

INTERNATIONAL  
OIL POLLUTION  
COMPENSATION  
FUND

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
27th session  
Agenda item 3

FUND/EXC.27/3  
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## INCIDENTS IN ITALY

### AGIP ABRUZZO INCIDENT

Note by the Director

#### The Incident

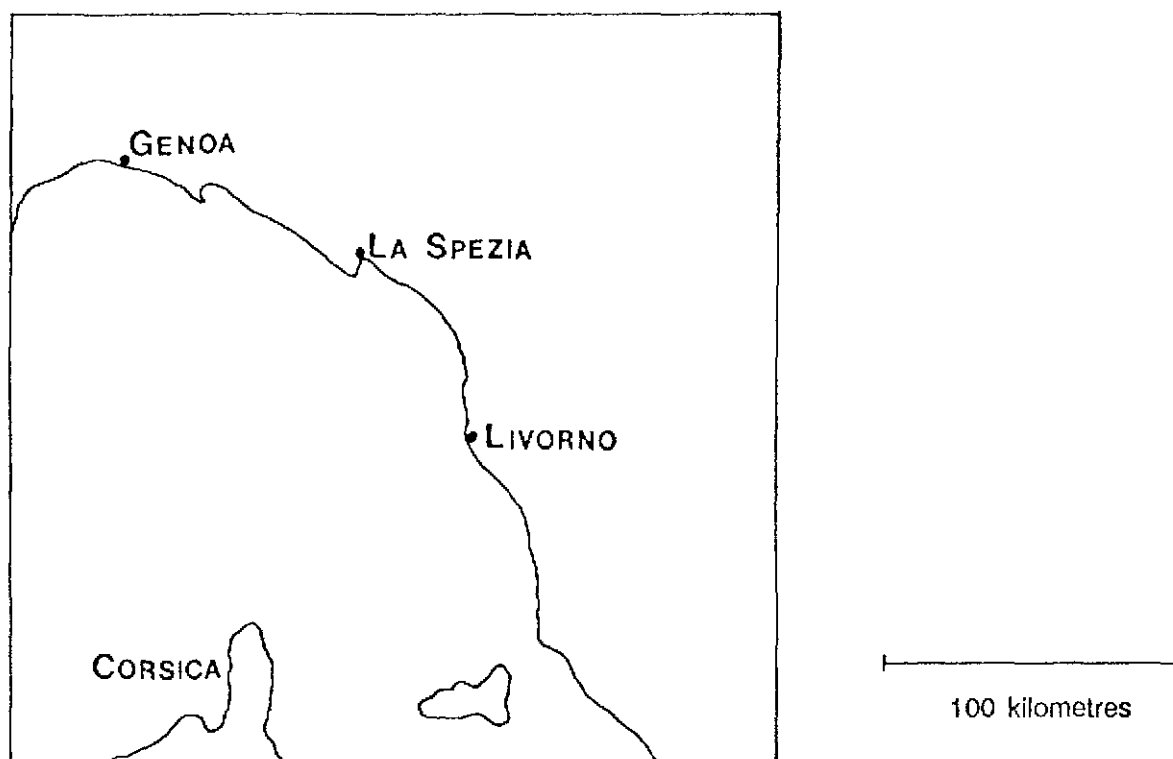
1 Whilst lying at anchor two miles off the port of Livorno on 10 April 1991, the Italian tanker AGIP ABRUZZO (98 544 GRT) was struck by the Italian ro-ro ferry MOBY PRINCE. Both vessels caught fire. All passengers and all crew members but one on board the ferry (143 persons in all) died, and the ferry was totally destroyed. Nobody on board the tanker died, although some crew members were injured. As a result of the incident, a state of local emergency was declared on 10 April, and it was lifted on 18 May 1991.

2 The AGIP ABRUZZO was carrying about 80 000 tonnes of Iranian light crude oil. The fire on board the tanker lasted for seven days during which time about 2 000 tonnes of cargo oil and an unknown quantity of bunker fuel oil was spilled.

3 As a result of the collision, the AGIP ABRUZZO was damaged in the region of the aft end cargo tanks on the starboard side, resulting in an initial escape of oil. The accommodation area and the engine room were destroyed by the fire, which probably also consumed some of the cargo oil. Explosions in the starboard bunker tank three days after the incident caused extensive structural damage to the ship and a subsequent loss of fuel oil.

#### Clean-up Operations and Salvage

4 Originally it was envisaged that the water from the flooded engine room and other spaces would be pumped so as to reduce the AGIP ABRUZZO's draught, thereby enabling her to be brought into the port of Livorno to discharge her cargo there. However, due to the difficulties that arose, it was decided to conduct a lightening operation at the anchorage. The transfer of the cargo to another vessel was completed on 17 May, after having been interrupted several times due to bad weather and operating difficulties.



5 During the operations, and as a result of bad weather some two weeks after the initial incident, further small releases of oil occurred from the starboard bunker tank through a damaged cargo tank. As a direct consequence, the Italian Government insisted that the number of vessels available for containment of oil at sea and recovery of floating oil be increased, and that these vessels should remain in place while the transfer of the cargo was being carried out.

6 Attempts to recover the oil at sea were partially successful but difficulties were experienced due to the high viscosity of the burnt oil residue and because the spilt fuel oil was distributed over a wide area. The spilt oil eventually stranded over some 130 kilometres of shoreline, mostly north of Livorno, although the pollution was intermittent and for the most part consisted of light scattering of tar balls. Clean-up of the shoreline was carried out mainly by manual means with some high pressure washing of rocks and slipways.

7 Shoreline cleaning in the Livorno area was undertaken by a local contractor using vacuum trucks to recover bulk oil, followed by manual removal of oiled debris, sand and pebbles. Hot water and dispersants were used for final cleaning of amenity areas. The clean-up on shore had not been finalised at the time of drafting this document. It is expected that these operations will be completed by early June and before the beginning of the main tourist season.

8 The clean-up operations on shore and at sea were monitored on behalf of the IOPC Fund, the owners of the AGIP ABRUZZO and the shipowner's P & I insurer (the Skuld Club) by experts from the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF), assisted by local surveyors. The IOPC Fund gave Murray Fenton & Associates the task of monitoring the salvage operations on the Fund's behalf. These experts held numerous discussions with representatives of the Italian authorities and representatives of the shipowner.

9 The Director followed the operations in Livorno on 17 April and the Legal Officer visited the site of the incident on 23 April.

**Limitation Proceedings**

10 The owner of the AGIP ABRUZZO has not yet initiated limitation proceedings. It is estimated that the limitation amount applicable to the AGIP ABRUZZO under the Civil Liability Convention is approximately Lit14 000 million (£6.4 million).

**Claims for Compensation**

11 Although no claims for compensation have been submitted so far, the Director considers that this incident may give rise to claims for compensation in significant amounts. It is not possible at this stage, however, to estimate the aggregate amount of the claims, nor whether they will exceed the limitation amount applicable to the AGIP ABRUZZO.

**Investigation into the Cause of the Incident**

12 The Italian authorities are carrying out an investigation into the cause of the incident. The Director is following this investigation in order to assess in particular whether the IOPC Fund should consider taking recourse action against the owner of the MOBY PRINCE.

**Action to be Taken by the Executive Committee**

13 The Executive Committee is invited to consider the information contained in this document and to give the Director such instructions concerning his handling of this incident as it may deem appropriate.

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