDRE (www.ifremer.fr/cedre/) or TotalFinaElf (www.totalfinaelf.com/erika/index.htm) websites. A full report on the Erika pumping operation will be available in the next MOIG newsletter.



Pictures from the Maltese Exercise – Oct 2000

During this meeting the members also agreed that starting in January 2001, a fee of \$2,000 would be asked of each company wishing to be a MOIG member to contribute to the group's budget. The various presentations from this meeting have been posted on the MOIG website, <http://www.ipieca.org/MOIG>, and the next MOIG meeting will take place in Athens, Greece either end of May or early June 2001.

MOIG OBJECTIVES

- *to promote regional cooperation within the industry and between governments and industry by creating a regional network of industry oil spill response coordinators in all Mediterranean countries.*
- *to enhance preparedness and response to oil spill incidents in the Mediterranean region by acting as a regional forum for information exchange and discussion on oil spill matters and by making best use of industry resources of equipment and expertise for education and training.*

EXERCISES / TRAINING COURSES / EVENTS

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON OIL & CHEMICALS SPILLS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE STRATEGY, Rabat, Morocco : 25-27 April, 2000

The first national seminar on oil and chemical spill preparedness and response was held in Rabat, Morocco, on April, 25-27th. The seminar was organised under the supervision of REMPEC and in cooperation with the State Secretary of Environment in Morocco.

The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Technical Cooperation Division (TCD) provided financial support.

The seminar was based on a level 3 IMO training course with an additional session on chemical spills. It was aimed at Moroccan officials having responsibilities under the NCP, and at senior managers of the oil and shipping/port industries. The majority of the participants (28 in total) came from the public sector. The attendants actively participated in the seminar.

The intent of this seminar was to train government officials on the management of an oil spill response organization. It focused on the strategic policies of oil spill response rather than its practical applications. The final presentation covered the national system for oil spill response in Morocco, given by Lieutenant-Colonel Ahmed Kamoun and was followed by an important debate on the country's future strategy. Jointly chaired by Colonel Kamoun and the course Director, this debate raised the following issues which the Moroccan authorities will take into account:

- The NCP needs to be updated, in particular in defining a head of sea operations in the case of an emergency, but also when addressing the policy on dispersants and disposal of oily wastes.
- Cooperation and training: regular meetings between the financial/legal/public relations groups participating in the NCP are essential and courses on "training the trainers" will follow this one. The petroleum industry also needs to be involved in the NCP, as it can make a valuable contribution.
- Equipment: an inventory showed a lack of oil spill response equipment. A project on sensitivity mapping has to be carried out and the satellite remote sensing of the national defence system could also be used for oil spill response. Furthermore, a strategy for marine chemical emergencies has to be defined, including the equipment needs, training and the chemical expertise.

For the past six months, CEDRE's activities have been fully devoted to the clean up of the 500 km of Brittany coasts polluted by the Erika's heavy fuel oil.

In July, the Ship Research Institute (SRI) of Japan and CEDRE organised a seminar covering their experiences on the Nakhodka and Erika spills for the memorandum of understanding for better marine oil spill response by passing ships. 30 French and European partners attended the seminar. Proceedings are available on the CEDRE website (<http://www.ifremer.fr/cedre>)

NATIONAL TRAINING COURSE ON ACCIDENTAL OIL AND CHEMICAL MARINE POLLUTION Algiers/Siedi Fredj, Algeria : 4-8 June 2000

The first national training course on accidental oil and chemical marine pollution was held in Algiers from 4-8 June. It was also organised by the REMPEC and the State Secretary of Environment, Algeria.

This level 2 IMO training course had an additional full day session on chemical spills. It was aimed at Algerian officials and managers having responsibilities within the National Contingency Plan (NCP), and also at official experts in the field of spill response. Twenty-five participants attended the national training course. The attendants actively participated in the course by interacting with the speakers and a course evaluation questionnaire confirmed the high level of interest among the participants.

This national training course intended to increase the level of awareness and therefore preparedness to accidental marine pollution in Arab/Mediterranean States. It insisted on the practical side of contingency planning and response techniques and it also dealt with related topics such as the media, compensation mechanisms and international cooperation. Practical training included three short exercises on chemicals and a half-day exercise, which included an oil spill scenario. The training course ended with a session on the national system for oil spill response in Algeria, made by Mr Salim Hamdane, Deputy Director for International Affairs at the General Direction for the Environment. This was followed by a debate on the future Algerian strategy.

National and local emergency plans have been established by decree but the tasks and roles of the different parties remain to be defined. The first step of the implementation of the NCP lies in the establishment of the permanent secretariat which has to be set-up without delay. The local emergency plan already allows the creation of local working groups bringing together port authorities and civil partners.

The work from the CEDRE on sensitivity mapping in 1993 and the risk assessment that was undertaken in the Norwegian study in 1997 has to be pursued. The estimated equipment needs had been costed at \$160 million, an amount that no administration could provide immediately. The available equipment is essentially for clean-up purposes. Some ports, such as Algiers, have already conducted simulation exercises. At Skida, the equipment provided has actually been used to fight several oil spills.

