

## From 14 to 16 vessels: EMSA boosts its network of oil spill recovery vessels in the Baltic and the Channel

*Lisbon, 17 November 2009, The European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) today awarded two new contracts for at-sea oil recovery services in the Baltic and the Channel/Atlantic areas. As a result, two additional vessels will be modified and equipped for oil spill recovery activities, bringing the total number of EMSA-contracted vessels available for oil pollution response around European waters to 16. For the Northern Baltic Sea, Finnish ship-owner Finstaship will provide pollution response capacity with the Kontio, an ice-breaker vessel that services the Gulf of Bothnia during the ice-breaking season, which will be based at Helsinki during the rest of the year. To provide better response capacity in the Channel and its Atlantic approaches, Belgian shipowner Aegean Bunkers at Sea will provide a bunker tanker, Sara, operating from Portland (UK). Both vessels are expected to enter into operational service during the second half of 2010.*

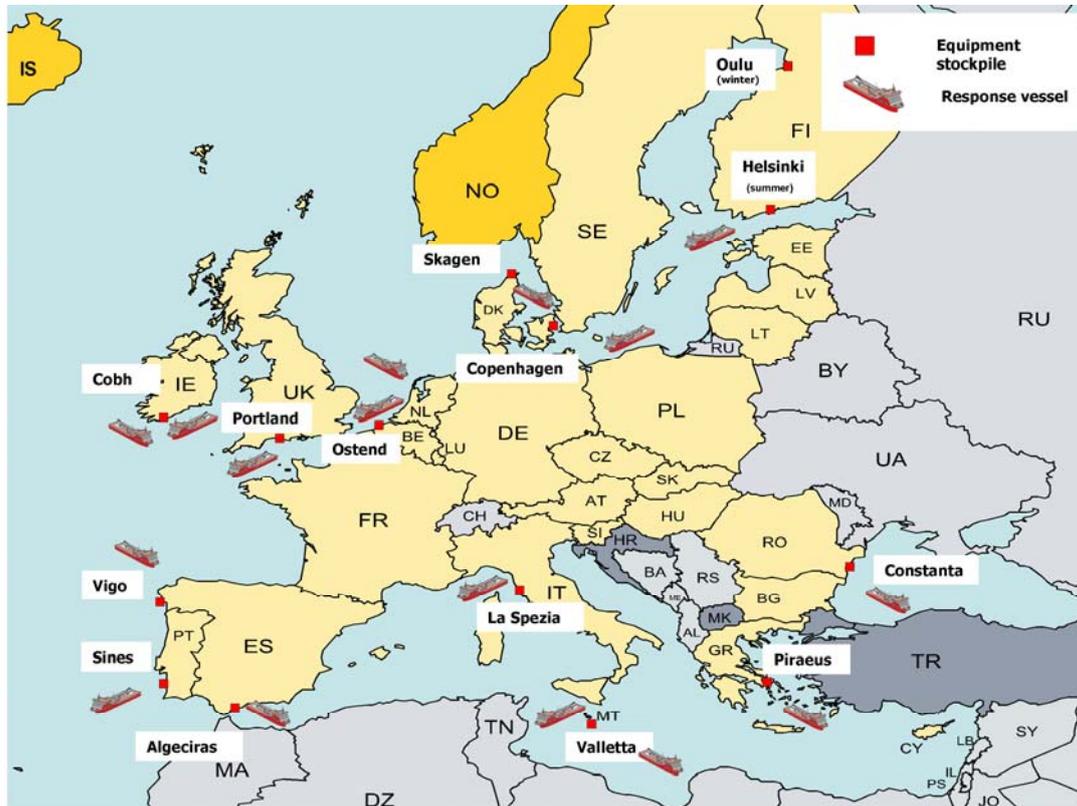
*'Since EMSA was set up following the Erika and Prestige oil spills, we have been successful in reinforcing the Community Civil Protection Mechanism through our network of Oil Pollution Response Vessels that improve Europe's ability to respond to major oil spill incidents. These two latest contracts cover two sea regions that need to be very closely monitored. First, the Channel area and Atlantic approaches experience extremely heavy sea traffic, with transiting oil tankers supplying millions of tonnes of crude each year to refineries across Northern Europe. Second, the North Baltic sea area is a very fragile marine and coastal zone, where concerns for environmental protection must be balanced with increasing oil tanker traffic, particularly through the Gulf of Finland. The two new fully-equipped vessels add a combined additional response capacity of 8,600 m<sup>3</sup>, and will cost the Agency around €8 million - including equipment - for three years, representing excellent value. The Agency now has under contract 16 oil pollution response vessels throughout all European waters', states Willem de Ruiter, EMSA Executive Director.*

### Background

Regulation 724/2004/EC gives EMSA the task of assisting EU/EEA Member States in their response to ship-sourced pollution within the Community. EMSA has built a network of stand-by oil pollution response vessels that covers the whole of the European coastline, and serve to 'top up' the existing pollution response capacity of Member States. The network is based on contracted vessels which are equipped with oil spill response equipment as per EMSA requirements. The

vessels carry out their 'normal' commercial operations on a day-to-day basis, yet when needed can be adapted at short notice to serve as oil spill response vessels. With state-of-the-art equipment, such as oil slick detection radars, sweeping booms and skimmers, the vessels can be scrambled into action at the command of the Member State.

**Map: the EMSA Oil Spill Response Vessel Network**



**Newly Contracted Vessels**

Northern Baltic Sea

For the Northern Baltic Sea, EMSA has contracted the ship *Kontio*, built in 1987, with a speed of 18.5 knots and tank capacity for recovered oil of 2,033 m<sup>3</sup>. The ship will be dedicated to ice-breaking approximately 130-140 days a year. The remaining part of the year it will be based at Helsinki port with the crew placed on stand-by. When the ice-breaking season starts, the ship will take the equipment to the port of Oulu where it will be ready to be mobilised during the winter months.



Channel/Atlantic

The arrangement for the Channel/Atlantic area is based on the bunker tanker *Sara*, with an equipment stockpile situated in Portland, on the Southern Coast of the United Kingdom. The ship is a double-hulled Maltese-flagged tanker built in 1988, with a speed of 13 knots and capacity for recovered oil of 6,658 m<sup>3</sup>. The base at Portland is well-placed for boosting existing oil spill capacity in the Channel sea area, with concentrations of crude oil traffic around the ports in the Solent and Le Havre, together with transiting traffic entering the Straits of Dover for ports in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and other parts of Northern Europe.



Pictures and maps are available on request. For more information, please contact EMSA External Communications:

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