

Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.  
Tel: +353 1 678 2460.  
Fax: +353 1 678 2159.  
Freefone: 1800 202614.



**REPORT OF THE  
INVESTIGATION INTO THE  
GROUNDING OF THE MALTA  
REGISTERED CAR CARRIER  
"SEA HAMEX" AT ROSSLARE  
EUROPORT, CO. WEXFORD ON  
28TH JANUARY 2003.**

**The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 2002 under The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000**

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# SYNOPSIS

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## 1. SYNOPSIS.

- 1.1 On Tuesday 28th January 2003, the Malta registered car carrier "Sea Hamex" arrived in Rosslare Europort, Co. Wexford with a cargo of cars from Le Havre, France.
- 1.2 During the process of berthing at the port, after one unsuccessful attempt, the vessel was then blown onto the end of the pier of Berths 1 and 2, causing damage to the vessel's starboard side. After this, in an effort to clear the harbour the vessel was blown bodily in a south east direction and grounded between the ramps of berths 2 and 3. There was no pilot or tugs in attendance.
- 1.3 At the time of the grounding, the sea state was rough with a west-northwest gale force 8, occasionally strong gale force 9 wind.
- 1.4 The vessel was subsequently re-floated at 1605hrs on Wednesday 29th January 2003 and with tug assistance was brought alongside Berth 2 early on the following morning. Due to the damages suffered in the incidents the vessel was towed to Cork, where repairs were subsequently carried out in the local dry-dock.
- 1.5 There were no injuries suffered to any person in the incident. There was no pollution resulting from the incident

## 2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

### 2.1 Particulars of the vessel.

Flag:	Malta.
Port of Registry:	Valletta.
Built:	1983.
IMO Number:	8206533.
Length overall:	82.64 metres.
Breadth overall:	18.58 metres.
Summer Draft:	4.20 metres.
Gross tonnage:	5462.
Net tonnage:	1638.
Draft:	Fwd 2.65m. Aft 5.30m.
Owner:	Sea Liban Shipping Co. Ltd. Casa Roma, 48 Sir Augustus Bartolo Street, TA 'XBIEX MSD 11, Malta.
Main Engine:	Motor Diesel 2870kW / 3900 bhp.
Bow Thruster:	300 bhp.
Height to upper deck:	15.25 metres.
Description of Vessel:	Steel, single screw, car carrier, motor vessel with seven decks. Vessel is fitted with two cargo ramps, one aft and one on the starboard side. Vessel was on passage from Le Havre to Rosslare Europort with a cargo of 407 new cars.

### 2.2 Main Navigation Aids provided on board.

Magnetic Compass:	One Plathgeomar.
Gyro Compass:	One Anschutz.
Auto-pilot:	One Anschutz
Radars:	Two Furuno.
GPS:	One Navigator GPS GP-80. One Shipmate GN 30.
Echo Sounder:	One Delta.
Rudder angle indicator:	Robertson.

### 2.3 Crew

There were 15 crewmembers on board and the vessel was manned in accordance with the Safe Manning Document on board the vessel.

### 3. EVENTS PRIOR TO THE INCIDENT

- 3.1 At 0945 hours on January 28th 2003, the "Sea Hamex", on a course of 008 (True) passed the Tuskar Rock lighthouse abeam to starboard, at a distance of 1.90 nautical miles.
- 3.2 The Master recalls that he was informed by Rosslare Europort that there was a strong Westerly wind of 25 to 30 knots at this time and that no pilot or tugs were available. It was his first time in the port of Rosslare.
- 3.3 Rosslare Europort VTS recorded the arrival of the "Sea Hamex" in the port. (see summary at Appendix 9.1). The various wind speeds and directions as given in the summary were obtained from the anemometer situated at the end of the breakwater at Rosslare Europort. The remarks include VHF conversations between the vessel and the Harbour Authority and also the observations of the Rosslare Europort Harbour Master.
- 3.4 At 1012hrs the vessel passed the South Long buoy and at 1028 passed the West Holdens buoy. Please see chart extract for the approaches to Rosslare Europort at Appendix 9.2. At 1030 hours, the "Sea Hamex" confirmed the location of Berth 3 and was also informed that Berth 4 was clear. The vessel was also advised by the Rosslare Harbour Master to come well clear of the breakwater before swinging to starboard and also to keep both anchors clear. It was the intention that the "Sea Hamex" would berth stern onto Berth 3 in order to discharge her cargo of cars through the stern ramp. The Rosslare Europort chart extract is given in Appendix 9.3.
- 3.5 At 1038 hours the "Sea Hamex" passed the breakwater. At this time the wind speed was recorded at 39.4 knots from a direction of 268 (True). At 1040 hours the Master found that he could not swing the vessel to starboard in the weather conditions that were present and he had to abandon the berthing attempt and proceed out of the area.
- 3.6 He then decided to approach the breakwater from the West and to swing the vessel to port before coming stern onto Berth 3. At 1058 hours the vessel passed No 3 buoy in its approach from the west. Shortly afterwards, as the vessel was turning to port off the end of Berth 1 and 2, the Master recalls that he noticed the vessel drifting onto the end of the pier due to the very strong wind. He went full ahead on the engine in order to avoid the pier with the wheel hard to port and the bow thruster full to port. However, this was not successful and the vessel landed on the end of the pier of Berth 1 and 2.

