

Major oil spills are fortunately not frequent, but when one occurs, public opinion, enhanced by media, is convinced that once again we are not prepared to respond, that nothing has been done to prevent and control oil spills and that no progress has been made taking experience of past events.

This is not true, at least for three reasons:

1. Oil spill management systems have been developed in most countries, in order to be ready to react rapidly and efficiently to any new accident.
2. Major cooperatives, such as OSRL, FOST, ..., have been established in different countries with up to date equipment and well trained personal.
3. In addition oil spills are always different and therefore must be managed differently. The recent spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the Erika one for instance are very different, and the response has to be different. There is, and there will be always, a need to evaluate an event before taking decisions to control it. That is included in spill management systems.

During this workshop, we shall have presentations on the experience in two countries: USA and France, In addition, the idea (developed in the R&D Argomarine project) for a spill management system for "smaller" maritime actors will be introduced. We shall then have plenty of time for a global discussion including other experiences and potential improvements.