



**Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung**  
**Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation**  
Federal Higher Authority subordinated to the Ministry of Transport  
and Digital Infrastructure

**Interim Investigation Report**  
pertaining to the investigation report 71/17

**Very Serious Marine Casualty**

**Collision of fishing vessel JAN MARIA with a fishing  
boat in the Mauritanian EEZ on 21 March 2017**

29 March 2018

Under the terms of § 28 Para. 1 sentence 1 of the law to improve safety of shipping by investigating marine casualties and other incidents (Maritime Safety Investigation Act – SUG) of 16 June 2002 in conjunction with Art. 14 Para. 2 of the directive 2009/18/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2009 establishing the fundamental principles governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector, the Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation publishes an interim report in case an investigation report dealing with very serious or serious accidents cannot be prepared within the term of 12 months.

The German text shall prevail in the interpretation of this interim investigation report.

Issued by:  
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## 1 Factual information

### 1.1 Photo FV JAN MARIA



Figure 1: FV JAN MARIA

### 1.2 Ship particulars FV JAN MARIA

Name of ship:	JAN MARIA
Type of ship:	Fishing vessel
Nationality/Flag:	Germany
Port of registry:	Bremerhaven
IMO number:	8707446
Fisheries code:	BX 791
Call sign:	DFDJ
Owner:	Doggerbank Seefischerei GmbH, Bremerhaven
Year built:	1988
Shipyards:	Schichau Seebeckwerft AG, Bremerhaven
Yard number:	1066
Classification society:	DNV GL
Length overall:	125.53 m
Breadth overall:	18.28 m
Draught (max.):	9.40 m
Engine rating:	6.150 kW
Main engine:	Krupp Mak Maschinenbau GmbH 8 M 35
Speed at the time of the accident:	3 kts
Crew:	47

### 1.3 Voyage particulars FV JAN MARIA

Port of departure:	Ijmuiden (Netherlands)
Port of call:	Nouadhibou (Mauritania)
Type of voyage:	Deep-sea fishery in the Mauritanian EEZ
Draught at time of accident:	n/a
Manning:	47

### 1.4 Marine casualty or incident information

Type of marine casualty or incident:	Very serious marine casualty
Date, time:	21/03/2017 approx. 0113 UTC
Location:	Atlantic Ocean, Mauritanian EEZ
Latitude/Longitude:	approx. $\phi$ 20°25,7 'N $\lambda$ 017°31,0'W
Ship operation and voyage segment:	Preparation of fishing (search for fish)
Consequences (for people, ship, cargo):	Foundering of a fishing boat Death of three crewmembers of the fishing boat



Figure 2: Scene of the accident

## 1.5 Shore authority involvement and emergency response

Agencies involved:	None
Resources used:	Life buoys, rescue boat of JAN MARIA
Actions taken:	SAR-operations by the crew of JAN MARIA, Distress calls on VHF-channel 16
Results achieved:	No reactions whatsoever regarding the distress calls despite the presence of several fishing vessels in the vicinity; rescue of three crewmembers of the fishing boat by the crew of JAN MARIA, three further crewmembers are still missing

## 2 Summary

At about 0113 UTC on 21 March 2017, the German fishing- and processing vessel JAN MARIA ran over the anchor lines of an unlit Mauritanian fishing boat, which was undetectable by radar, in the Mauritanian EEZ while searching for fish. The anchor line of the fishing boat got entangled in the underwater hull of the JAN MARIA. As a consequence, the fishing boat was caught by the JAN MARIA and pulled to her hull.

The fishing boat, which was manned with 6 fishermen, is a so called pirogue that is a simple, open wooden boat (cf. below by way of illustration figure 3). Locals use this type of boat, inter alia, for extended inshore fishing at the Mauritanian coast. Usually they are not equipped with safety appliances, radio sets, radar reflectors and – if at all – are only sparsely lit in the night.

