



SAFETY RECOMMENDATION No: 62/2013

Text of Safety Recommendation:

Supplement existing procedures for pilot embarkation cases when pilot launches encounter difficulties for proceeding to the fixed pilot embarkation position.

No of Safety Investigation Report:

09/2013: Impact of MSC Magnifica on Piraeus Port entrance breakwater.

(See the full Report [here.](#))

Safety Recommendation addressed to:

Piraeus Pilot Authority

Date of publication:

05/08/2015

Comments-Remarks:

INFORMATION OF ACCIDENT

Type of vessel: Passenger cruise vessel
Year of built: 2010

Impact of MSC Magnifica on Piraeus Port entrance breakwater

Course of events

A cruise ship was underway in Piraeus Traffic Separation Scheme, approaching Piraeus Port being on a scheduled round cruise at Mediterranean Sea.

According to the weather bulletin issued by the National Meteorological Service prevailing winds for the Saronic Gulf were forecasted to be South force 4- 5 bfrs to Southwest force 5 bfrs.

However, the aforementioned weather bulletin included a general notice, drawing the attention to Mariners that wind gusts can be 40% stronger than those given in the bulletin and max wave height up to twice the significant.

Actual weather conditions were reported to be moderate; prevailing winds in the Saronic Gulf were South-southeastern force 5 to 6 bfrs and sea state was moderate with swell. It was also reported that weather was unstable with squalls, showers and gusts from 30-35 knots.

The pilot had requested form the Master to proceed further from the embarkation position 1.5 nm off the port, as the pilot boat was encountering difficulties for approaching due the swelling sea South-southeast directed.

By the time the pilot entered the bridge the cruise ship was less than 200 m for Piraeus Port entrance under 5.7 knots whilst the wind was gusting at 39.1 knots southeast directed. The Master was under maneuvering on an effort to avoid the imminent danger of impacting on the port breakwater's head as the cruise ship was drifting rapidly to port.

At approximately two minutes after pilot's embarkation the port bow of the cruise ship impacted on the head of the breakwater and the concrete round-hut red light, located on it, was detached and collapsed into the sea.

The cruise ship sustained a crack at the point of impact while her port underwater shell plating close to the waterline sustained deformations and intends lengthwise due the contact with the breakwater under the sea level. Her port stern quarter sustained an indent caused by port tug stem post during maneuvering to assist her.

Following, the cruise ship continued with the berthing operation that was completed at 0700. No injuries to passengers or crew were reported as well as no pollution.

Repairs were carried out while in berth by a marine service company and following her Class inspection, she departed from the port at morning hours on the next day of her arrival and continued her planned cruise voyage.



Figure 1: MSC Magnifica.

Extent of damage

1. structural damages :
 - crack on port bow section above the waterline
 - deformation and intends and scratches on port side shell plating lengthwise under the waterline
 - indent at port aft quarter close to stern post
2. Piraeus' port entrance breakwater
 - Port entrance breakwater's head damaged
 - concrete round-hut red light detached and collapsed into the sea

Related causes

The pilot launch did not approach MSC Magnifica at the Pilot boarding position due to the prevailing weather conditions.

Lessons to be learned

It is advisable that the rearrangement of the pilot embarkation positions, if required, should be predefined under consultation with Masters that are vested with the authority to take actions deemed necessary to preserve the safety and integrity of the vessels under their command and the persons boarded.



Figure 2: *The damaged head of the breakwater.*



Figure 3: *The damaged port bow section of MSC Magnifica*