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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
INTO DUAL FATALITY OFF
SKERRIES,
NORTH COUNTY DUBLIN
ON
1st APRIL 2011**

**REPORT No. MCIB/200
(No.4 of 2012)**



Report MCIB/200 published by The Marine Casualty Investigation Board
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1. SYNOPSIS

(Note: All times are in UCT)

- 1.1 On the afternoon of 1st April 2011 the five metre open-top fishing vessel No. D-708 "*Lady Linda*" went missing off Skerries Harbour, Co. Dublin with two crew onboard, Mr. Ronan Browne and Mr. David Gilsean. The upturned vessel was found the following morning Saturday 2nd April off Clogher Head. Neither crewman were with the vessel. A large scale search effort commenced. The bodies of both casualties were recovered accidentally in a single trawl by the Irish FV D-51 "*Guiding Light*" on the early morning of Saturday 9th April 2011.
- 1.2 Mr. Browne (26) and Mr. Gilsean (41) were lifelong friends, both men were experienced and qualified marine engineers in the fishing vessel industry. Both men were experienced in boat handling and fishing and had worked together on many occasions.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Vessel Details

Name:	"Lady Linda"
Type of Vessel:	GRP Dory with O/B & no wheelhouse
Operational Area:	Within three miles of safe haven
Make:	Fastworker 19. No A12191 Fastworker Boats, Falmouth Cornwall. Year Circa. 1990.
Dimensions:	LOA 5.67-mtr. Beam 2-mtr. Depth 0.8-mtr.
Engine - Make - Capacity:	Honda 25-hp petrol engine.
Fishing Equipment:	Pot hauler and associated donkey engine. 5.5-hp petrol engine.
Last Survey:	12th September 2010 at Skerries by Promara Ltd.



Photograph A

Taken by MCIB inspector, of the forward part of the vessel at Clogher Head after the vessel was turned upright on the evening of 5th April 2011.



Photograph B

Taken by MCIB inspector, of the after part of the vessel at Clogher Head after the vessel was turned upright on the evening of 5th April 2011.



Photograph C

Taken by MCIB inspector, of the donkey engine before the vessel was turned upright on the evening of 5th April 2011.

3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 Mr. Browne had lobster pots laid in the Colt Island / St Patrick's Island area off Skerries. On the morning of 1st April 2011 he had gone out to attend to them at about 08.00 hrs. He experienced technical problems with the pot hauler and returned to Skerries Harbour to repair it. He enlisted the help of Mr. Gilsenen in this regard and they worked on it until approximately 11.30 hrs. It is not known exactly what the problem was or what repairs were carried out. Mr. Browne, in the company of Mr. Gilsenen then went back out in the vessel to attend to the lobster pots and/or check out the effectiveness of the repairs. That was the last that was seen of both men and the vessel.



Photograph D
Extract of the chart for the Skerries area.

- 3.2 The weather conditions were deteriorating when the vessel left harbour. The Met Éireann report for the area for 12.00 to 18.00 hrs. was as follows:
- Winds: Southerly force 5 to 7 with gusts up to gale force 8.
 - Weather: A few light outbreaks of rain or drizzle but mostly dry and rather cloudy.
 - Visibility: Moderate to good.
 - Waves: Rough.

