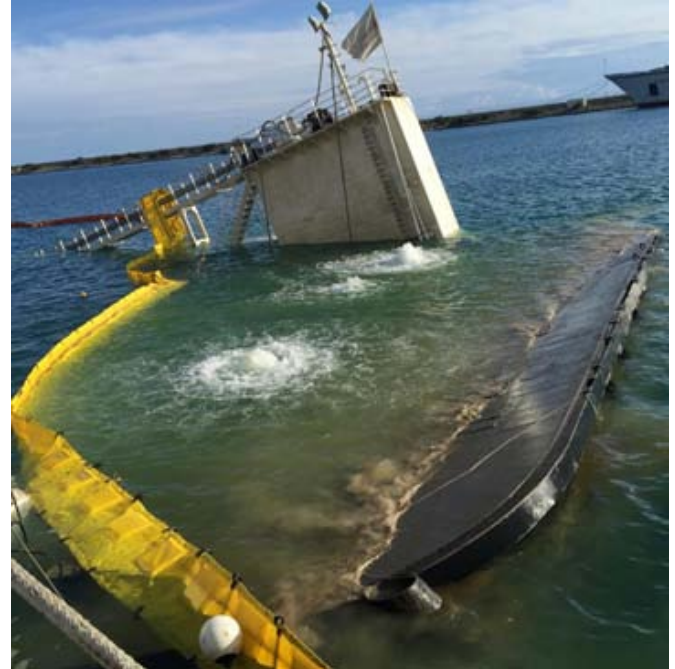


participants from all Asean member states, namely Malaysia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. **Source : BERNAMA**

## **SPANOPOULOS REFLOATS BARGE IN LIMASSOL**



The caisson barge **PIRAEUS V** that sank at the port of Limassol in a water depth of 17 mtrs and was refloated by **Spanopoulos salvage** on 19th of February 2015. **Photo's Cpt. Antonis Prekas ©**

## **Africa's maritime security wish list for 2015**

2014 was an important year for African maritime security, and one of several improvements. For many, maritime security is synonymous with piracy, and the fight against piracy remains the most notable area of success. The 2014 annual report of the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB-PRC) shows that reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea in African waters have continued to decline from 2011. This offers the encouraging thought that the threat is diminishing, and that improvement is likely to continue. Given even these incremental advances, what do we wish to see in the African maritime domain in 2015? And how feasible might these wishes be? This year, the number and severity of piracy and armed robbery incidents must continue to decline. The IMB-PRC recorded 55 attacks in 2014 – down from 79 in 2013 – in African waters or attributed to African pirates. Of these, 41 took place in the west, in the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean seaboard, and 12 occurred off the Horn of Africa or along the Western Indian Ocean seaboard. The other two incidents – both cases petty theft in port – occurred respectively in Morocco and Mozambique. A small caveat is necessary: this is only what is reported to authorities. Some estimate that only 50% of the total incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, for instance, are reported. Maritime security pundits and researchers are now facing a balance of probability problem, as the lack of evidence about the nature of attacks makes it difficult to identify successful countermeasures.

Of the evidence that is available, and the IMB-PRC remains the best source, only 29 incidents conform to the legal definition of piracy (as occurring outside of territorial waters), while 26 incidents occurred to a vessel that was either berthed or anchored, and therefore within the territorial waters of various states. Most of what we assume are pirate attacks are therefore, technically, cases of armed robbery – often minor thefts of stores and equipment from ships docked in ports such as Pointe-Noire in the Congo, or anchorages such as Lagos. Labelling every incident as piracy – without distinguishing it from armed robbery at sea – is not only erroneous, it could also have major repercussions for maritime security spending and policy decisions worldwide. In this way, what are often domestic problems are externalised to become solely international ones. This points towards a need to enhance the capacity of security and judicial elements within countries, so that criminal acts can be deterred and responded to within ports as well as in territorial waters. This would significantly reduce both the risk and cost of sailing to and through African waters, where insurance premiums, risk payments and loss of income from delays remained high in 2014. One solution could be