



SAFETY RECOMMENDATION No: 64/2014

Text of Safety Recommendation:

Take preventive measures in consultation with the vessel's class and relative authority issuing the PSSC in order to ensure that in case the Return Chamber overflows, the fuel will not be led within the air extractor pipes that exist within the funnel ducts of the vessel, as it happened in the examined case. Additionally to check preventively all other tanks that contain fuel and have air extractor pipes that end up within the funnel ducts or in areas which according to the opinion of the Administration are not considered safe and act accordingly.

No of Safety Investigation Report:

10/2014: Fire on board RoPax IERAPETRA L

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

Safety Recommendation addressed to:

The Owners / Managers of the ship

Date of publication:

22/11/2019

Comments-Remarks:

INFORMATION OF ACCIDENT

Type of vessel: RoPax

Year of built: 1975

Fire on board RoPax IERAPETRA L

On 29 November 2014 at approximately 18:00, Ro-Pax "IERAPETRA L" sailed from Brindisi port with a crew of 23. The vessel departed without passengers and cargo on board, after she had completed her round voyages between the port of Brindisi (Italia) and Durres (Albania), for a single voyage to Igoumenitsa, where she was scheduled to undergo her annual maintenance.

At approximately 21:01, while the vessel was en route 27nm South East of Brindisi, a fire was detected in the port exhaust funnel. The fire was spotted by the officer on the watch in the bridge and it was described as a full flame torch coming out of the funnel with the fire flame extended to the adjacent lounge area inside the ship. At the same time the fire detection system was activated, indicating fire at the accommodation area, followed by the activation of the sprinkler system. The OOW immediately alerted the crew through the public address system and master was called upon the bridge.

The crew took immediate action by stopping both main engines and ventilation fans, air conditioning units, as well as auxiliary diesel generator engines No 2 and 3 because they

were located at the port side area of the engine room where the fire broke out. They also closed fire dampers, side scuttles, fire doors and cut the power supply to the electrical circuits of the affected area.

While dealing with a leak in the discharge pipe of the main fire pump, the designated crew members were summoned and started fighting the fire and cooling adjacent places, using all available means, while the starboard side life-saving equipment was prepared for launching, if needed.

The Master reported the situation to the Italian authorities as well as to Piraeus Joint Search and Rescue Coordination Center and the vessel's managing company. The Bari Coastguard Authority took over the coordination of the incident establishing contact with the vessel for any assistance that may be needed and deploying available means.

At approximately 22:15 the fire was under control and a few minutes later it was reported that it was fully extinguished. IERAPETRA L returned back to the port of Brindisi, by her own means using the starboard main engine which was not affected by the fire. She arrived at Brindisi at approximately 05:30 in the morning of the following day where she was inspected by the Italian Authorities and her Class.

The fire caused extended damages to the inner side of the port side funnel and also to the adjacent to the port side funnels accommodation areas on decks No 7 and 8. No pollution and no injuries were reported.



Investigation identified that the main reasons contributing to the fire were related to the visual check and inspection, to make sure that all valves of the port main engine fuel oil return system were set and operated correctly, prior to the vessel's departure for Igoumenitsa, following the maintenance carried out. In particular the most possible cause for the fire breakout is the valve of the port side "return chamber", which was a small tank for the accumulation of fuel returns from the main engine's fuel supply system towards the recirculation to the fuel supply system, which had been damaged and found at closed position and this caused the fuel to overflow the tank and be led by its air extractor pipe

towards the interior of the port funnel duct, where it came in contact with hot surfaces of the main exhaust gas pipe.

Safety recommendations focused on the necessity for visual inspections and crosschecks following works carried out during maintenance (especially for setting the valves of the fuel supply systems), and the establishment of a safety arrangement like a level detector alarm, for dealing with possible overflow of all tanks that contain fuel and have air extractor pipes that end up within the funnel ducts of the vessel.