

Moving closer to an EU LRIT Data Centre

Today, 6 November 2008, at the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) headquarters in Lisbon contracts have been signed for the development of the European Union Long Range Identification and Tracking Data Centre. This step marks the end of a European public procurement process started with the tender publication on 11 June 2008. Willem de Ruyter, EMSA Executive Director, Christophe Vassal, CEO of CLS (Collecte Localisation Satellites) based in Ramonville, France and Isabelle Roussin, Executive Vice President of Marketing for Highdeal S.A., based in Paris, France met to underline their dedication to setting-up a Data Centre for the EU Member States as early as possible in 2009.

Mr. de Ruyter expressed his confidence in the two companies to set up a robust system for the collection and distribution of long range ship position reports. Mr. de Ruyter recalled that it was only on 2 October 2007 that the task of providing an EU LRIT Data Centre was given to the Agency by the European Transport Ministers. Substantial work has been carried out by a dedicated task force since this date. He stated: "*With the professional experience of these companies (CLS and Highdeal) I trust that a good European LRIT system will soon be available to serve over 10,000 vessels flying the flag of EU Member States and interested Overseas Territories.*"

Two contracts have been signed with CLS for the development of the European Union Data Centre and for the provision of ASP/CSP (Application/Communication Service Provider) services. One contract has been signed with Highdeal for the provision of an invoicing and billing system.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted on 19 May 2006 Resolutions of the Marine Safety Committee MSC 202 (81) and MSC 211 (81), which states amendments to the International Convention of Safety of Life At Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) and introduces the timely establishment of the Long-Range Identification and Tracking system (LRIT). Each Flag State should collect at least a position report every 6 hours (4 times per day) of ships flying its flag. Information will be used for maritime safety, maritime security, environmental protection and Search and Rescue.

The Council Resolution of 2 October 2007, EU Member States decided to establish an EU LRIT Data Centre. The objective of the EU LRIT DC is the identification and tracking of EU Flagged ships which will be integrated in the wider International LRIT system. All Member States will share an LRIT information repository, a common interface to the International Data Exchange (IDE) for requesting LRIT information on ships flying non-EU flags, and a common interface to LRIT information.

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