TANGIER VTS

At the end of last year HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco inaugurated the Tangier maritime traffic control centre (MTCS) established at a cost of Dirhams 50 million ($6 million). The new installation, provided by SOFRELOG, will contribute to improving the maritime traffic efficiency and protection of the environment in the Gibraltar Strait.

Tangier Centre is said to be the first of its type in the Arab world and Africa to be mandated by the IMO as a Coastal Vessel Traffic Service with a mandatory ship reporting system. It operates an integrated system to keep track of vessel movements, commonly called the Tangier VTS (Vessel Traffic Services). This enables the competent authorities to continually assess the situation in the area in order to prevent accidents, promote maritime safety and security and protect the marine environment in the Strait. The new centre includes three stations: the main station in Ras Parort (15 km from Tangier), the remote station of Ras Cires (located in the Tanger-Med port) and the intermediary station to interconnect the two previous stations.

Gibraltar Strait has the second highest density of traffic in the world, just behind that of the Strait of Malacca, and each year over 100,000 trade vessels transit the Strait, over a third of which transport hazardous materials. Traffic is also expected to grow sharply through the Tangier centre over the coming years.

The Strait of Gibraltar is the only one in the world to separate two continents: Africa and Europe. Its maritime safety has been ensured for 30 years by Spain, from the Tarifa Operational Centre that receive all Report Calls (named GIBREP: GIBraltar REPorts) from ships coming from the Atlantic Ocean as well as from the Mediterranean Sea. Since 1st December, 2010 the Centre de Surveillance du Traffic Maritime (CSTM) of Tanger, Morocco, is officially designed by IMO to receive GIBREP from all ships coming from the Atlantic and from the Port of Tanger Ville as well as Port of Tanger Med.