Ievoli Sun — Maritime Chemical Accident

2000, October 30 — English Channel, 45 n.m. north of Batz, France

Styrene (Class 3) in ship cargo tanks; flammable liquid
TLV 20 ppm (USA), IDLH 700 ppm (USA); **marine pollutant**

Methyl ethyl ketone (Class 3) in ship cargo tanks; flammable liquid, explosive when mixed with air, TLV 200 ppm (USA), IDLH 3,000 ppm (USA)

Isopropyl alcohol (Class 3) in ship cargo tanks; flammable liquid
TLV 400 ppm (USA), IDLH 2,000 ppm (USA)

Summary: At 4:30 a.m. on October 30, 2000, the Italian chemical tanker **Ievoli Sun** reported a **leak** in the bow section. The ship was carrying 4,000 tonnes of **styrene** and 1,000 tonnes each of **methyl ethyl ketone** and **isopropyl alcohol** in cargo tanks. After consideration of the gravity of the situation, the crew was evacuated by a helicopter. The risk of grounding was obvious and as this might lead to pollution of the nearby coastline. The favoured option was to tow the ship to shelter. The towing began at 5:15 p.m. to the North-East. On the morning of October 31, the Ievoli Sun **sank** during towing at a **depth of 70 metres**. The ship had then reached a position 12 n.m. from Alderney. General surveillance of the area was started due to the risk of pollution. The wreck was marked out with beacon buoys and maritime traffic was diverted. After a complete survey of the wreck had been done it was decided that the most appropriate solution would be to pump up the styrene and the heavy fuel. The methyl ethyl ketone and the isopropyl alcohol could be released if monitored closely. This was done by a hired salvage team in April-May 2001. The **release** of methyl ethyl ketone and the isopropyl alcohol showed no evidence of environmental impact. The styrene and the fuel was **pumped up** with the help of a **remote operated offloading system**. Both air and sea samples were taken throughout the area during the operation but tests showed no traces of a styrene leak. The operation was finished in May 2001.

Cause of Accident: A leak in the bow section double bottom.

Comments on Response: The response organisation worked well, probably much due to the Erika incident that happened less than a year before this accident. Both national and international co-ordination was trimmed during the Erika incident and one command centre was still operational. The technology used to salvage the styrene and the heavy fuel proved to be efficient.

Source of Information: Brief report from the French authority Cedre. Available at www.le-cedre.fr .
(Abstracted June 2002 by Edvard Molitor, Swedish Coast Guard H.Q.)