

Press release no. 13

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Operation MSC FLAMINIA finished

Central Command for Maritime Emergencies handed over the direction of the entire operation

This morning at 10.00 am the Central Command for Maritime Emergencies (CCME, German: Havariekommando) has declared the direction of the entire operation in the case MSC FLAMINIA as terminated.

As the "hot containers" were unloaded, there is to deal with regular unloading and disposal works now that do not need to be coordinated by the CCME anymore.

On 20 August 2012 the CCME had been assigned to plan the return of the MSC FLAMINIA into German territorial waters. In the past twelve weeks, the casualty staff directed the operation of 20 companies and 30 authorities. Until 9 September 2012 the focus of the operation was on determining an adequate place of refuge, organising the passage of the towing train with the MSC FLAMINIA with no risk for human and environment and on arranging the necessary preparations in the port of refuge in Wilhelmshaven.

After the MSC FLAMINIA had berthed in Wilhelmshaven, the close cooperation of the CCME with the authorities and the companies on site began. The conditions on board were continuously monitored by taking air, swipe and water samples as well as by temperature measuring. Potential sources of danger such as hot spots were monitored and eliminated. The superstructures were cleaned so that a crew could go on board again. On 28 September 2012 the unloading of 80 intact containers from the quarter deck started. The unloading and disposal works were lead by CCME that was in charge of the entire operation. For this purpose, briefings were held regularly with the authorities, institutions and specialised companies involved in the operation.

On 14 July 2012, a fire broke out in hold 4 of the container vessel MSC FLAMINIA, flying the German flag, which was at that time on its voyage from Charleston (USA) to Antwerp (Belgium) carrying a total of 25 people (23 crew members and 2 passengers). In the course of the attempt to extinguish the fire, a violent explosion occurred for reasons yet unknown. Since the attempts to extinguish the fire were not successful, the ship's management called the emergency services and left the ship together with the passengers and crew shortly afterwards. The salvage company that was assigned by the shipping company did not succeed in finding an adequate place of refuge for the damaged vessel.

On 17 August 2012, the Federal Republic of Germany had taken its responsibility as the flag state and promised the owner and the salvage company in charge to permit the entry of the towing train into German territorial waters in order to call on a place of refuge there.

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