



SDN Schutzgemeinschaft
Deutsche Nordseeküste e.V.

Press release

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German North Sea, 02.02.2025

Are offshore wind farms attracting accident victims? Schutzgemeinschaft Deutsche Nordseeküste e.V. (SDN) is concerned about road safety on the North Sea

German North Sea. 'If we had thought up such a scenario out of concern for the safety of the North Sea as a habitat, we would probably have been labelled as fantasists,' assumes SDN Chairman Gerd-Christian Wagner. However, situations that could have the worst possible consequences for the marine environment could occur again and again, not only due to increasingly narrow shipping routes in the North Sea, but also as a result of direct human action. 'The accident of the multipurpose freighter PETRA L on 24 April 2023 with the wind turbine GOW R04 in the Gode Wind 1 offshore wind farm near Juist unfortunately only confirms such fears.' The current investigation report by the Federal Bureau of Maritime Casualty Investigation (BSU) shows several reasons why such a difficult-to-imagine situation could have happened - regardless of the size of the ship or cargo.

Shortly before handing over the watch to the master, the chief officer of the PETRA L changed the ship's course to the northern edge of the traffic separation scheme (VtG) in the direction of the wind farm. The master, who was then alone on the bridge, left the course unchanged, probably took the wrong tablet, fell asleep immediately and only woke up when he collided with the wind turbine. This resulted in water ingress in the bow area, but fortunately did not injure anyone. The captain reacted quickly and turned his ship, which was badly damaged on the starboard side, in the direction of VtG in order to sail to Emden. The alternately responsible employees of the Wilhelmshaven, Jade and Emden traffic centres and the wind farm operator's monitoring centre were not informed of this. Until finally the master of the GUSTAV MEYER noticed the damage to the PETRA L inside the Emden harbour lock and reported it immediately.

'We have to bear in mind that the accident involving the 100,000 tonne oil tanker EVENTIN, which was on its way to Egypt near Rügen a few days ago, could have happened just over a day later in the middle of the North Sea,' Wagner adds. And this is particularly true in view of the amount of space taken up by the planned offshore wind farms, which would extremely restrict the traffic space for ships of all kinds. It is therefore important to take a holistic view of these increasing burdens and to look for real solutions that can at least reduce this growing hazard potential.

'The problem is simple,' the SDN chairman continues, 'a single serious shipwreck can be enough to destroy the North Sea with its Wadden Sea and estuaries as a habitat for humans and animals.' For example, at least one emergency tug with a minimum bollard pull of 130 tonnes and a one-hour response time must be available at every conceivable point of accident as a risk mitigation measure, for which the responsible authorities have the authority to issue instructions and the right of access if necessary. In addition, seamless and fail-safe maritime surveillance must be guaranteed for the entire southern North Sea, supported by technical solutions that also support the human factor against its weaknesses. 'Our motto must be to truly learn from past mistakes and take preventative

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action from now on. Because the North Sea habitat must not be allowed to degenerate into a poorly developed industrial area.'

With friendly request for publication,

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Additional information 1:

Data dry multipurpose freighter PETRA L:

Length overall: 73.66 m, width a.s.l.: 11.5 m, maximum draught: 4.2 m, gross tonnage: 1162, deadweight: 1685 t, engine power: 750 kW, speed: 10.5 kn, year of construction: 1984, crew: 7, pilot on board: No

BSU investigation report no. 192/23 dated 30 January 2025:

<https://www.bsu-bund.de/DE/Aktuelles/neueVeroeffentlichungen>

Additional information 2:

The Schutzgemeinschaft Deutsche Nordseeküste e.V. (SDN)

is a supra-regional and non-profit environmental protection umbrella organisation that was founded in 1973 in response to extensive pollution of the North Sea. Since then, the conservation organisation has been committed to the protection of the North Sea as a living, economic and natural environment on a professional and cross-party basis. It serves around 200 municipalities, districts, nature conservation organisations, institutes, associations and individual members as a mouthpiece for the public as well as the ministerial administrations and parliaments of the federal government and the four North Sea coastal states. The common goal is to protect the unique features and beauty of the North Sea, the Wadden Sea and the neighbouring coastline from harmful human intervention and to find solutions to the problems of North Sea protection.

Some of the measures in recent decades in which the SDN has represented the interests of the coast as a lobby organisation and which are now considered to have been largely dealt with are the dumping of dilute acid, waste and sewage sludge, the emergency towing concept, antifouling, air monitoring, ballast water, tank cleaning, MARPOL I to IV and the acquisition of modern emergency tugs for the North Sea and Baltic Sea, as well as the Lower Elbe at present. www.sdn-web.de