

## **Investigation Report 015/09**

15 February 2010

Very Serious Marine Casualty

Capsize of the SY TAUBE with six fatalities off the Atlantic coast of Morocco on 20 January 2009

### **1 Summary of the marine casualty**

On the afternoon of 20 January 2009, the German sailing yacht TAUBE sank while sailing from Larache, Morocco, when entering the Sebou River on the Moroccan Atlantic coast. The international crew consisted of seven young people aged 17 to 28 years. The TAUBE capsized while attempting to head for the port of Mehdia on the Sebou in heavy swell. Severely damaged, she drifted keel uppermost and sank shortly afterwards. Of the seven crew members, only one German female sailor managed to save herself by swimming ashore.

The rescue services summoned by shore-based witnesses were unable to reach the scene of the accident due to the heavy swell. All search measures were unsuccessful.

Eight days after the accident, the body of the Danish female co-sailor was found and three days after that the body of the Slovenian female co-sailor. The other four crew members, three German males and an Austrian female, were not found. The wreck of the TAUBE had also not been located as of completion of the marine casualty investigation.

### **2 Safety Recommendation(s)**

The following safety recommendations shall not create a presumption of blame or liability, neither by form, number nor order.

#### **2.1 Owners and skippers of sea-going pleasure craft**

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that owners and skippers of sea-going pleasure craft observe the relevant carriage requirements and rules of conduct. The seaworthiness of the pleasure craft must be verified before every sailing trip and careful voyage planning carried out. That includes examining whether the equipment carried is appropriate for the planned sailing trip. Current information on the area and weather at sea must – if available – be obtained from the local harbour master's office before setting sail. Furthermore, the crew must be given a safety briefing before setting sail.

#### **2.2 Operating associations of pleasure craft**

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that operating associations of pleasure craft maintain regular contact with their boats to the extent possible using common means of communication so that in the event of an emergency it is possible to provide

information as to the vessel's approximate position and the composition of the crew on board to rescue services and relatives.

### **2.3 Co-sailors and passengers**

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that co-sailors and passengers on pleasure craft familiarise themselves with the safety precautions on board before setting sail. If this information is not volunteered by the skipper, it is recommended to actively inquire thereafter.

### **2.4 Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs**

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that, to improve the comprehensibility of safety-related equipment requirements for pleasure craft, the BMVBS work towards making the regulatory documentation comprehensible for everyone by using concise formulations.