The chronic pollution of the Oued El Harrach meant that the government programme now considers the treatment of waste water. The oil companies polluting the area have been made aware of the problem.

In conclusion, Mr Mohammed Si-Youcef, Director General for the Environment, has acknowledged improvement is still needed. The environment in Algeria is a recent issue. Decision makers and the average citizen have to be aware of the environmental concerns and technicians must be adequately informed to resolve these pollution problems.

A PERSONAL OUTLOOK ON THE INFOPOL SEMINAR, 19-30 June, 2000

"The INFOPOL Seminar was useful and interesting for everyone that participated in it. All subjects discussed were objective and interesting and may have occurred in any part of the world, therefore; realising such incidents, their causes and methods of combating, by big industrial countries of high capabilities as France is most important and useful in all measures.

Disasters such as oil spills and pollution at sea which occur in developing countries are a big harm due to the poor capabilities and the availing equipment of these countries. Therefore; participating representatives from these developing countries in such a seminar and conference will provide them with good experience and mutual skills about the up-to-date techniques and the new materials.

The arrangement, planning and preparation of the seminar was fine and there were suitable speakers, lecturers and directors who were well qualified and that had a vast amount of

experience in the field. I think that the more participation from many different countries of the world – whether lecturers or attendees, the better the seminar will be. My participation in the INFOPOL Seminar was very interesting and useful for me." Badr Darmini, Syrian Company for Oil Transport.

NEWS FROM PALESTINE

General Petroleum Corporation - Land lube oil spill and disposal

The application and use of lubricants in Palestine has dramatically increased in the past decades, with annual usage increasingly over 10% since 1994. This increase has meant a corresponding increase in the annual volume of wasted used oil.

Collection systems exist for this used oil on the whole West Bank, but improper handling, storage and uncontrolled dumping in the surrounding areas of garages and service stations has caused substantial pollution. Winter rains carry this oil where it can have very harmful effects, in particular to rivers. The estimated annual consumption is more than 7 million litres of lubricating oils and related materials. A large part of it penetrates down to the groundwater or reaches the sea.

Used oil originates from a variety of sources: petroleum plants, garages, industrial sites and rural farming. Dark and viscous, used oil mainly contains aliphatic hydrocarbons, but also cyclic hydrocarbons, toxic heavy metals and other contaminants.

Discharged on the ground, oil can form an impenetrable film blocking sunlight, oxygen and water. Toxic components can directly affect the biological balance of soil and its vegetation. Spilled on water, oil covers the surface, decreasing the solar and oxygen supplies which causes a considerable reduction in the biological activity. Furthermore, high density particles sink to the bottom and affect fauna and flora. Burnt in obsolete combustion units, toxic components of oil cause air pollution and spread over a large area before reaching the ground.

If spilled oil reaches the groundwater, it can contaminate large amounts of fresh water without any hope of natural degradation, due to the very low underground biological activity. Human health can be adversely affected in the long term by toxic carcinogenic particles contained in such drinking water. In addition, the extreme stability of most oil components, which accumulate in fat tissues, induces repercussions on the whole biological

chain. Used mineral oil still has a high economic value in a developing country such as Palestine. A nation-wide recycling and re-use system can be economically viable. But collecting used oil

requires public awareness and efficient infrastructure. To begin with, a legal framework has to be set up, including official authorisation of any commercial activity related to the use of mineral oils.

NATIONAL EXERCISE: OPERATION BLANCHE - La Goulette, Tunisia, 22-23 September

The 22nd of September 2000 at 6.00 am, a collision occurred between a tanker and a shipping boat near the entrance of La GOULETTE Harbour in the Gulf of Tunis. The shipping boat capsized and the sea men were salvaged. This collision caused an oil spill of heavy fuel oil from the tanker, the spill was estimated at about 200 Tons. Different action plans were launched according to the situation until the start of the National Emergency Plan (NEP). International co-operation and assistance with France and Italy took place. REMPEC, MOIG and CEDRE participated as experts at this operation which took place over two days, the first day concerned the operations at sea, the second day to those on land.

The main objectives of this operation were to:

- Test the different steps of the NEP.
- Train the different intervention teams.
- Evaluate the efficiency of equipment and means of intervention.
- Control the co-ordination between the different Operational Plans.
- Test the different means and networks of communication.
- Test the way of co-ordination between different organisations.

This operation and especially the Strategic and technical team, which was connected directly to General Commander Post, was very dynamic and highlighted the good co-operation between Tunisian experts and those of REMPEC, MOIG and CEDRE. The different Tunisian Departments in charge of the protection of the sea appreciated participation of MOIG representatives at this operation.



FUTURE TRAINING/EXERCISES

- **Subregional training course with African Arabic countries, OSC/Supervisors supported by REMPEC) in Alexandria, Egypt in February 2001**
- **International Oil Spill Conference in Tampa, Florida 26-29 March 2001**



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