

Investigation Report No. 258/18

Date: 2 June 2019

Very serious marine casualty

**Capsize of survey boat GEO PROFILER in the Wadden Sea
off Büsum on 17 July 2018**

1 Summary

On 17 July 2018, the 7 m-long survey boat GEO PROFILER sailed into turbulent waters in the Wadden Sea off Büsum. This led to the boat capsizing through the transverse axis and stern at about 1940 when – according to the crew – a wave of some 2 m in height struck the stern. The cause of this was a sudden increase in wind force from 4 Bft to 7 Bft. Since the water had been receding for about 2.5 hours at this point, a steep sea quickly developed. One outboard engine failed to begin with. It was not possible to steer the boat in a controlled manner with only one engine and she broached, resulting in her taking on even more water. The second engine and on-board electronics then also failed. This made it impossible to send an emergency call and only one lifejacket and a lifebuoy could be donned. Rescue cruiser THEODOR STORM sighted and rescued the two crewmembers on Tertius sand at about 1300 on the following day during a major rescue operation involving several agencies. The crewmembers had drifted there shortly beforehand in a weakened state. The water temperature stood at 20°.

2 Safety Recommendations

The following safety recommendations do not attribute a presumption of blame or liability in respect of type, number or sequence.

2.1 Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the BMVI amend the SchSV and the SchBesV such that commercial workboats of less than 8 m in length are also covered. The term near-coastal voyage should be defined further in the See-BV with regard to national voyages, taking into account regulation II/3 of the Annex to the STCW Convention, to allow certificates of proficiency for the manning of workboats and other small vessels. At the same time, the qualifications of existing skippers should be taken into account.

2.2 German Social Accident Insurance Institution for Commercial Transport, Postal Logistics and Telecommunication (BG Verkehr)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the Ship Safety Division (BG Verkehr) draw up regulations for commercially used workboats of less than 8 m in length, so that ship safety and minimum safety manning certificates can be issued for such vessels.

2.3 Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the BSH liaise with the Ständigen Arbeitsgemeinschaft für das Seefahrtbildungswesen der Bundesländer [permanent working group for maritime education of the federal states] and develop a training pathway specifically for the skippers of small vessels (NSF) operating on national voyages, as well as standards for the recognition of existing skippers who do not hold a nautical certificate of proficiency.

2.4 Owner and operator of the GEO PROFILER

2.4.1 The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the owner or the operator of its small commercial vessels train crews operating in near-coastal waters for the official SKS at minimum until official safety relevant requirements must be complied with and official certificates are issued by the Ship Safety Division (BG Verkehr).

2.4.2 The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the owner or operator obtain radio operating certificates for the use of their radiotelephone equipment on board.

2.4.3 The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the owner or operator obtain a declaration of conformity from the shipyard in accordance with the certified module Aa, in which a stability calculation is required, for the Coenenboat CKB700 type of boat.