



Coast Guard vessels from three Baltic Sea countries in a joint exercise

## Flagship project is keeping an eye on the Baltic Sea

Various authorities of more than ten countries collaborate on shipping surveillance, the fight against organized crime, monitoring environmental factors, protection of marine resources, sea-rescue services, fishery controls and management of chemical and oil discharges. Project MASUNO means a large step forward to make reality out of the European Union's Strategy for the Baltic Sea region

The Swedish Coastguard Service plays a leading role in coordinating 24 government bodies in more than ten countries in MARSUNO, Maritime Surveillance North, one of the Strategy's flagship projects. "MARSUNO is unique to the extent that it coordinates so many parties from a range of sectors in the fields of maritime surveillance and security in many countries", notes Richard Vesterberg, departmental secretary in the Ministry of Defence's Civil Contingencies Agency. But time is short. During the two years of

the project, 2010 and 2011, the participatory countries have not only to exchange experiences about each other's information systems which are an important aid in surveillance and security for people and the environment of the Baltic Sea. They have also to show good examples of how government authorities can act together effectively to deal with oil spillages and to save lives in the event of distress at sea.





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### Removing legal obstacles

“An important precondition for effective and legally transparent maritime surveillance is appropriate legislation”, Richard Vesterberg notes. One of the tasks of MARSUNO is to map the obstacles to effective coordination that may have their roots in differences in legislation and administrative regulations.

In MARSUNO both civil and military authorities will exchange experiences and expertise. Among the bodies taking part are Sweden’s National Maritime Administration, Coastguard Service, the Swedish Police, Defence Forces and the Customs Administration and their equivalents in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Norway, Belgium and France.

“It is a matter of establishing ‘best practice’, i.e. those systems, methods and concrete activities that have proved to be safest and most effective, including both legal transparency and cost effectiveness”, Richard Vesterberg explains.

### More effective strategies for combating oil spills

Thomas Fagö, formerly the Swedish Coastguard Service’s head of rescue operations at the control centre in Karlskrona probably has more experience of dealing with oil spills than anyone else in Sweden. To him, MARSUNO is a great opportunity to improve existing cooperation with a view to avoiding, detecting and dealing with oil spills in the Baltic Sea. Surveillance today makes use of satellites, ships and aeroplanes. “We shall be in a position to take command responsibility for the employment of resources for example for maintaining preparedness for emergency towing assistance. Instead of Sweden placing a multi-purpose vessel that can undertake control of the border, tow large vessels, pick up oil from the sea, fight fires at sea, control fishing and rescue distressed sailors in a single region of the sea, Finland, Poland or Germany can provide this resource at the same time that the cost of the service is determined and agreed in advance. In this way surveillance will become more efficient and more permanent in the same area”, Thomas Fagö explains.

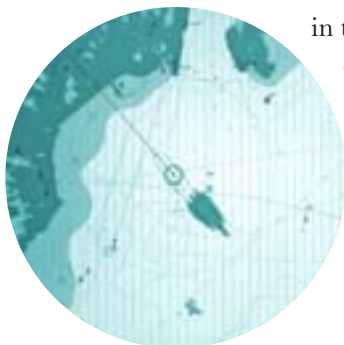


"MARSUNO will improve our understanding of each other's information systems" says Heli Haapasaari, who works with surveillance by satellite and aeroplanes of the Finnish sector of the Baltic Sea.

He says that there are some 60 illegal discharges of oil annually from ships in Swedish waters. During the last ten years there have been about 900 incidents of ships going aground. Forty percent of them are due to human error. MARSUNO will surely be able to reduce the numbers of oil discharges, groundings and collisions between ships", he insists.

Thomas Fagö also explains that the cooperation that exists today under the auspices of the Helsinki Commission, HELCOM, which is an international agreement ratified by all nine Baltic Sea countries, also has several advantages and can serve as a model for maritime-surveillance authorities in other maritime waters within the European Union, for example the Mediterranean.

"The alarm systems for maritime surveillance in the nine Baltic Sea countries have been standardized and the authorities in the various countries can call for assistance or send help in cases of shipwrecks or discharges of oil and chemicals without having to go through the diplomatic channels. This is a major advantage.



### More difficult for ships to break the law

Heli Haapasaari works with surveillance by satellite and aeroplanes of the Finnish sector of the Baltic Sea at Finland's environmental centre SYKE.

