

Investigation Report 145/04

1. February 2005

very serious marine casualty:

Loss over board of the Skipper of SY ALENA on 20 June 2004, southwest of Gedser

1 Summary of the marine casualty

During the voyage of SY ALENA from Kiel to Gedser, Denmark, the 64-year-old skipper fell over board approx. 9 nm SW of Gedser on 20 June 2004 while taking in the main sail under southwesterly winds of force 3-4 Bft. with a characteristic wave height of 0.5 m,. Rescue attempts by his wife sailing with him were unsuccessful. Following an emergency call that was heard from two Swedish vessels at 22.15 h and forwarded to the MRCC Bremen, the SY ALENA was found by a BGS (German Federal Border Guard) vessel at 23:49 h. The yacht was taken to Gedser escorted by a BGS boat, where the wife was passed on to a hospital in Nykøbing with medical assistance. The search with three BGS vessels, two Danish and German emergency rescue cruisers, two helicopters of the BGS and the German Navy, two helicopters of the Danish Navy, a vessel of the Danish Navy and two Danish survey vessels remained unsuccessful and was discontinued the next morning. On 4 August 2004 the corpse of the skipper was found at Bagenkop, southwest of Langeland.

2 Safety recommendation(s)

All operators and skippers of leisure craft must ensure that depending on the area sailed (high seas, coastal waters, protected waters) their boat is of such a nature that the risk of falling over board is reduced as far as possible and re-entry is facilitated. Even experienced leisure craft skippers should constantly review their readiness for risks. The structural requirements of the Directives 94/25/EC and 2003/44/EC of the European Parliament and the Council, the CE-Guidelines for Leisure Craft and the Safety Guidelines of the Cruiser Department of the German Sailing Association (Deutscher Seglerverband e.V.) as well as the brochure "Safety at sea and in coastal areas" (Sicherheit im See- und Küstenbereich) of the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) should be observed. As regards the "Person over board" manoeuvres, reference is made to the training in sailing schools, regular practical exercises and the relevant technical literature. The BSU also refers to its Investigation Reports 338/03 SY LISA and 122/04 SY RENI.