

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May, 7<sup>th</sup> 2011

### **First test at sea of the European project ARGOMARINE successfully completed by NURC in La Spezia**

*A new system capable of raising a real-time alarm  
in case of oil spill in the Mediterranean will be ready by 2012*

The early stage of the European project **ARGOMARINE (Automatic Oil Spill Recognition and Geopositioning integrated in a Marine Monitoring Network – [www.argomarine.eu](http://www.argomarine.eu))** has come to an end on May 6 at **NURC in La Spezia**, with the completion of the first at-sea test. This 3 year project aims at creating an **integrated system dedicated to the monitoring of the marine environment for oil spills**. Like the **mythological dog Argo**, who was endowed with hundred eyes, open day and night, **ARGOMARINE** is intended to develop new technologies capable of constantly monitoring our seas and giving a real-time **alert in case of hydrocarbon spill in the Mediterranean**, with particular attention given to the more vulnerable areas from an environmental and security point of view.

As part of the project's Mid-Term Steering Committee meeting, scientists from the **nine project partners** (which from Italy include **NURC**, the **Tuscan Archipelago National Park** and **CNR**), have conducted a joint experiment of the instruments developed date. The instruments tested include: **hearing sensors and autonomous vehicles**, that will act in synergy with **satellites, radar stations and sophisticated computers**. As part of the test the unauthorized access of a craft with the potential to cause an oil spill was simulated.

In the next phase of the project, the system will be enriched with new sensors, "**electronic noses**" able to "sniff" and catalogue the emissions coming from oil spill. These sensors will be installed on floats and autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs). "**NURC and the Tuscan Archipelago National Park have been cooperating for many years now to activities of environmental interest**" said **Edoardo Bovio, NURC Business Development Manager**. "**NURC is proud of the achievements obtained by the ARGOMARINE consortium which will transfer in the civilian field technologies developed for military purposes**".

The **ARGOMARINE** project, which was chosen in 2009 from 350 proposals is funded through the European Union's **7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development**. With **3.3 million euros in funding**, the partners will work together to minimize pollution risks in the overcrowded **Mediterranean basin**, where every year **60 significant accidents occur, 15 of them characterized by hydrocarbon spills at sea** (PNAT data).