



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
www.bsu-bund.de

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330/13

(+ 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 8311

Date

E-Mail: posteingang-bsu@bsh.de 15 March 2016

Press Release 6/16

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby gives notice that the investigation report 330/13 was published on 15 March 2016. The investigation deals with the collision of the LPG-tanker CORAL IVORY and the cargo ship SIDERFLY in the area of the Kiel-Canal viaduct Brunsbüttel on 28 October 2013. Alternatively this report – as well as all previous reports – is available on the website <http://www.bsu-bund.de> and can be downloaded.

Serious marine casualty – collision of LPG-tanker CORAL IVORY and MV SIDERFLY in the Kiel Canal

Short version

On 28 October 2013 the Netherlands registered LPG-tanker CORAL IVORY collided with the cargo vessel SIDERFLY flying the Flag of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines west of the viaduct at Brunsbüttel. The CORAL IVORY had departed from her berth in the port of Ostermoor south of the canal route

a few minutes before and began to turn into the Kiel Canal. In the course of this manoeuvre the vessel deviated too far into the northern part of the Canal and collided with the oncoming SIDERFLY. Their crew had to abandon the distressed ship.

The SIDERFLY was so heavily damaged that she had to be scraped later on.

The investigation report was published on By the Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation and is available on www.bsu-bund.de.

Long version:

At about 0256 on 28 October 2013, the Dutch-registered LPG tanker CORAL IVORY and the cargo ship SIDERFLY, flying the flag of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, collided in the Kiel Canal west of the viaduct at Brunsbüttel. The ammonia-laden CORAL IVORY had left her berth in Landeshafen Ostermoor (inland port of Ostermoor), located to the south of the canal route, a few minutes beforehand and started to turn into the Kiel Canal towards Kiel. Despite the use of her bow thruster, the ship moved too far into the northern part of the canal during this manoeuvre and collided with the oncoming SIDERFLY, which was sailing towards Brunsbüttel.

An astern manoeuvre enabled the CORAL IVORY to part from the other vessel shortly after the collision happened. The CORAL IVORY only sustained minor damage during the accident and was able to return to the inland port of Brunsbüttel under her own steam afterwards.

The shell plating of the SIDERFLY, fully laden with nitrogenous fertiliser, was torn open below the waterline during the collision. The inflowing sea water caused a steadily increasing list, which exposed the ship to an acute risk of foundering.

External assistance for the heavily damaged SIDERFLY was requested from the bridges of the CORAL IVORY and the SIDERFLY immediately after the accident on VHF radio. It was possible to take four crew members ashore a few minutes after the collision with the help of a work boat belonging to a nearby ship. The remaining five crew members and the pilot were taken safely on board a pilot tender that had rushed to the distressed vessel shortly afterwards.

Two tugs that had arrived at the scene of the accident shortly after the collision managed to push the SIDERFLY, which had drifted some 0.3 nm eastwards in the meantime, temporarily against the northern canal embankment and prevent the ship, which was listing at more than 20 degrees to the port side, from foundering.

A huge technical effort in the hours and days that followed made it possible to first stabilise the distressed vessel on the northern canal embankment and then make her temporarily buoyant.

The Kiel Canal had to be closed completely and later partly for the very complex process involved in securing the SIDERFLY for a total of three days. The SIDERFLY was shifted to the port of Brunsbüttel on 6 November 2013. After unsuccessful attempts to sell the ship, which was greatly in need of repair, she began her last voyage on 5 February 2014 when she was towed to the ship breaking yard.

Within the framework of the investigation, the BSU, inter alia, analyzed the radio communication taken place between the VTS Kiel Canal and the vessels involved prior to the collision and investigated the initial seaworthiness of the SIDERFLY with the assistance of a shipbuilding expert. In doing so the shipbuilding expert did not detect any evidence whatsoever that technical deficiencies contributed to the rapid list of the SIDERFLY.

The investigation report comprises safety recommendations for the pilot brotherhood Kiel Canal I and the GDWS, the competent authority for the safety of shipping on the Kiel Canal, aiming at optimizing the communication between the pilots, the ships commands and the VTS. Moreover, the GDWS is recommended to examine the possibility of installing an additional signaling system at the exit of Landeshafen Ostermoor.

Volker Schellhammer
Director