



## **KIMO RESOLUTION 1/99**

### **PROTECTION OF THE WADDEN SEA – MV PALLAS INCIDENT**

#### **Background:**

The general cargo vessel m/v PALLAS caught fire during stormy weather off the Danish coast near Esbjerg on the night of 25/26 October 1998 and three days later (28.10.98) stranded 2 nm off the coast of Amrum in Schleswig-Holstein. Besides the burning cargo of timber, there were 600t of heavy fuel oil (IFO) and 150 cbm of diesel oil on board the ship.

It took almost one month to extinguish the fire on the ship. Due to the bad weather conditions the German oil spill response fleet had difficulties in combating the estimated 50 cbm oil spilled into the water. An unknown quantity of oil was burnt. After a total of 42 days (to 6/12/98) of attempted salvage no further oil pollution was observed.

Oil from the wreck polluted the beaches of the islands of Amrum, Föhr, Sylt-Hörnum, southern tip of Hooge, Langeness, Norderoog as well as outer sands.

About 11,471 dead oiled birds were found on the beaches in Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark and Common and Grey seals were threatened because of the oil. This pollution caused unnecessary risks and costs for local authorities, industries such as fisheries and tourism and for wildlife in the area.

*KIMO welcomes the decision by the Environmental Ministers of the German Federal and State Governments in Stuttgart on 19.11.98 to adopt a security concept for the German Bight which will require: sufficient security standards for all ships, qualified staff on all ships, liability for environmental damages by the ship owners, and the establishment of a central coast guard with comprehensive competencies.*

However, international measures to prevent this pollution were too slow and ineffective and additional procedures and systems must be implemented with urgency. KIMO is particularly concerned about the length of time it took for the Emergency Task Force of the five coastal states and the Federal Republic of Germany to intervene in the incident once the ship owner realised there

was no commercial value left in the ship. Environmental protection of fragile coastlines must not be left to commercial decisions about taking action.

*KIMO believes measures should be implemented to ensure:*

- *adequate emergency contingency plans are in place between neighbouring countries to intervene when environmental damage to coastlines is threatened,*
- *that the polluter pays,*
- *that full recovery costs are obtained for all impacts including direct contamination from oil pollution and other effects of oil pollution such as lost of revenue due to bad publicity etc.,*
- *that local authorities at all levels are included in emergency contingency plans and exercises,*
- *that adequate provision of pollution prevention equipment is provided to protect the coastline effectively.*

## **KIMO**

**In recognition of the need for a clean environment around Northern Seas and having regard to KIMO Resolutions 2/94, 4/94 (amended 96) and 1/98:**

- 1. urges European Governments and the European Commission to implement urgent measures to achieve this goal.**
- 2. calls on all European Governments and the European Commission to work towards: safer ships, safer shipping routes, more efficient surveillance - including satellite surveillance, statutory insurance, safer transport standards, intervention measures to combat inaction by ship owners and inter-country emergency contingency plans for accidents at sea.**
- 3. urges concerted action to ensure that consideration of the IMO Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) guidelines results in adequate measures to protect environmentally sensitive areas, which are at risk from shipping.**
- 4. calls on all European Governments and the European Commission to take action immediately.**