



## Summary of Investigation

**Collision between the tug Vega and the mv Harriett during a towing operation when entering the Mussalo basin in Port Kotka on 05.04.2009, resulting in the damage of the azipod of the Vega**

Tallinn

30.06.2009



### I Short Summary

On 05.04.2009 at 16.16 a collision occurred between the tug Vega (flag of Estonia) and the mv Harriet (flag of the Bahamas) during a towing operation when entering the Mussalo basin in Port Kotka. The tug Vega was pulling the mv Harriett. The towrope had been fastened to the bow of the Harriett, passing through her central hawse, the length of it was 30 metres. The mv Harriett was moving with a speed of 5 knots, there was a pilot on the bridge. The weather conditions were as follows: wind S, 4 m/sec, visibility good. During the towing operation the tug Vega strayed to the left in relation to the mv Harriett and the tug's attempt to correct the position ended in her port side fender hitting the bow of the Harriett. The towrope broke. As a result the Vega



received some damages to her superstructure. The tug Vega resumed the towing operation at 16.17, without using the towrope, to push the Harriett towards the quay A1 of the Mussola basin. At 16.31 the alarm of the port side azipod began to function because its gravitation tank was leaking. The port side engine was stopped and the engineer on watch reported that water was penetrating into the port side azipod. An oilspill was discovered, according to a Finnish expert there was about 1100 litres of oil in the water area of the port. At 17.12 the Vega completed the towing operation and she berthed at quay A3. At 17.20 the mv Harriett carried out an inspection of her bow, no damages were found. During a period from 17.49 to 20.11 a diver survey was carried out on the Vega and a dent was discovered on the lower fairing of the port side azipod, which probably had been developed as a result of the contact between the lower fairing of the port side azipod and the bow bulb of the Harriett. There was a small crack in it. After the completion of port formalities and the investigations by the Finnish police, National Rescue Board and Maritime Administration, the ship was given permission to leave Port Kotka on 10.04.2009 at 10.00 in order to proceed to Tallinn, where the Vega arrived on 11.04.2009.

## II Particulars of the ship:

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Name                           | Vega                 |
| Type                           | tug                  |
| Number of the Register         | 1TO6E04              |
| IMO number                     | 9375343              |
| Call sign                      | ES2646               |
| Flag of the ship               | Estonian             |
| Port of registry               | Tallinn              |
| Ship owner                     | AS PKL               |
| Year of build/country          | 2006, Gdansk, Poland |
| Main material of the hull      | steel                |
| Total power of the main engine | 2 x 1050 kW          |
| Ship's measurements:           |                      |
| Gross tonnage                  | 144                  |
| Net tonnage                    | 44                   |
| DW                             | 52.10                |
| Speed                          | 11.5 knots           |
| Length overall                 | 19.10 m              |
| Moulded length                 | 17.68 m              |
| Breadth                        | 9.00 m               |
| Depth                          | 3.80 m               |
| Draught                        | 3.00 m               |
| Classification society         | DNV                  |



### III Circumstances

On 05.04.2009 at 16.16 a collision occurred between the tug Vega and the mv Harriett during a towing operation when entering the Mussola basin in Port Kotka. At 16.03 a towrope of the length of 30 metres was fastened from the aft end of the Vega to the bow of the mv Harriett, passing through her central hawse. At 16.05 a towrope from the aft end of the Harriett was fastened to the tug Janet. There was a pilot on the bridge, the mv Harriett was moving with a speed of 5 knots towards the quay A1 of the Mussola basin. At 16.15 the Vega strayed to the left in relation to the mv Harriett and the tug began to correct her position. As a result of the manoeuvre the tug remained facing the bow of the Harriett with her port side. At 16.16, in order to avoid remaining in the way of the bow of the Harriett, the tug applied slow ahead while trying to turn her bow towards the Harriett. The manoeuvre was partially successful and the port side fender of the Vega hit the bow of the Harriett. The towrope, which became tense as a result of the growth of speed, caused some damages to the superstructure of the Vega and finally broke. At 16.17 the Vega moved away from the Harriett. Everything seemed to be in order and the master of the Vega made the pilot a proposition to resume the pilotage without using the towrope. The pilot agreed and the Vega began to push the Harriett towards quay A1 of the Mussola basin. At 16.31 the alarm of the port side azipod began to function because its gravitation tank was leaking. The port side engine was stopped and the engineer on watch reported that water was penetrating into the port side azipod. Also an oilspill was discovered in the water area of the port. The tug continued to work by using her starboard side azipod. At 17.12 the tug Vega completed the towing operation and at 17.25 she berthed at quay A3. On 10.04.2009 at 10.00 the Vega departed from the Mussola basin in Port Kotka to proceed to Tallinn. She arrived on 11.04.2009 at 11.00.





#### **IV Causes**

The contact between the lower fairing of the port side azipod of the Vega and the bow bulb of the Harriett was caused by an error, committed by the master of the Vega, who failed to keep the tug on the course that had been given from the bridge of the Harriett. The Vega strayed to the left in relation to the bow of the Harriett, and as a result of the following handling of the azipods, the Vega came into contact with the bow of the Harriett.

#### **V Consequences**

No damages of the mv Harriett were discovered, they had no claims to the tug. No claims about the small oilspill in the water area of Port Kotka were launched. A detailed inspection of the port side azipod of the tug Vega was carried out in a floating dock of the Baltic Ship Yard in Tallinn. The management of the PKL made a decision to send the azipod to the manufacturer in Rauma to have it repaired there.





## **VI Classification**

The accident in question has been registered in the “Record Book of Marine Accidents,” No 4/2009, and it has been classified as a less serious accident according to Chapter II, § 3 (3), p.1 of the Regulation of Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia No 77 of 27 December 2002.

Voldemar Lindmets  
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And Maritime Safety Development department



## The collision between the tug Vega and the mv Harriett during a towing operation

