

Investigation Report No. 12/16

Date: 25.03.20

Serious marine casualty

Collision between the Rendsburg transporter bridge and freighter EVERT PRAHM with subsequent grounding of the EVERT PRAHM on 8 January 2016

1 Summary

The German-flagged coaster EVERT PRAHM transited the Kiel Canal westbound on 8 January 2016 during her voyage from Liepaja in Latvia to Husum in Germany. The bridge was manned by the chief officer and a cadet. A canal pilot was also on the bridge. A 2-3 Bft south-easterly wind which was slowly turning to the south-west blew in the early hours of the morning. *Inter alia*, snow and black ice warnings had been issued for the Rendsburg-Eckernförde area. There was snow and freezing rain during the night. Wind forces of 4-5 Bft with gusts of 6-7 Bft were measured at Rendsburg after 0600¹. The air temperature stood at about 3 °C and there was light rain.

The EVERT PRAHM approached the railway bridge at Rendsburg in darkness at 0635. Her speed over ground (SOG) was about 8.8 kts. The transporter bridge suspended below the railway bridge was on the northern bank of the Kiel Canal at the time. In addition to the operator, there was also a passenger on the transporter bridge. The EVERT PRAHM kept to the middle of the fairway and was just short of the railway bridge when the transporter bridge set off toward the southern bank. Despite the EVERT PRAHM executing a full astern manoeuvre combined with hard to port, it was not possible to prevent the collision. The transporter bridge struck amidships against the hatch, was briefly snagged, rotated, and then released again. It then struck the starboard wing before scraping over the wheelhouse, dragging the antenna, radar and stern mast with it in the process. The EVERT PRAHM sailed gently onto the southern embankment at canal kilometre 62.5. She freed herself unassisted by means of a stern manoeuvre. She then sailed into the Kreishafen of Rendsburg and made fast there at 0715.

As a result of the accident the Kiel Canal and the railway bridge at Rendsburg were closed to maritime traffic and to rail traffic respectively.

The transporter bridge was severely damaged due to the collision and partially torn out of the rail track. It was stuck over the middle of the Kiel Canal. The operator was seriously injured due to the collision. The only passenger on the transporter bridge was also injured. With the assistance of the canal ferry MEMEL, both people could be rescued from the transporter bridge and taken to hospital. The emergency responders managed to re-engage the transporter bridge and move it to the southern side of the canal by about midday.

¹ All times shown in this report are local = UTC+1.

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 Owner of the EVERT PRAHM

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that efforts be made to ensure that the EVERT PRAHM's bridge is always manned in accordance with the requirements of the STCW Code, especially with regard to the posting of a lookout.

2.2 Owner of the EVERT PRAHM

The Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation recommends that the crew of the EVERT PRAHM be made aware of the fact that in dangerous situations the possibility of a warning by means of a tyfon signal should be made use of.