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■ EARLY WARNING – DUTCH SAFETY BOARD

Subject

Early warning in response to very serious occurrences involving the trawlers UK-165 and UK-171

The Dutch Safety Board is currently investigating very serious occurrences involving the trawlers UK-165 'Lummetje' in the autumn of 2019, and UK-171 'Spes Salutis' in the autumn of 2020. Both trawlers were beam trawlers, with a length of less than 24 metres.

The investigation has revealed that beam trawlers with a length of less than 24 metres can become extremely unstable in an asymmetric load condition. An asymmetric load condition occurs for example if fishing gear is suspended from the outrigger boom on one side of the ship, and not on the other. In that situation, the ship no longer floats upright in the water, but adopts a permanent list. In the event of an asymmetric load condition, this type of beam trawler experiences a rapid and extreme loss of stability. At that point, even a slight increase in the degree of list is sufficient to cause the ship to rapidly capsize and sink.

Asymmetric load conditions involve a substantial and genuine safety risk. To date, however, there has been little or no knowledge or recognition of this risk throughout the sector.

The Board considers this safety risk to be sufficiently serious for it to issue an interim warning in anticipation of the publication of the full investigation report, pursuant to Article 63 of the Dutch Safety Board Act.¹ I would ask you to inform the skippers and crews of any beam trawlers with a length of less than 24 metres about this safety risk.

Details of the full investigation into the capsizing and sinking of the trawlers UK-165 and UK-171 are expected to be published before the summer of this year. This interim warning is being issued to coincide with the submission of the draft report to the parties directly involved, for their inspection. A copy of this letter has been sent to the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, and the European Commission.

The Hague,
8 April 2021

¹ Article 63: If necessary for immediate action in order to prevent accidents, the Board shall already make its recommendations for preventive measures while the investigation is still in progress.