**EMSA**

According to a statement issued by the European Commission in mid-June ministers are expected to reach a general agreement (known as a “general approach”) on a proposal modifying the mandate of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to enable it to deal with new challenges in an ever-changing world.

EMSA is widely recognised as an important contributor to the European Union’s maritime transport and safety policy in close co-operation with the Commission, the Member States and stakeholders from the sector. Developments since the agency’s start in 2003 require now a limited update of its mandate, it is understood.

The Commission proposed to maintain EMSA’s current tasks and overall institutional structure, ensuring continuity for the Agency’s activities which provide added value at EU-level and are well appreciated by the stakeholders.

According to a *communiqué* issued by the EC on 16th June this proposal for a limited extension of EMSA’s tasks reflects new needs and the Agency’s updated mandate would:

- Clarify that the Stand-by Oil Spill Response Vessels under contract by EMSA can intervene also in case of oil pollution caused by offshore installations;
- Increase EMSA’s involvement in EU research (analysis of research projects and identification of research priorities);
- Extend EMSA’s technical assistance to all European Neighbourhood Policy countries in order to promote the EU maritime safety policy in all the regional seas bordering the EU;
- Emphasise the role of EMSA’s operational vessel traffic monitoring services as basis for extended transport and maritime information services, including in the context of the development of a Common Information Sharing Environment for the EU maritime domain, and
- Extend EMSA’s assistance in the development and implementation of EU policies, such as Motorways of the Sea, e-maritime as well as environmental aspects of shipping including climate change.