



# Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

## Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

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### **PRESS RELEASE No 01/23**

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) has published the Interim Investigation Report No. 37/22 on 1 February 2023. The report provides information about the subject, the course and the current state of the investigation. The report is available for download at

[https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Publications\\_node.html](https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Publications_node.html)

### **Serious Marine Casualty – Grounding of MUMBAI MAERSK while entering the Weser fairway on 2 February 2022**

On 2 February 2022, the MUMBAI MAERSK, a so called „Ultra-Large Container Ship“ (ULCS<sup>1</sup>), was en route from Rotterdam (Netherlands) to Bremerhaven. The ship had chosen the deep-water route as opposed to the coastal route for its approach. In the course of a turning manoeuvre just before entry into the narrow “Neue Weser” fairway, the ship ran aground on a dumping ground for dredging silt adjacent to the fairway.

During her approach of the narrow fairway section, the MUMBAI MAERSK received the information via UHF that her berth was still occupied, despite existing schedules, but would become free very soon. With a draft of 12.80 m, the ship was tide-dependent. Shortly afterwards, it was denied entry into the narrow section of the fairway in which neither turning nor encounters between large ships would be possible without problems. The vessel therefore performed a turn before that point (approx. level with buoys 3b and 4b) and proceeded to sail in the opposite direction.

Less than half an hour later, the MUMBAI MAERSK was informed that she could now enter Bremerhaven after all. With the tide window threatening to close, the ship

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<sup>1</sup> ULCS (also ULCV, Ultra-Large Container Vessel): very large container ships with a deadweight tonnage of more than 12,000 TEU (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units).).

immediately turned back to her original course. The planned manoeuvre failed, however, and the MUMBAI MAERSK ran aground on a dumping ground for dredging silt just south of the fairway. The grounding was immediately reported to Vessel Traffic Services.

The informed German Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME) assumed overall command of the salvage operations an hour later. A first attempt at towing the ship free at the next high tide failed and had to be aborted.

The Dutch salvage company SMIT Salvage, commissioned by the shipping company, prepared a salvage plan that was coordinated with the CCME. At the next high tide (in the night between 3 and 4 February) the next attempt was made at towing the vessel free. Prior to this, the exact water depths around the MUMBAI MAERSK had been sounded and the ship lightened by 7.000 tons of ballast water. At 0114 hrs on 4 February 2022, the ship was reported to be afloat.

Before the MUMBAI MAERSK entered Bremerhaven under her own steam, she was towed into the German Bight to test her two main engines.

The diving inspection required for maintenance of class, including all class surveys, was conducted in the next scheduled port of call, Aarhus (Denmark), due to insufficient water depth in Bremerhaven and poor visibility conditions under water. For this purpose, a provisional voyage permission was granted in Bremerhaven after a survey of all tanks by the classification society, Germany's Ship Safety Division, and the vessel's insurance company. The diving inspection revealed that the accident had only resulted in paint abrasion, and that the ship had not sustained any further damage. Class was therefore reissued.

The investigations by the BSU, dealing with Weser approach coordination, the management of dredging silt and dredging operations in general, as well as an extensive analysis of the navigational manoeuvres before the accident, have been concluded. The BSU is currently in the process of preparing the investigation report.

Because the one-year deadline for publication, set by the European Union and adopted as national law by the Federal Republic of Germany, cannot be met, the public is informed about the status of the investigations into this very serious maritime accident by means of the publication of an interim investigation report.

All investigation reports, safety recommendations as well as other BSU publications are available for download at

[https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Unfallberichte/Unfallberichte\\_node.html](https://www.bsu-bund.de/EN/Publications/Unfallberichte/Unfallberichte_node.html)

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