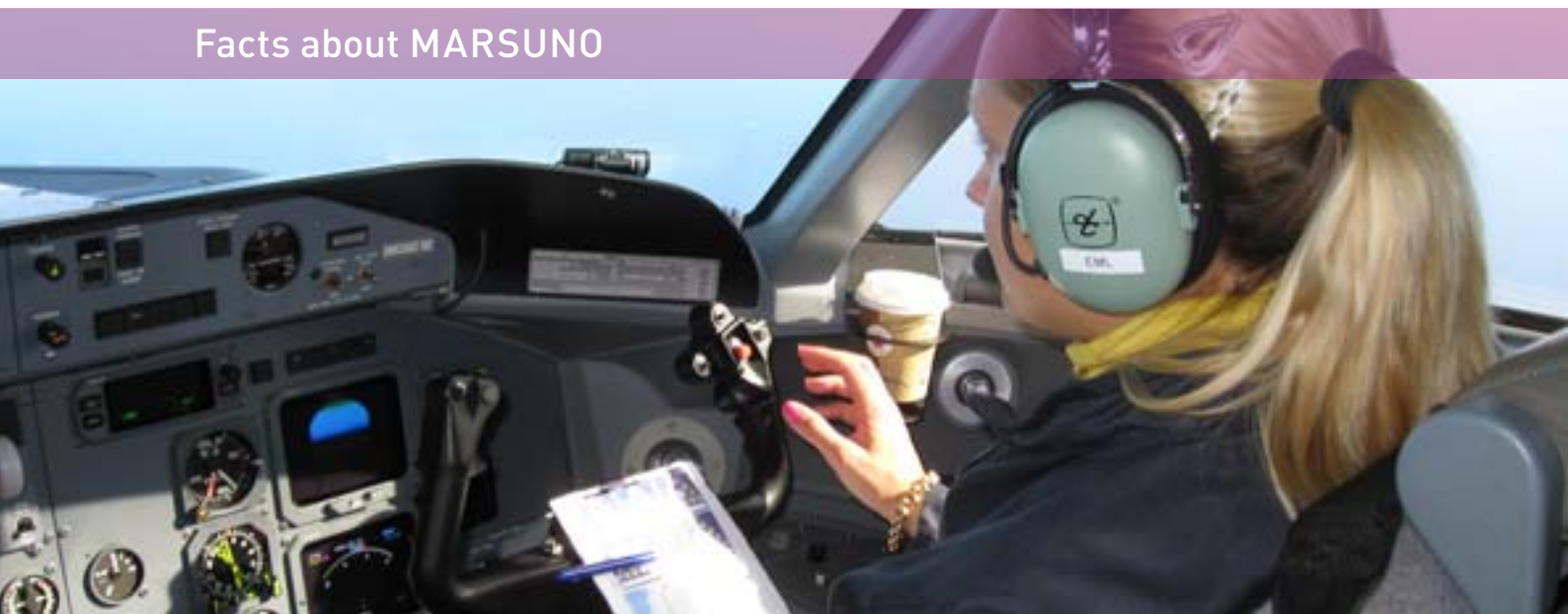
"MARSUNO", she maintains, "will improve our understanding of each other's information systems, not just regarding statistics of discharges and wrecks but also registers of vessels that have committed repeated offences."

Heli Haapasaari is also convinced that the coordination of air surveillance and control of ships will send a clear warning to anyone planning or committing offences in the Baltic Sea, for discharging oil to smuggling goods and humans.

That Sweden has taken a leading part in realizing this aspect of the European Union's Baltic Sea strategy is proof of the country's high ambitions with regard to control and surveillance of our waters and coasts. This is the opinion of Mikael Wolfbrandt, departmental secretary in the Ministry of Defence's Civil Contingencies Agency.

He concludes by emphasizing that MARSUNO's most important characteristic is its focus on the total picture; on contributing to the achievement of international agreement as to how the Baltic Sea and other waters can most effectively be protected with a view to creating sustainable economic, environmental and social development.

## Facts about MARSUNO



**MARSUNO - Maritime Surveillance North** – is a project aimed at improving maritime surveillance in the Baltic and the North Sea. Making it easier for the countries in the area to exchange information about such matters as shipping movements, accidents and weather conditions at sea will facilitate crime prevention, fisheries control and joint action in crises. The Swedish Coastguard Authority is in charge of the project with some 24 government organizations from ten countries acting as partners. MARSUNO has been adopted by the EU Commission as a pilot and flagship project for implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

For the space of two years the partners in the project will identify the legal and admin-

istrative obstacles with a view to improving the efficiency of maritime surveillance. Together they will study how the exchange of different types of information from the civil and military systems in the various countries actually works. The project partners will also develop new systems for future joint operations.

In the autumn of 2009 the Swedish Coastguard Authority received a grant of some 30'000 Euros from Sida's Baltic Sea Unit to enable it to submit an application to the EU Commission for funding for the MARSUNO project. The budget amounts to some 3 million Euros and the project has been managed since January 2010 from its headquarters in the Baltic port of Karlskrona.

Integrated maritime surveillance is included in the European marine policy and was a priority issue during the Swedish presidency of the EU in 2009.

For practical purposes the MARSUNO project is divided into six thematic areas:

- Integrated management of border surveillance including crime prevention
- Information system for monitoring shipping movements
- Control of marine pollution
- Sea-rescue service (SAR)
- Fisheries control
- Maritime status report

Further information at [www.marsuno.se](http://www.marsuno.se)

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Sida's Baltic Sea Unit develops cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. We have a special assignment from the Government based on Swedish interests to support activities in the fields of the Environment & Energy, Social and Health issues and Civil Security. Our projects and activities aim at facilitating the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.