



Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

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 – 83 11
Fax: + 49 (0) 40 31 90 – 83 40
posteingang@bsu-bund.de
<http://www.bsu-bund.de>

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+ 49 40 31 90 – 83 11

email: posteingang@bsu-bund.de

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The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby announces the publication of the Investigation Report 117/20 on 9 May 2022. The report deals with the collision of the coastal motor vessel SCHELDEBANK with the Kiel Canal ferry HOCHDONN in the area of the Hochdonn ferry crossing on 8 May 2020. The report is available for download at

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/News>

Less serious marine casualty – collision between coastal motor vessel and canal ferry on the Kiel Canal

In the morning of 8 May 2020, the coastal motor vessel SCHELDEBANK sailing on the Kiel Canal collided in the area of the Hochdonn ferry crossing with the canal ferry operating there under the same name. Extremely dense fog with visibility of some 75 m prevailed at the time of the accident.

The ferry HOCHDONN had already passed the middle of the canal and was approaching the southern ferry terminal with several people and vehicles on board, when her starboard side was struck by the SCHELDEBANK's bow. The coastal motor vessel's starboard forecastle scraped past the ferry's side superstructure, deforming it significantly.

Fortunately, the superstructure on the opposite side of the ferry, which accommodates the ferry's control position and is separated from the vehicle deck, was not affected by the collision. The vessel's propulsion system, steering system and buoyancy were not affected, either. The ferry pilot had the presence of mind to manoeuvre the ferry back

towards the ferry terminal after the collision-induced course deviation and to dock there shortly afterwards.

No persons on board were injured. The transported vehicles were also able to leave the ferry largely undamaged after the accident. There was no pollution of the water.

The SCHELDEBANK was blown off course by the collision. However, the pilot and the ship's command managed to steer the ship back into the middle of the canal by skilfull manoeuvres. Contact with the embankment and/or blockage of the canal could be avoided. The ship only sustained minor damages as a result of the collision. Her manoeuvreability was not restricted.

Within the scope of the accident investigation, the BSU, inter alia, dealt with the technical conditions on the HOCHDONN's control position and the legal framework regarding the Kiel Canal's ferry operation, particularly in adverse visibility conditions and, to this extent, and with respect to its legal mandate, investigated the question as to whether general lessons can be learned from the incident.

In this regard, the BSU has taken into account that for many years, in all visibility conditions, over 1000 ferry crossings have taken place on the 12 NOK ferry stations on a single day alone, according to rough estimates, and that no accidents have occurred in the past - apart from a serious marine casualty in which the Rendsburg transporter bridge collided with a cargo ship passing through the canal on January 8, 2016. In addition, it is of course known that all NOK ferries are being replaced by units that are modern in every respect, starting this year.

Nevertheless, the BSU has identified technical, operational, and regulatory needs for action aimed at optimizing the safety of NOK ferry operations in adverse visibility conditions. Accordingly, the investigation report contains safety recommendations to the Waterways and Shipping Administration as owner of the ferries, to their private operators and to the Federal Ministry of Digital and Transport (BMDV).

All investigation reports, safety recommendations and other information published by the BSU are available at

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications>.

Ulf Kaspera
Director