



**Marine casualty
Safety Investigation**

**Law 4033/2011 as amended and
applies**

(summary extract of art. 1.b, 4.1.a
& 4.1.b)

The conduct of Safety Investigations into marine casualties or incidents is independent from criminal, discipline, administrative or civil proceedings whose purpose is to apportion blame or determine liability. The sole objective of the conduct of a safety investigation is to ascertain the circumstances that caused the marine accident or incident through analysis, to draw useful conclusions and lessons learned that may lead, if necessary, to safety recommendations or proposals addressed to parties or stakeholders involved in order to take remedial actions, aiming to prevent or avoid future marine accidents.

Points of Interest

- This Interim Report has been prepared by virtue of art. 16.2 Law 4033/2011, as applies (art. 14.2 Directive 2009/18/EC) as the full investigation report will not be published within 12 months of the marine accident date.
- The Interim Report has been published for the sole purposes of the safety investigation process with no litigation in mind and should be inadmissible to any judicial or other proceedings (administrative, disciplinary, criminal or civil) whose purpose is to attribute or apportion blame or liability.
- The Interim Report only aims to present a concise summary of the events occurred on the 28th of August 2018 that led to a serious marine accident.
- The Interim Report does not constitute legal advice in any way and should not be construed as such.

Serious marine casualty

August 2019

HBMCI conducts the safety investigation of issued marine casualty as the Lead Investigating State. The content of this Interim Report is based on current available information and data collected and analyzed during the safety investigation process into captioned marine casualty. The completion of the procedure as defined in relevant legislation may reveal or identify new information, data or evidence and consequently cause changes or amendments in data provided by this Interim Report. All times quoted are local times unless otherwise stated.

«ROPAX EL. VENIZELOS»

The 38261 of gross tonnage ROPAX «EL. VENIZELOS», under Greek Flag, was built in 1992 in Poland. During the time of the marine casualty the vessel was operating on round trip voyages from Piraeus to Chania, Kriti Island. On August 28th, 2018, at about 23:41, during a scheduled itinerary from Piraeus to Chania Port, a fire broke out at the fore port section of the garage deck No3, while she was sailing at the sea area approximately 10 nm east of the Island of Hydra.

Narrative

On the day of the accident, «EL. VENIZELOS» had departed from Piraeus port at approximately 22:00, carrying 875 passengers, 81 trucks (including semi trailers), 155 cars, 3 buses, 34 motorcycles and she was manned with 140 crew members. At 23:41 while she was en route, approximately 10 nm east of Hydra, in position: Long: 37° 24'9" N and Lat: 023° 46'6" E, a fire broke out in the garage deck No.3.

The vessel's voyage was cut short and she headed back to Piraeus port using her own engines, however escorted by patrol boats of the Hellenic Coast Guard, tugboats, other ROPAX vessels, as well as a Navy Frigate. On August 29th, 2018 at around 03:55, «EL. VENIZELOS» arrived at Piraeus port and immediately after she was safely berthed, the passengers' emergency evacuation was initiated. At approximately 06:40 passengers' emergency evacuation was safely completed, under the coordination of her crew along with the assistance of the Hellenic Coast Guard and Fire Department personnel, as well as Piraeus Port Authority employees.

The fire situation inside ROPAX «EL. VENIZELOS» garage deck No.3, was initially combated by her crew. More specifically actions were taken to close the fire dampers and to shut down the ventilation system of the space affected; to activate the permanent fire extinguishing sprinkler system (DRENCHER) on deck spaces No.3 and No5.

Additionally the power supply to garage decks No.3 and No.5 was shut down and the crew was cooling down the adjacent spaces by spraying water with the fire hoses in order to prevent the fire from spreading and mainly targeting on the corridors of the adjacent accommodation spaces on deck No. 5 as well as the on the outer shell plating of the superstructure's fore section. Aforementioned action resulted to be effective as the fire was contained within garage deck No.3.

Following the arrival of «EL. VENIZELOS» at Piraeus port, Fire Brigade units and personnel joined the fire fighting operation with two fire fighting boats and several fire trucks.

The fire extinguishing operation lasted for five (05) days and was completed in the evening of September 2nd, 2018.

The removal of trucks and cars commenced at approximately 18:00 on August 29th, 2018 and was completed at approximately 01:45 on September 3rd, 2018.

