



MEDSLIK oil spill prediction system assisting the response agencies in the Southern European seas

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The permanent risk from oil spill pollution in the Mediterranean and Black Sea associated with heavy traffic of merchant vessels transporting oil and gas, accidental coastal and drilling platforms releases is very high. Such a dense activity related to oil industry, imposes to the coastal countries the need to organize and prepare an operational warning and response system to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of accidental marine pollution due to major oil spills incidents. The recommended initial procedure for responding to a reported oil spill incident includes the application of oil spill models to predict where the spill will move, how soon it will get there, which resources are threatened and what will it look like when it arrives.

Presently in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea the well established MEDSLIK oil spill prediction system is in use by several response agencies in 4 coastal MS, as well in 3 non MS. MEDSLIK been part of the Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network's (MOON) is coupled with the MOON's products from regional, sub-regional and coastal forecasting systems. MEDSLIK oil spill forecasting services in the Mediterranean assisting national, sub-regional and regional contingency plans and relevant response agencies, during major oil spill incidents (Lebanese pollution crisis in summer 2006, the Gibraltar Strait pollution accident in December 2007 and the Und Adryatik incident in 2008). Recently, MOON and REMPEC (a Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre of IMO and UNEP/MAP for the Mediterranean), have set up an agreement, where the MEDSLIK oil spill model provide predictions, in cases of emergency to REMPEC and its associates agencies from all the Mediterranean countries. Moreover, MEDSLIK oil spill model used for demonstrations and real incidents within several EU projects (MERSEA strand1, MFSTEP, MERSEA-IP, ECOOP, MyOCEAN) aimed to build the Marine Core Service of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES).

MEDSLIK oil spill models fulfilled most of the requirements of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) view on further development of oil spill modeling. For example the MEDSLIK oil spill model is already coupled with EMSA CleanSeaNet satellite images for short forecasts and backtracking predictions in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in order to assist the local MS respond agencies to implement the EU Directive 2005/35, for the identification of the ships responsible for illegal oil slicks in the Eastern Mediterranean.