4. THE INCIDENT

4.1 There were no witnesses to the circumstances of the incident.

5. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

- 5.1 When it was realised that the vessel was missing, a large scale search effort commenced that included:
- RNLI.
 - The Irish Coast Guard Services.
 - An Garda Síochána Sub-Aqua Unit.
 - The Naval Service: L.E. Emer and L.E. Ciara and the Diving Section.
 - Local people from the Skerries area.
 - Local Fishing Vessels operating on the North East Coast of Ireland.
- 5.2 The overall search was co-ordinated by the Irish Coast Guard and the Naval Service was appointed as on scene co-ordinator by the Coast Guard for the "at Sea" search.
- 5.3 The upturned vessel was found off Clogher Head on 2nd April 2011 and was towed, undisturbed, to Clogher Head Harbour and moored there.
- 5.4 The bodies of both casualties were found accidentally in a single trawl by the Irish FV D-51 "*Guiding Light*" early on the morning of Saturday 9th April 2011 5.2 miles S.E. of Clogher Head. Clogher Head lifeboat was immediately tasked to recover the bodies and attended alongside FV D-51 "*Guiding Light*" at approximately 02.20 hrs. Mr. Gilsean's body was the first to be seen in the water, followed by the discovery of Mr. Browne's body deeper in the water. The bodies of both men were entangled together by a length of rope, thought to be lobster pot rope. The bodies of both men were recovered onboard the Clogher Head lifeboat and brought to Port Oriel. No personal floatation devices were found with the bodies.
- 5.5 The post mortem results for both men found that:
Mr. Browne died from drowning.
Mr. Gilsean died from hypothermia and drowning.
- 5.6 An inspector from the MCIB examined the vessel at Clogher Head Harbour on the evening of 5th April 2011.
- 5.7 The vessel had been moored upside-down at the slipway from the time it was brought to the harbour and had suffered major damage as a result. The forward deck in way of the pot hauler had been torn apart and the gantry mounted at the after part of the vessel had been destroyed.
- 5.8 The hull of the vessel was found to be intact. There were some minor scratches on the underside forward port side but no evidence of a breach of the hull or that the vessel had struck anything to cause the incident.
- 5.9 The fender at the bow was parted in places.

- 5.10 There was some mechanical damage to the gunwale area at the Starboard stern quarter.
- 5.11 The Starboard stainless steel hand rail was missing. This rail slotted into holes in the Starboard gunwale and may have fallen out when the vessel turned upside-down. This rail was not found in the course of the diving operations to-date.
- 5.12 The engine controls (No. 407753) were found to be in the “engine-on” position and the joystick was found to be in the full-ahead position. Please see photograph E below taken by MCIB inspector showing the engine control before the vessel was turned upright on the evening of 5th April 2011.



Photograph E

- 5.13 The emergency cut-out protection cord for the engine was found to be attached to the ignition key.
- 5.14 The petrol tank (dimensions 500mm x 300mm x 275mm) for the engine was found to be in good order and approximately 1/2-full.
- 5.15 The throttle control for the donkey engine was found to be in the full throttle position and held in place with a rubber band, please see photo C on page 6.
- 5.16 One life belt was lashed to the remains of the rear gantry.
- 5.17 The emergency equipment, flares, hand held manual EPIRB, etc., were found in a yellow flare box with the top cut-off located in the forward water tight compartment under the deck. The compartment hatch was closed with the two dogs in the closed position.
- 5.18 No personal floatation devices were found on the vessel.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 There were no witnesses to the incident, thus it has not been possible to determine the cause.
- 6.2 Both of these men were active able bodied experienced individuals. The evidence would suggest that the accident happened very suddenly and that neither Mr. Browne nor Mr. Gilseman had any time to react to the situation and access the emergency equipment or to stay with the vessel after it capsized.
- 6.3 Possible causal factors or combinations of factors leading to the deaths of these two men:
- Weather conditions and wave height.
 - Possible equipment malfunction such as the pot hauler exerting excessive or intermittent load causing the vessel to list excessively to starboard.
 - Shifting of equipment within the vessel such as fish boxes and rope / lobster pots.
 - Possible failure in communication between the two men, for example the pot hauling co-incident with putting the engine in the full ahead position. The scenario is thought to be unlikely as both men had worked together many times in the past and were experienced fishermen.
 - The emergency cut-out protection cord for the engine was found to be connected to the ignition key.
- 6.4 Neither person was found wearing personal flotation devices. The wearing of such devices will increase the chance of survival following entry into water.
- 6.5 The emergency equipment was stored in the forward water tight compartment under the deck. This did not allow for easy access, particularly when responding to a sudden event such as a boat capsizing.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Before any voyage, check and heed that the foreseeable weather conditions are such that the vessel can cope with them safely.
- 7.2 It is recommended that Fishermen should wear suitable PFD's whilst on deck at all times.
- 7.3 It is recommended that the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport review the requirements of the Code of Practice for fishing vessels under 15 mtrs., with a view to establishing revised stability criteria, with particular reference to freeboard and freeing ports in small decked vessels. This is in order to minimise the risk of instability because of trapped water and its free surface effect.
- 7.4 It is recommended that all fishing vessels should be fitted with auto float free EPIRB's.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

8.1 Met Éireann Weather Report

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Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Glasnevin Hill, Cnoc Ghlas Naíon, Tel: +353-1-806 4200
Dublin 9, Ireland. Bailte Átha Cliath 9, Éire. Fax: +353-1-806 4247
www.met.ie E-mail: met.eireann@met.ie

1/4/2011

Our Ref. WS3018/2C_14085
Your Ref. MCIB/200

Estimate of weather conditions in the sea area off Skerries Harbour, on the 1st April 2011, between 6 hours and midnight.