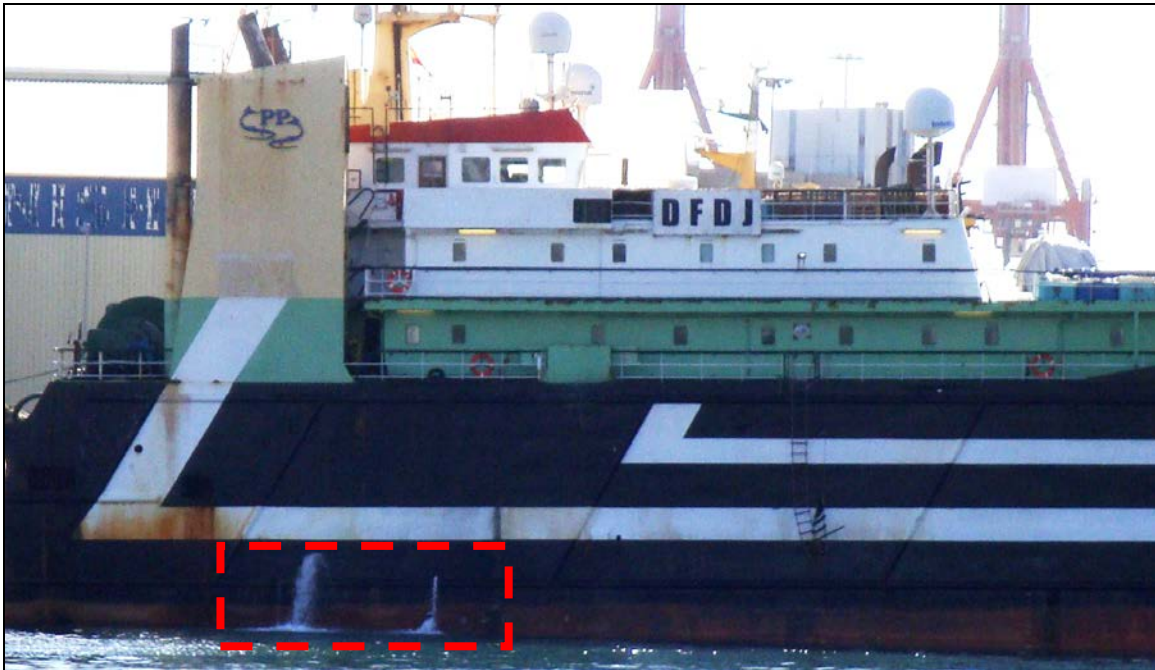


**Figure 3: Fishing boats (pirogues) off the Mauritanian coast<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Source: The exemplary photo was provided by the master of JAN MARIA on the occasion of an inspection onboard by the BSU on 27/03/2017.

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The contact area of both vessels was in the aft area of the JAN MARIA on starboard side of the vessel (cf. figure 4 below).



**Figure 4: Contact area of both fishing vessels**

It is discernible in figure 4, that cooling water openings in the hull of JAN MARIA are located directly above the contact area of both vessels. At the time of the accident, a strong water jet visible in figure 3 and in the close-up view below (figure 4) burst out of these openings.



**Figure 5: Escape of cooling water (in this case on the port side of JAN MARIA).**

While sleeping, the crew of the fishing boat was taken by surprise by the sudden contact with JAN MARIA. The boat which was tied to JAN MARIA by the entangled anchor line was directly struck by the cooling water jet and flooded within a very short period due to the quantity of water continuously flowing in which was very large in relation to the dimension of the boat. The crew was unable to cut the anchor line and move away from the JAN MARIA within the short period available. As a consequence, the pirogue inevitably foundered in the sea within a short time.

The crew onboard the JAN MARIA became aware of the accident by the grinding noises generated through the contact with the pirogue and the subsequent calls for help of the fishermen. In the course of the rescues operations immediately initiated, three fishermen could be recovered alive. The other three crewmembers could not be found although the rescue boat of JAN MARIA was deployed. Distress calls transmitted by the JAN MARIA remained unanswered despite large fishing vessels located in the vicinity.

The vessels owner notified the BSU in a timely manner. After having suspended the search measures, JAN MARIA called at the Mauritanian port of Nouadhibou, located approximately 45 nm from the scene of the accident, in order to take the survivors on shore. After the interviews conducted by the Mauritanian authorities, which continued for several days, had been completed the vessel could leave the port and arrived at the port of Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) on 26 March 2017. On the next day, two investigators of the BSU embarked in order to interview the vessels command and inspect the structural circumstances.

Meanwhile, the investigation of the BSU was largely concluded. However, the BSU is still awaiting the reply to a written inquiry addressed to the EU Commission dealing with information according to which the European Union subsidizes fisheries in Third World countries and in particular pays development aid to Mauritania.

Since the time limit of one year set by the European Union and implemented into national law by the Federal Republic of Germany, to publish an investigation report after a very serious or serious marine casualty has occurred, cannot be satisfied due to the outstanding answer from Brussels, the public is informed about the state of the investigation by means of this Interim Investigation Report.