

Paris, March 11th 2013

## Les Abeilles' expertise at the fore in a world first: towing the world's largest containership, the CMA CGM Marco Polo

**WEBNEWS** – On March 9th, the crew on the *Abeille Bourbon* successfully completed towing operations on the [CMA CGM Marco Polo](#), the jewel in CMA CGM's crown and the largest containership in the world (capable of carrying up to 16,020 TEUs(\*)), as part of an exercise organized by the [Atlantic French Maritime Prefecture](#).

The *Abeille Bourbon* is a tug specializing in salvage and assistance and chartered by the French Navy to protect the French coastline. **The vessel provided its services for an Atlantic French Maritime Prefecture exercise to test the latest generation of the CMA CGM Marco Polo containership's emergency towing arrangement.** The containership is 396 m long, weighs 186,000 tons and has a 16,020 container capacity.

As part of the exercise, the *CMA CGM Marco Polo* simulated damage to its propeller system when leaving the Ouessant traffic separation scheme. The vessel naturally positioned itself across the wind. Its size provided a large surface for wind impact and the containership soon began to drift. **The crew on board the *Abeille Bourbon*, headed by the Captain Thierry Choquet, launched a fast tow procedure** and focused on tug maneuvers to turn the *CMA CGM Marco Polo* head to wind.

The Salvage tug therefore moved closer using a line-throwing gun and a pass rope to link up with the *CMA CGM Marco Polo*. In adverse weather conditions, this maneuver is risky as it requires the high seas salvage tug to be very close to the ship it is assisting. *The Abeille Bourbon* reached a speed of 6.7 knots with a bollard pull of approximately 90 t.

*"The operation went perfectly. This new experience is an asset to the Abeille Bourbon crew's expertise. The Abeille Bourbon, with over 21,000 horsepower and 200 t in traction, has once again demonstrated its ability to assist new types of vessels e.g. latest generation containerships,"* says **Christian Quillivic, Managing Director of Les Abeilles, BOURBON's affiliate in charge of assistance, salvage and anti-pollution.**

(\*) TEU = Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit, unit of cargo capacity