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PRESS RELEASE

## The EU LRIT Data Centre is in production

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***As from 1 June 2009, the European Union Long Range Identification and Tracking of ships Data Centre (EU LRIT DC) entered in production following successful developmental testing. This is a milestone following a preparatory phase of a year-and-a-half of development work by the European Maritime Safety Agency and its main contractor – Collecte Localisation Satellite (CLS). By the entry into operation of the EU LRIT DC, the participating Contracting Governments<sup>1</sup> meet the international deadline for providing LRIT information as of 30 June 2009.***

“The Data Centre is yet another step in our common efforts to have safer ships sailing our seas. By tracking ships we will be able determine what sort of ship enters European waters. This is yet another success story for the European Union, where Member States have agreed to delegate a complex operational task to the EU. I thank EMSA for the development work it undertook over this last year-and-a-half leading to this achievement” said European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, in charge of Transport.

The EU LRIT DC is a combined effort of the European Commission, in cooperation with Member States, through the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). The Agency is in charge of the data centre's technical development, operation and maintenance. EMSA established a small Task Force in December 2007 to create an Implementation Plan early in 2008 for setting up the Data Centre. The original deadline of August 2009 was brought forward to June. Currently, it is estimated that the EU LRIT DC is the biggest data centre of the whole international LRIT system. When all Member States' ships are phased in by the end of 2009 it will track around 10,000 ships, which will generate a minimum of 40,000 position reports per day.

At present, there are 32 Member States, EFTA countries and Overseas Territories participating in the EU LRIT DC. This number may increase if other third countries join in the future. The EU LRIT DC covers an estimated 20 to 25% of the world fleet subject to LRIT. In addition to tracking EU-flagged ships, the EU LRIT DC also provides Member States, on request, with the

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<sup>1</sup> States participating in the EU LRIT DC are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greenland, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway.

LRIT information of any third country vessel bound to, or sailing within, EU waters. So it is possible to track any ship within a 1,000 nautical mile zone of a participating state's coastline, no matter what flag the ship is flying.

All maritime authorities of the Member States, such as those in charge of Search and Rescue, Port, Coastal and Flag State responsibilities, are authorised users of the system. They can use the EU LRIT DC to better track their ships and consult or request position reports.

To support the work of the competent maritime authorities of Member States, EMSA has set up a permanent monitoring function (Maritime Support Services) to ensure the continuity, quality and reliability of the information exchanged through the new EU LRIT DC.

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