

Investigation Report No. 496/15

Date: 29.11.2019

Serious marine casualty

Fire in the cargo hold of the multipurpose ship VENTURA off the canal locks at Kiel-Holtenau on 18 December 2015

1 Summary

The Antigua and Barbuda-flagged multipurpose ship VENTURA was sailing from Liepaja in Latvia to Casablanca in Morocco on 18 December 2015. The VENTURA was carrying almost 4,811 mt of sugar beet pulp with no added molasses. She passed Kiel lighthouse at 1100. Smoke was noticed on board at about 1200 and the fire alarm then triggered. The regional vessel traffic service (VTS) centre was notified and it assigned the VENTURA an emergency mooring off Vossbrook on the Kiel Firth.

Kiel Fire Service deployed a firefighting unit (FFU) on board to investigate. The Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME) was notified of the ship fire promptly by Waterway Police (WSP) Kiel and formally took charge of coordinating the incident in the early evening. The VENTURA made fast in Kiel Ostuferhafen port at 2100. Part of the cargo was subsequently unloaded onto the pier using a dredger belonging to the port and extinguished there by the Kiel Fire Service. Both the VENTURA's cargo hold and cargo were damaged by the accident. Neither people nor the marine environment were affected.

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 Strahlmann (the owner)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the owner, Erwin Strahlmann GmbH & Co. KG, advise the masters and chief officers in its employ of the need to comply with the regulations laid down in the IMSBC Code.

2.2 Strahlmann (the owner)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the owner, Erwin Strahlmann GmbH & Co. KG, advise its ship's command to the effect that if solid bulk cargo is loaded from open troughs or the like, which are not protected ashore from any type of precipitation, new samples must be taken in respect of the moisture content and that parts of the cargo must be excluded from loading if required limit values are not met.

2.3 Strahlmann (the owner)

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the owner, Erwin Strahlmann GmbH & Co. KG, advise its ship's command that the niches in which cargo hold

lights are located should be sealed when solid bulk cargo is loaded above them so that it cannot pass through their protective grating and come into direct contact with the lights. This would rule out the possibility of a direct or indirect source of ignition originating from cargo hold lights that were not switched off or defective.