



# Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

## Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

Federal Higher Authority subordinated to the Ministry of  
Transport and Digital Infrastructure

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation, P.O. Box 30 12 20 • 20305 Hamburg

**Office building**  
Bernhard-Nocht-Str. 78  
20359 Hamburg  
Tel.: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 0  
Fax: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 83 40  
[posteingang-bsu@bsh.de](mailto:posteingang-bsu@bsh.de)  
[www.bsu-bund.de](http://www.bsu-bund.de)

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**+ 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 0**

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**E-Mail: [posteingang-bsu@bsh.de](mailto:posteingang-bsu@bsh.de) 31. July 2014**

### Press Release 11/14

**The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby gives notice that the investigation report No. 417/13 was published on 31 July 2014. The joint investigation report of the Flag State Antigua & Barbuda and Germany deals with the collision of MV CONMAR AVENUE with MV MAERSK KALMAR on the Outer Weser on 7 May 2013.**

**This report – as well as all previous reports – is available on the website <http://www.bsu-bund.de> and can be downloaded.**

#### Short Version:

On 7 May 2013, the Antiguan flagged container ship CONMAR AVENUE collided with the NETHERLANDS registered container ship MAERSK KALMAR on the Outer Weser. The MAERSK KALMAR, damaged above the waterline, was able to continue her voyage to Bremerhaven under her own steam. The

CONMAR AVENUE did not sustain water ingress either. The force of the collision caused 15 containers on the CONMAR AVENUE to fall overboard. The vessel ran aground outside the fairway. She was towed free later on and subsequently called at the port of Bremerhaven with tug assistance. The accident did not result

in any injuries and there was no environmental pollution. The lost containers could be retrieved completely.

The investigation report was published on 31 July 2014 by the Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation and can be downloaded on [www.bsu-bund.de](http://www.bsu-bund.de).

## **Long Version:**

### **Serious marine casualty – collision involving CMS CONMAR AVENUE and CMS MAERSK KALMAR on the Outer Weser on 7 May 2013**

At 1555 on 7 May 2013, the Antigua flagged container ship CONMAR AVENUE collided with the container ship MAERSK KALMAR, which is registered in Holland, on the Outer Weser between fairway buoys 29 and 31 in the Fedderwarder Fairway. The sea was calm and visibility good. Both ships were heading for Bremerhaven and had previously followed the course of the fairway under pilotage.

The collision happened during an overtaking manoeuvre by the CONMAR AVENUE, during which technical problems occurred with the supply of lubricating oil to the ship's main engine; this had already happened on several occasions during the course of the day. However, this time it was not possible to remedy the difficulties at short notice. Therefore, the engine shut down automatically to prevent serious damage. As a result, the CONMAR AVENUE lost manoeuvrability and was drawn into the wake of the much larger MAERSK KALMAR. Despite contra-rudder, she then turned towards the MAERSK KALMAR due to hydrodynamic interactions. The CONMAR AVENUE's forecastle rammed into the starboard side of the MAERSK KALMAR's aft section at an angle of about 60 degrees. The force of the collision caused 15 containers on the CONMAR AVENUE to fall overboard. Both ships sustained material damage above the waterline. The accident did not result in any injuries and there was no pollution of any significance. The fairway had to be temporarily closed to transiting shipping. The lost containers could be retrieved completely.

The MAERSK KALMAR was able to continue her voyage to Bremerhaven under her own steam. Due to the ebb current and her loss of manoeuvrability, the CONMAR AVENUE ran aground outside the fairway level with buoy 30 after the collision. She anchored there and was pulled back into the fairway at about 1830 with the help of five tugs. After that, this ship initially continued her voyage under her own steam, too. At about 1941, technical problems with the supply of lubricating oil were experienced again shortly before reaching the port boundary in the area of buoy 45, however. Following that, the precaution was taken to designate the CONMAR AVENUE a vessel not under command. She was towed to the berth by tugs and made fast there at 2105.

The alarm log (engine room) protocol was the crucial source of information within the course of the investigation of the marine casualty. The log proved the major problems relating to the lubricating oil supply of the main engine. This ultimately led to the shutdown of the engine and resulted in the loss of propulsion and steerability of the CONMAR AVENUE. Despite extensive examination of the vessel's owner and the engine manufacturer the cause for the disastrous drop of the lubricating oil pressure could not be clarified with absolute certainty.

It was not possible to clarify whether the ship's command of the CONMAR AVENUE was sufficiently informed about the existing technical difficulties before the decision to overtake the MAERSK KALMAR was made. The technical cause of the uncontrollable drop in lubricating oil pressure could not be determined with absolute certainty, either. Therefore, the BSU concluded the investigation into the serious marine casualty with a summary report and dispensed with the publication of specific safety recommendations. Nevertheless, the publication of this summary investigation report aims to raise the awareness of officers in charge of the navigational watch and officers in charge of the engineering watch, as well as shore-based inspectorates of the urgent need to investigate technical faults immediately when they occur. Even if the technical fault only occur temporary, they might lead to a loss of the ability to manoeuvre when they recur. If fault finding is inconclusive, then it is necessary to take precautionary measures for the event that the fault recurs. The vessels command must be immediately informed about the incidents in order to consider the unresolved technical faults and the risks associated with them in all their decisions.

Volker Schellhammer  
Director of the Federal Bureau