General Situation

There was a complex Low pressure area centred near Iceland which gave a strong south to south-westerly airflow over Ireland and the Irish Sea.

Details:

6 hours to 12 hours

Winds: South-south-west Force 6 to 7 gusting Gale Force 8

Weather: patches of cloud, rain and drizzle interspersed with clear spells

Visibility: poor in rain or drizzle, otherwise good.

Waves: Rough

12 hours to 18 hours

Winds: southerly Force 5 to 7 with gusts up to Gale Force 8

Weather: a few light outbreaks of rain or drizzle but mostly dry and rather cloudy

Visibility: moderate to good

Waves: Rough

18 hours to 24 hours

Winds: southerly Force 7 gusting to Gale Force 8

Weather: some drizzle and rather cloudy. There was widespread thundery activity over the whole Irish Sea especially around midnight.

Visibility: moderate to good

Waves: Rough

Evelyn Murphy B.Sc. M.Sc. Meteorologist
Research & Applications Division
Met Éireann

Appendix 8.1 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service.

Glasnevin Hill,
Dublin 9, Ireland.


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Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éiro.
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Tel: +353-1-806 4200
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E-mail: met.eireann@met.ie

The M2 reports below. Latitude 53.479°N and 5.425°W

time	Wind speed (knots)	Wind gust (knots)	Wind direction (degrees from North)	hm0 Sig. Wave height (metres)	Max. Wave height (metres)	Wave direction (degrees from North)
01-apr-2011 06:00:00	25.1	33.3	198.3	2.3	3.8	185.6
01-apr-2011 07:00:00	24.1	30.5	189.8	2.7	4.1	188.4
01-apr-2011 08:00:00	25.5	31.4	187	2.5	3.7	191.3
01-apr-2011 09:00:00	26.4	33.7	191.3	2.3	3.7	194.1
01-apr-2011 10:00:00	27.8	35.5	192.7	2.4	3.5	188.4
01-apr-2011 11:00:00	27.8	41.9	192.7	2.7	3.8	184.2
01-apr-2011 12:00:00	25.1	33.3	196.9	2.5	3.8	180
01-apr-2011 13:00:00	20.5	34.2	188.4	2.8	4.4	177.2
01-apr-2011 14:00:00	17.8	28.2	201.1	3	4.5	177.2
01-apr-2011 15:00:00	23.7	32.3	189.8	3.3	4.2	175.8
01-apr-2011 16:00:00	26.4	36.4	187	3.7	5.2	181.4
01-apr-2011 17:00:00	27.8	37.4	177.2	3.4	5.5	177.2
01-apr-2011 18:00:00	24.6	32.8	180	3.5	4.5	182.8
01-apr-2011 19:00:00	23.2	31.4	181.4	3	5.2	184.2
01-apr-2011 20:00:00	28.2	36.4	181.4	3	4.6	188.4
01-apr-2011 21:00:00	26.9	35.5	178.6	2.5	3.4	187
01-apr-2011 22:00:00	28.7	37.4	177.2	2.6	4.4	185.6
01-apr-2011 23:00:00	26.9	37.8	180	2.4	3.8	181.4
02-apr-2011 00:00:00	16.9	26	181.4	2.3	3.4	181.4

Appendix 8.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Glasnevin Hill, Cnoc Ghlas Naíon Tel: +353-1-806 4200
Dublin 9, Ireland. Baile Átha Cliath 9, Éire. Fax: +353-1-806 4247
www.met.ie Email: met.eireann@met.ie