The fire extinguishing operation as well as the trucks removal undertaking from «EL. VENIZELOS» garage spaces lasted for a long time, mainly due to the fact that the extremely high thermal load developed in the main garage area of Deck No.3 (approximately 500°C) created hazardous and extremely fuzzy atmosphere for the fire fighting personnel involved as well as due to the restricted access in the loaded garage spaces. More specifically the trucks and vehicles had been stowed at a close distance between them causing difficulties on firemen access into the garage, while the release of dense smoke due to the various cargo being carried by the trucks (flammable materials, plastics, wood products etc.) that were fuelling the fire, was periodically covering the garage space with heavy smoke that was creating extremely reduced visibility.

The continuous operation of the Drencher fire-extinguishing system, mainly on Deck No.3, resulted in the concentration of seawater at the port side of the garage spaces causing a list to port of approximately 4° to 5°. In order to counteract PORAX list to port, port tugs were deployed to push her against the dock in order to secure her mooring position, while in parallel following discussions with the Fire Brigade on scene commander, it was decided to open draining holes on the port shell plating of the garage in order to drain the remaining sea water and restore her stability.

Moreover, both Piraeus Coast Guard Authority and Port Authority were instructed to launch the emergency contingency plan for preventing possible pollution. Consequently antipollution containment floating boom was deployed around the ship.

On September 4th the ship sailed under towage from Piraeus main port headed to Perama shipyard to repair her damages.

Origin of the fire

An inspection was carried out at the fore port area of garage deck No. 3, where the fire was initially spotted and in particular on the electrical installation and equipment of the vessels that was supplying the refrigerated trucks with electrical power (electrical panels, sockets, electrical fuses) as well as in specific refrigerated trucks located at that area. According to data collected so far, the investigation analyses is focusing on a short-circuit that occurred on a refrigerator truck's cooling equipment, that was in operation during the voyage, as it was supplied with electrical power through the ship's electrical power supply system. Due to the short-circuit and the generated spark the fire broke out and was rapidly expanded to the near by parked refrigerator trucks and general cargo tracks, namely due to the fact that the parking distance between them was limited; the tractors' covers and refrigerator tractors were not fire retardant or resistant; general cargo (wood products, plastic goods, etc.) was fueling the fire.

The fire was not extended to other garage spaces or compartments of the ROPAX vessel due to the immediate emergency containment actions; continuous operation of the Drencher system; the efficient cooling of the adjacent areas; and the Fire Service operational involvement.

Investigation

An analysis of the gathered evidence will be carried out, in order to determine the conditions and the contributing factors that led to the examined serious marine casualty and propose relevant safety recommendations.

Final safety Investigation Report

When the draft safety investigation report will be prepared it will be circulated to involved and interested parties for consultation.



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FACTUAL INFORMATION

SHIPS PARTICULARS

Name	EL. VENIZELOS
Flag	GREECE
Registry	CHANIA 20
Ship's type	ROPAX
IMO	7907673
Call sign	SWWZ
LOA (m)	175,48
Breath (m)	28,5
Year of built	1992
Shipyard	GDYNIA
Construction	Steel
Gross Tonnage	38261
Net Tonnage	19803
Engine / Power	SGODA - SULZER 16ZV 40/48 X4 4X1000 HP
Classification Society	RINA
Minimum Safe Manning	17

Voyage Particulars

Date of departure	28 August 2018
Trading Area	Piraeus-Chania-Piraeus
Cargo on board	81 trucks, 155 cars, 3 buses, 34 motorcycles and 140 crew members
Crew on board	140

Marine Casualty Information

Date & time	28 August 2018 , 23:41
Type of marine casualty	Serious marine casualty
Weather & environmental conditions	Night, N 5-6 Bf
Location of casualty	Long: 37 ° 24'9 N Lat: 023 ° 46'6 A, approximately 10 nm east of nissos Hydra
Indicative damages to ship	Main garage space (decks No.3 to 5, Fr.100-170), ports ide external shell (decks 3 to 5), centre casing (Decks No.3 to 5) and Deck No.5 (same extend). In all affected areas all equipement fittings such as smoke detection system, electrical cabling, piping (drencher system, sewage, fresh water), electrical lighting, sockets, and fire insulation has been affected. Watertight doors and retractable ramps for cars also affected. Side pax/crew cabins on Deck 5 (fr.33-201, Port & Stbd) have been flooded as well as on Deck 6 (fr.41-201) sustained damages from water and smoke.
Fatalities / injuries	None
Marine pollution	No



Image 1: ROPAX "EL. VENIZELOS"



Image 2: The garage deck No.3 following the fire