

Press release no. 8

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Extensive preparations, authorisations of passage given

MSC FLAMINIA allowed to start passage to Germany

Today from 19 hrs pm (German time) on, the towing train with the MSC FLAMINIA its allowed to start its way to Germany. The salvage company has received the authorisations from Germany and the involved coastal states of the Channel to pass the territorial waters of England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands and to come into German territorial waters. The towing trip is expected to take five days. The formal admission/authorisation is given to the salvage company by the German "Berufsgenossenschaft for Transport and Traffic" as representative for the flag state Germany.

Extensive preparations had to be carried out, before the admission could be given. There is an up-to-date survey by Germanischer Lloyd, attesting the stability and floatability of the MSC FLAMINIA as well as the solidity of the hull.

Last Wednesday, the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies Germany (CCME) (German: Havariekommando) had sent out a Fact-Finding Team aboard the damaged ship, consisting of a fire-fighting expert, a chemist and salvage expert. The team stood in close contact to the British authorities and to the exploration team from England, France and the Netherlands. Both teams attested the stability of the ship. All fires had been extinguished, neither were there any flames arising from hot spots. The samples of fire water and air as well as swipe samples are currently analysed by certified laboratories.

Also, the analysis of the thermal pictures taken on the second flight of the sensor aircraft shows that the heat development on the ship, especially in hold 3, has clearly decreased.

The steering gear of the ship has been reset, an energy supply was built. The superstructural parts are sound and usable, also the auxiliary diesel, several winches are or can be made ready for operation.

Four containers were identified on board the MSC FLAMINIA; that might eventually go overboard under adverse conditions. These containers are equipped with GPS-senders so that they could be located and salvaged without problems.

The experts from TUIS (transport, accident, information and assistance system of the chemical industry) and the specialists from the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (German: Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung) have made a risk assessment for the containers with dangerous goods on board. Basis for this assessment was the register of dangerous goods on board that is on hand at CCME. This register does not show any abnormality compared to usually in international container traffic transported goods.

Neither is there any indication for dangerous goods being declared wrongly with intention.

Meanwhile the CCME and TUIS have compiled information about all the listed dangerous goods that are necessary for planning the salvage and further handling of the containers without risk for human and environment. The dangers and risks resulting from the different dangerous goods determine decisively the overall salvage concept of the ship and the further handling of the cargo. Special challenges result from the huge amount of water for fire-fighting which is contaminated with residue of fire and hazardous goods. The Fact Finding Team had taken samples of this water in the cargo the day before yesterday. These samples are currently analysed chemically. Depending on the results of this analysis are the precautionary measures how the water for fire-fighting has to be salvaged and disposed.

During the entire course of the passage there are engineers of the shipping company and staff members of the salvage company onboard the ship. Amongst other things they ensure a fire watch and the operational readiness of the fire extinguishing device on board the MSC FLAMINIA at any time.

In agreement with the involved coastal states, the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, the CCME, the Ship Safety Division, the Germanischer Lloyd, the shipping company and the salvage company a passage plan has been created that considers all aspects of safety and security for human, environment, ship and cargo.

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