Beaufort Scale of Wind

Force	Description	Speed* knots	km/hr	Specification -sea	Wave height** (metres)
0	Calm	<1	<1	Sea like mirror	
1	Light air	1-3	1-5	Ripples	0.1 (0.1)
2	Light breeze	4-6	6-11	Small wavelets	0.2 (0.3)
3	Gentle breeze	7-10	12-19	Large wavelets, crests begin to break	0.6 (1)
4	Moderate breeze	11-16	20-28	Small waves becoming longer, frequent white horses	1 (1.5)
5	Fresh breeze	17-21	29-38	Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of spray	2 (2.5)
6	Strong breeze	22-27	39-49	Large waves, white foam crests, probably some spray	3 (4)
7	Near gale	28-33	50-61	Sea heaps up, streaks of white foam	4 (5.5)
8	Gale	34-40	62-74	Moderately high waves of greater length	5.5 (7.5)
9	Strong gale	41-47	75-88	High waves, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	7 (10)
10	Storm	48-55	89-102	Very high waves, long overhanging crests, visibility affected	9 (12.5)
11	Violent storm	56-63	103-117	Exceptionally high waves, long white foam patches cover sea	11.5 (16)
12	Hurricane	64+	117 & over	Air filled with foam and spray, sea completely white	14 (-)

*Speed = mean speed at a standard height of 10 metres.
**Wave height is only intended as a guide to what may be expected in the open sea.
Bracketed figures indicate the probable maximum wave height.

Wave Heights / State of Sea

The wave height is the vertical distance between the crest and the preceding or following trough. The table below gives a description of the wave system associated with a range of significant wave heights.

Sea State (Descriptive)	Significant Wave height in meters
Calm	0 – 0.1
Smooth (Wavelets)	0.1 – 0.5
Slight	0.5 – 1.25
Moderate	1.25 – 2.5
Rough	2.5 – 4
Very rough	4 – 6
High	6 – 9
Very high	9 – 14
Phenomenal	Over 14

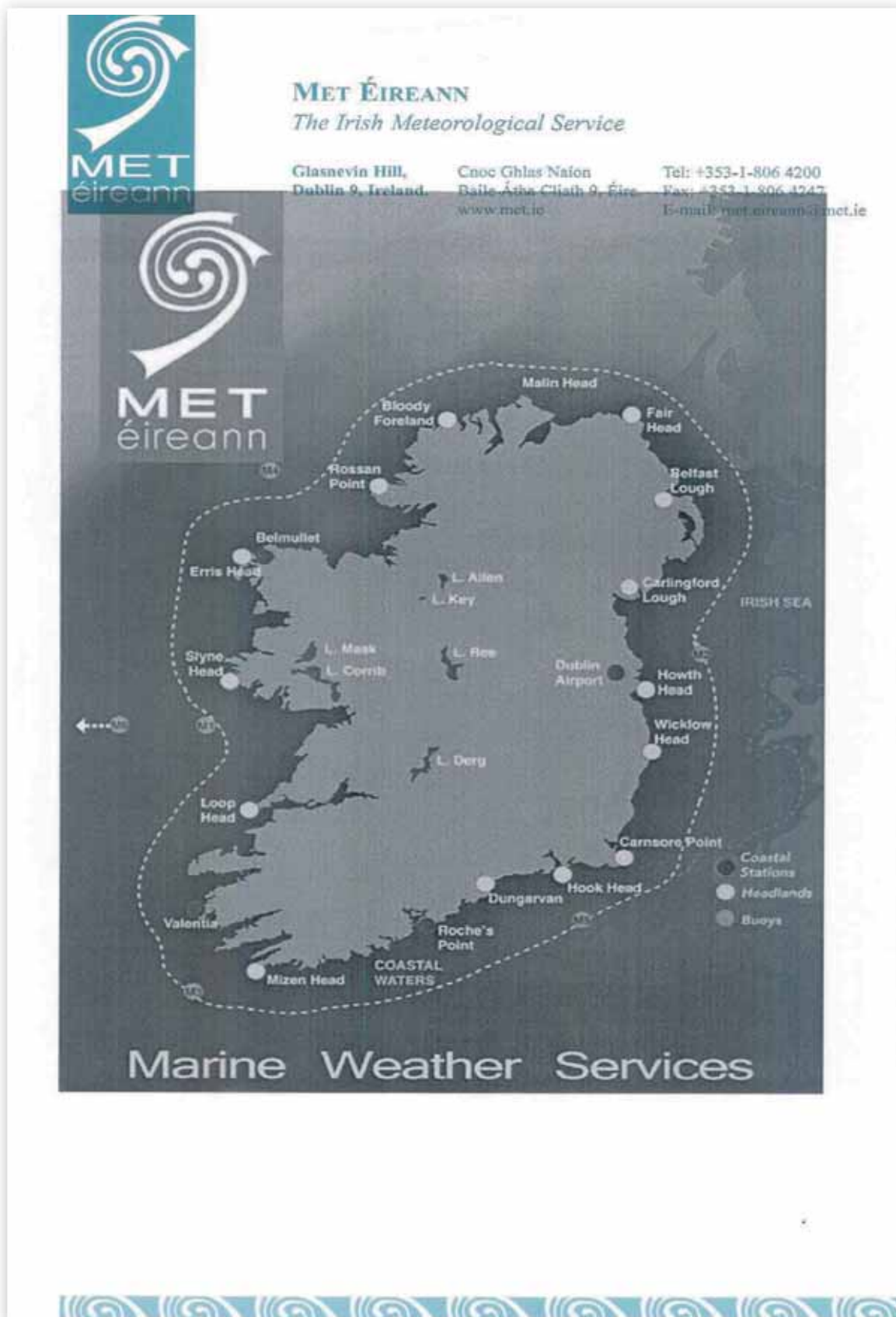
Individual waves in the wave train will have heights in excess of the significant height. The highest wave of all will have a height about twice the significant height.

