

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS FOLLOWING MAJOR SPILLS

Whereas the *Torrey Canyon* spill led to the CLC of 1969 and IOPC Fund Convention of 1971, the *Amoco Cadiz* spill led to an International Conference on Tanker Safety and Pollution Prevention in 1978. The resulting 1978 Protocol amended the 1973 International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and commonly is referred to as MARPOL 73/78. It produced little of substance for oil spill response but did introduce a number of spill prevention measures. Specific international measures to handle oil spills developed after the *Exxon Valdez* spill. Progressive amendments to MARPOL 73/78, however, have introduced the SOPEP requirement and additional spill prevention measures, such as requiring double hull tankers or mid-deck design to reduce likely oil outflow in the event of a collision or grounding.

Since spilled oil knows no boundaries, either a major spill would likely affect more than one country, or, alternatively, an affected country's resources would likely be overwhelmed. The process of developing and concluding multi-lateral and bi-lateral international agreements continued.

In Europe, the Bonn Agreement was signed in 1969, specifically to deal with co-operation on oil spill matters around the North Sea. A revised Bonn Agreement for "Co-Operation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Hazardous Substances" was signed in 1983 among countries bordering the North Sea. Within this agreement, a Joint Maritime Contingency Plan — "The Mancheplan" — sets out how the

Anglo-French responsibility is to be exercised in the English Channel. The UK and Norway have signed a similar agreement, "The Norbritplan."

The Helsinki Convention of 1974 and the Barcelona Convention of 1976 contained measures to co-ordinate international oil spill response arrangements in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, respectively. A Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre (REMPEC) was established in Malta under the Barcelona Convention of 1976. Elsewhere, other arrangements followed in the sea areas covered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Regional Seas Programme.

In 1990, as a result of the perceived inadequacies of the *Exxon Valdez* response, in particular the lack of close co-operation between government and industry and need for better international co-operation, the IMO approved the OPRC Convention. The OPRC Convention, which came into force in 1995, proposed sensible requirements for oil spill response measures. These included the need for a competent national authority; a national contingency plan; co-operation among governments, port authorities, and oil and shipping industries in planning and training; and improved international co-operation arrangements.

It also was recognised that there was a need to increase the amount of available compensation. In 1992, protocols were signed that amended the CLC and IOPC Fund Convention and established new, higher limits of compensation.