

MRCC Ostend – State-of-the-art Maritime Rescue and Co-ordination Center



Flemish Community chooses Barco's latest MRCC technology

Barco, together with Fabricom GTI and Tein Telecom, was selected by the Shipping Assistance Division of the Ministry of the Flemish Community in February 2005 to build a new Maritime Rescue and Co-ordination Center in Ostend.

Based on its extensive experience with traffic management applications, Barco was able to present an advanced, integrated vessel traffic monitoring system, along with a large-area high-resolution display system for 24/7 operational capability and overall maintenance, training and support services, for one of the busiest sea routes in the world.

Barco delivered an integrated monitoring system combining an advanced VTS system with an Incident Management System and a Search & Rescue module. With the new system, operators will be able to display traffic data coming from different external sensor sites such as the "Schelderadarketen" (Scheldt radar chain). In case of an incident, the MRCC can rely on a lean, reliable and cost-effective Incident Management System, which fully supports all Port Control and Maritime Rescue activities.

The MRCC is fully operational since July 2006.

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Fully integrated VTS solution

Barco installed an integrated monitoring system combining an advanced VTS system (based on Barco's OPScenter software component suite) with an Incident Management System and a Search & Rescue module. The combined and integrated functionalities of these tools create a unique benefit to the operator and facilitate a smooth and fast decision making in the rescue and coordination center. With the new VTS system, operators are able to display synthetic traffic data coming from different external sensor sites such as the Scheldt radar chain network and its AIS network.

In addition, the system is directly coupled to the local radar at the port of Ostend and is able to display the raw analog radar signal as a separate layer on the traffic display, thus enhancing the tracking abilities of the system. The VTS system is connected to a central ship database and the hydro-meteo sensors along the Belgian coast and provides the information to the operator via a quick and user-friendly interface.



Providing the Common Operational Picture

Along with its role as maritime coordination center, the new MRCC is also used as incident room and press information center. Barco's OverView mDG50-DL is configured as two high by four wide 50" modules resulting in a total resolution of 1536x4096 pixels and featuring dual-lamp redundancy for full 24/7 crisis operation, a TRANSFORM A18 graphical controller and APOLLO display wall management software (see cover picture).

Shared Situational Awareness

Barco's large-area display system is a network-centric visualization platform that enables interconnection of multiple display systems and allows insertion of situational variables in real time. The display controller series "TRANSFORM" for intelligent information fusion feature unique archiving, redundancy, dynamic-adaptive bandwidth and content redistribution options. Barco's display management software is ideally suited for scenario-building and content sharing, i.e. it allows shared situational awareness

from remote functional areas (incident management, search e rescue, VTS...) up to the MRCC central command center.

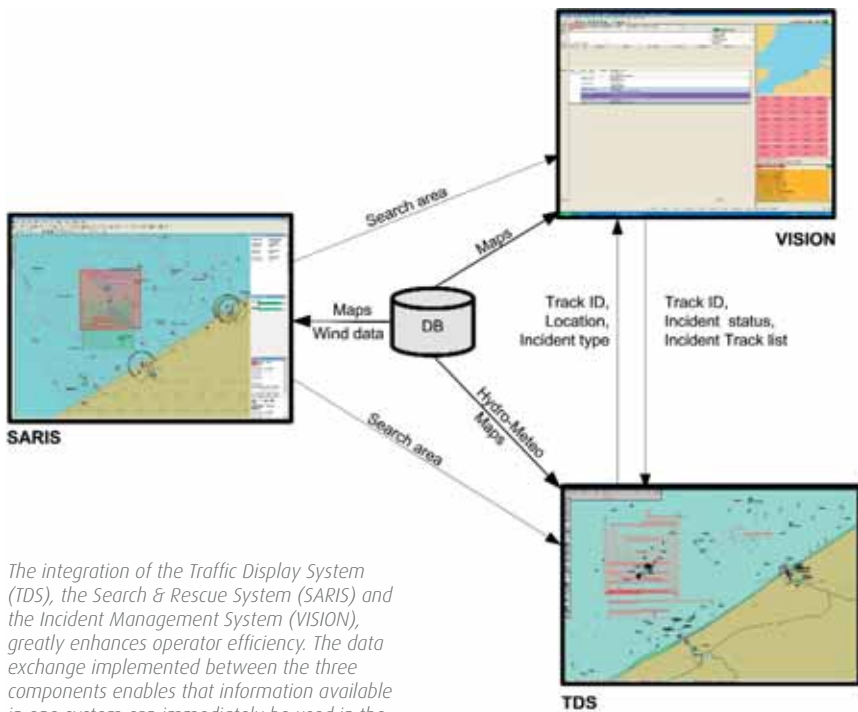
Integration of best-of-breed applications

To assist the MRCC operators in their co-ordination tasks, Barco teamed up with two other leading software tool providers in the world of maritime Search and Rescue, viz. BMT Limited, UK and Fortek Computers Ltd., UK. The Incident Management System VISION presents operators with





guidelines for dealing with incidents and provides the communication tools to quickly distribute the necessary information via telephone, fax, SMS or email. In cases where missing persons or drifting objects need to be found, the Search and Rescue planner SARIS, simulates the estimated drift (based on real-time wind data and a current database) and generates a search area with the highest probability of success. The information is then made available to the search and rescue units for them to adapt their search plans as appropriate.



The integration of the Traffic Display System (TDS), the Search & Rescue System (SARIS) and the Incident Management System (VISION), greatly enhances operator efficiency. The data exchange implemented between the three components enables that information available in one system can immediately be used in the other, either automatically or with limited operator action.





Antoine Descamps, Head of Shipping Assistance Division:

We are confident that the new MRCC will play a very important role in maintaining safety, security and environmental friendliness. “



The solution also includes combined radar video, track, voice recording & replay and allows for browser-based access to an integrated traffic image.

The MRCC acts as information and communication hub. As such, it is combining information from various input sources, such as radar and AIS tracks and hydro-meteo information into a user-defined operational picture. This information is again being dispatched to various clients, including SafeSeaNet, a European Platform for Maritime Data Exchange.

As part of the integrated monitoring system, several of Barco's 40" (1280x768 resolution) and 42" (1920x1080 native high definition resolution) flat panels are used as head-up displays, enabling visualization of vessel traffic and hydro-meteo information.

Antoine Descamps, Head of Shipping Assistance Division, comments: "In view of the ever increasing traffic on the North Sea and the increasingly strict European and international regulations the Flemish Government

saw the need for a modern and sophisticated Maritime Rescue and Co-ordination Center. We are confident that the new MRCC in Ostend equipped with the latest monitoring and communication technology will play a very important role in maintaining the safety and environmental friendliness of our coastal waters and in providing the best possible response and accommodation in case of an incident."

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