Visibility

Descriptions of visibility mean the following:

Visibility (Descriptive)	Visibility in nautical miles (kilometres)
Good	More than 5 nm (> 9 km)
Moderate	2 – 5 nm (4 – 9 km)
Poor	0.5 – 2 nm (1 – 4 km)
Fog	Less than 0.5 nm (< 1km)

Appendix 8.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



9. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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9.2 Irish Coast Guard MCIB Response	20 20



Royal National Lifeboat Institution

Chairman: Admiral Sir David Boothroy CBE CVO RRC
Chief Executive: Paul Stebbins

RNLI (Trading Ltd) 01078377, RNLI (Charity Ltd) 02001049 and RNLI (Incorporated) Ltd 1194028
All of companies registered at their Duty Base, Poole, Dorset, BH12 1UJ

From:
Divisional Base Ireland
Airside, Swords, Co. Dublin, Ireland
Tel (01) 8900460
Fax (01) 8900458

Mr. John G O'Donnell B.L.
Chairman
Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Leeson Lane
Dublin2

17th November 2011

Sir,

DRAFT REPORT INTO THE DUAL FATALITY OFF SKERRIES, NORTH COUNTY DUBLIN ON 1ST APRIL 2011

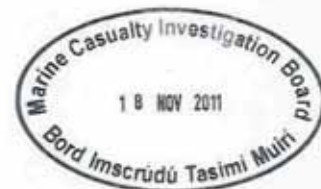
Reference: Yr letter MCIB/200 dated 2nd November 2011

Thank you for affording the RNLI the opportunity to view the draft report into the incident which resulted in the tragic loss of two lives.

The RNLI has no comment to make in relation to the incident except to offer our sincere condolences to the families and friends of Mr. Ronan Browne and Mr. David Gilsean.

Yours faithfully

Martyn Smith
RNLI Divisional Inspector of Lifeboats
Ireland



The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

Charity number 041 2676 in the Republic of Ireland and registered in England and Wales (209608) and Scotland (SC037796)

MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence.



10 November 2011

Our Ref. 22/52/2

Ms. Eve Reddin
Secretariat
Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

**Draft Report of the Investigation into dual fatality off Skerries, North Dublin
on 1st April 2011**

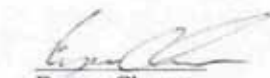
Dear Ms Reddin,

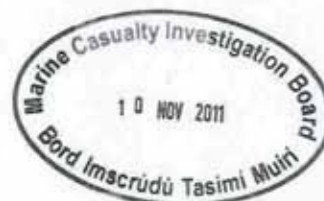
I wish to advise that the draft report in relation to this incident has been reviewed and the Coast Guard has no observations or submissions to make in respect of same except for the following clarifications:

Paragraph 5.1 Coast Guard mentioned twice

Paragraph 5.2 The Coast Guard co-ordinated the overall search. The Naval Service was appointed as on scene co-ordinator by the Coast Guard for the "at sea" search.

Yours sincerely,


Eugene Clonan
Chief of Operations



Administration Office, Irish Coast Guard, Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.
Oifig Riaracháin, Garda Cóna na hÉireann, An Roinn Iompair, Lána Chill Mochargán, Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire.
Tel: + 353 1 6783455 / 3427, Fax: + 353 1 6783459, email: admin@irishcoastguard.ie

MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence and has made the necessary amendments.