



Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

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

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457/18

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Date

15.10.2020

PRESS RELEASE 16/20

On 15 October 2020, the Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) published the investigation report No 457/18, prepared by the Coastal State France with the assistance of the BSU, also in the German language. The report deals with the capsizing of the sailing yacht MOMO resulting in breaking of the mast, falling over board of the sailing yacht's skipper and a crewmember of a rescue boat coming to the yachts rescue in the southern navigation channel of the Gironde estuary on 29 November 2018. The report is available on

https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/GeneralInformation/Warnungen/Warnungen_node.html

for download.

Capsizing of the sailing yacht MOMO resulting in the breaking of the mast and falling over board of the sailing yacht's skipper and died, as well as a crewmember of the SNSM rescue boat SIEUR DE MONS coming to the rescue of the sailing yacht in the southern navigation channel of the Gironde estuary (Bay of Biscay).

A German couple intended to sail their sailing yacht MOMO to a marina at the coast of the Spanish Basque country in order to leave it there during the winter. On their voyage to Spain, they were informed by the DGA Missile Centre about the firing exercises of the French military taking place in this sea area. Thereupon, they turned to Royan.

At about 11 p.m., the sailing yacht MOMO reached the southern navigation channel of the GIRONDE estuary. A south-westerly wind with a force of 4 - 5 Beaufort prevailed.

An especially strong wave took the skipper by surprise leading to the yacht capsizing and the skipper falling overboard. The mast broke also.

The skipper's wife alerted MRCC Bremen by telephone. MRCC relayed the distress call to ETEL MRCC. Three helicopters and two rescue boats were deployed. The French air force helicopter based in Cazaux spotted the skipper and winched him up. However, the medical team could only determine his death.

The rescue boat of the French rescue service SNSM from Royan, which was in the midst of the high waves suddenly listed heavily so that a crewmember fell overboard. He was quickly spotted and winched up by the same helicopter that winched up the sailing yacht's skipper. He merely suffered contusions.

The skipper's wife on board the sailing yacht was injured. She was the third person being winched up. The helicopter took the casualty and the two injured to the military hospital in Bordeaux. The sailing boat was left drifting in the estuary. On the next day, the boat grounded at the coast of Charente-Maritime and was recovered later.

The Coastal State France and the Flag State Germany agreed upon an investigation conducted by the French investigative authority (BEAmer) immediately after the accident. The BSU assisted with the investigation. In October 2019, the BEAmer published its investigation report on their homepage. Now, the BSU publishes the report in the German language. The original French version shall prevail.

The investigation arrives at the conclusion that on the one hand, the passage of the Bay of Biscay during the winter should be prepared particularly well by recreational craft's skippers and on the other hand, the information procedure with respect to the military firing exercise area must be improved. This also includes mastering the English language, especially the IMO-Standard phrases.

All investigation reports, safety recommendations as well as other publications of the BSU are available on

https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Publications_node.html

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