



Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung

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Date
15.03.2023

PRESS RELEASE No. 03/23

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) hereby announces the publication of the Investigation Report pertaining to the investigation of the very serious marine casualty of the fishing vessel FREYJA on 15 March 2023. The fishing vessel foundered due to a fire southeast of the island of Amrum in the Wadden Sea in the early morning of 18 September 2021. The report is available for download at

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

Very serious marine casualty – fire and foundering of the fishing vessel FREYJA in the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea

On the evening of 17 September 2021, a fire broke out in the engine room on the fishing vessel FREYJA which was manned by two fishermen. At the time of the accident, the fishing vessel anchored in the Wadden Sea southeast of the island of Amrum. The rapid spread of the fire, accompanied by heavy smoke, forced the two fishermen to activate the life raft and abandon the fishing vessel. The crew of a rescue helicopter who happened to be in the vicinity became aware of the accident and the life raft by a flare fired by the fishing vessels master. The two slightly injured ship wrecked fishermen could be rescued quickly and taken to the hospital in Heide.

After the rescue of the two crew members, it very quickly became clear to the operational forces that had been activated in the meantime that further emergency measures were out of the question. The wooden vessel inevitably burned out completely and foundered in the water at about 0245.

The operational forces observed a spreading oil slick at the next day, but it was badly ruptured and had already begun to dissipate in the course of the day. Type and extent of the environmental pollution emanating from the fishing vessel rendered further pollution control dispensable.

Three weeks after the accident, the remnants of the fishing vessel were salvaged with the assistance of a floating crane and transported to Husum on two working ships. There, the Waterways Police and the investigation team of the BSU inspected the fishing vessel.

The fire on board the FREYJA resulted in extensive destruction of the fishing vessel. The foundering of the fishing vessel resulting from the fire rendered it impossible to determine any useful clues as to the cause of the fire or the exact starting point of the fire development during the examination of the wreckage.

Therefore, the BSU investigation focusses on other safety relevant aspects of the ship operation including the survey system relevant for fishing vessels in coastal fisheries and the safe manning of such vessels. In this respect, generalizable findings could be gained.

The investigation report is concluded accordingly with safety recommendations to the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for Commercial Transport, Postal Logistics and Telecommunication (BG Verkehr) – Ship Safety Division – and the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport.

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

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

Ulf Kaspera
Director