BSU
Bundesstelle für Seeunfalluntersuchung
Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation

Investigation Report 276/14

Date: 4 September 2015
Collision in the Kiel Firth at Friedrichsort between the MV FRANCISCA and MV RMS BREMEN on 5 September 2014

1 Summary

At 0211 on 5 September 2014, the outbound RMS BREMEN, flying the flag of Cyprus, collided with the inbound FRANCISCA, flying the flag of Antigua & Barbuda, level with the Friedrichsort beacon in Kiel Firth. The exact scene of the collision remains unclear. The AIS recordings of the vessel traffic service indicate that the two vessels clearly passed one another. An electronic chart was on board both vessels. Recordings of them also indicate that the vessels passed each other.

2 Safety recommendations

2.1 Waterways and Shipping Authority (WSA) Lübeck

The BSU recommends that the WSA save recorded audio, video, radar and AIS data, handwritten records, and other relevant data of their traffic safety systems in the event of a marine casualty for the purposes of the Maritime Safety Investigation Act (SUG) for ten years in a public format that enables reproducibility in a marine casualty investigation using commercially available software.

2.2 Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)

The BSU recommends that the BSH, as publisher of official navigational bulletins, make available a circulation model of the Kiel Firth with a resolution of up to 100 m and at least 20 m for the Friedrichsdorfer Narrow and the area of the Kiel Canal on the Internet and revise the information in its sailing directions for this area.

2.3 Owners, operators, and ship's commands of the FRANCISCA and RMS BREMEN

The BSU recommends that in respect of manning levels, owners and operators take technical measures to facilitate work for their watch keepers on the bridge and man ships sufficiently for the requirements of the area of operation and the navigational equipment on the bridge. These include the verification of global navigation satellite system (GNSS) positions by such appropriate means as the installation of DGPS receivers, the installation of a second different GNSS like GLONASS, and the superimposition of AIS with radar targets.

The BSU recommends that officers in charge of the navigational watch on the bridge continuously verify the position of the ship in coastal waters with all available means using visual bearings and two independent systems, i.e. GNSS, radar units, and involve the lookout at night time, in particular.

The BSU recommends that the master of the FRANCISCA review the hours of work and rest of his crew in accordance with the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and, if a shortage of manpower is foreseeable, inform the owner and ensure the situation is remedied.