## 4. THE INCIDENT

- 4.1 After clearing the end of the pier, the Master of the "Sea Hamex" then tried to leave the Harbour by going ahead with the wheel to port in order to clear Berth 4 but he found that this was not possible due to the very strong wind. The Harbour Master advised the Master of the "Sea Hamex" to let go the port anchor around this time. The Master of the "Sea Hamex" was very aware of the "European Diplomat", which was on Berth 2, and was concerned with regard to making contact with this vessel and also with the berth ahead, as the "Sea Hamex" was being blown bodily into the harbour.
- 4.2 After clearing the "European Diplomat" on Berth 2, the Master of the "Sea Hamex" did drop the anchors. This was intended to stop the drift of the bow. It would appear that the first anchor was dropped before the vessel grounded and the second anchor was dropped around the time of grounding. The position of grounding at 1112 hours is indicated on the Rosslare Europort chart extract. The vessel grounded on the starboard quarter. The photographs in Appendix 9.4 show the vessel aground.
- 4.3 The Met Eireann weather report is given in Appendix 9.5.

### 5. EVENTS FOLLOWING INCIDENT

- 5.1 After grounding, the hull integrity of the vessel was checked by the crew. No changes were noted in the various tanks on board and there was no water ingress. Movement of the rudder and propeller were found to be in order. The only evident damage was the hull plating on the starboard side in way of the ramp, which was set in following the earlier contact with the end of Berth 1 and 2.
- 5.2 The vessel refloated due to the Port Anchor being relocated into the middle of the harbour, at high tide, by a small workboat. Subsequently, ropes were run out to Berth 2 and 3 to maintain her floating position until the arrival of the Tug.
- 5.3 With tug assistance the "Sea Hamex" was manoeuvred onto Berth 2 at about 0230 hours on Thursday 30th January 2003.



**6. DAMAGES TO THE VESSEL NOTED AFTER REFLOATING**

- 6.1 On the morning of 29th January 2003, the Master of the "Sea Hamex" was expecting a tug to arrive from Cork to assist in the refloating. In order to prepare for the tugs arrival and to assist with the refloating the crew of the vessel pumped out the fresh water tanks situated aft. This was estimated to decrease the after draft by about 10 cms. After carrying out this action the Master stated that the vessel was informed that the tug was delayed due to mechanical problems. Between 1300 and 1500 hours, approaching high water and with gale force winds present, the ship was banging off the harbour bottom. At 1500 hours an increase was noticed in the sounding of oil tank 13 Starboard. The oil in this tank was pumped into tank 7 Port.
- 6.2 There was a noted large increase in the loss of oil from the stern gland following the grounding.
- 6.3 Divers attended the vessel and carried out dives on 31st January 2003. They discovered side and bottom damage on the starboard side aft. They also noted that a wire rope had three turns around the propeller shaft and that there was possible damage to the underside of the skeg.
- 6.4 The starboard side ramp area was set in following the contact with the end of Berth 1 and 2 and was found not to be watertight.
- 6.5 Following temporary repairs, the vessel was towed to Cork Dockyard. After docking, a full inspection and assessment of the damages was carried out. All necessary repairs were completed and the vessel resumed sea-going service on 19th March 2003.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

- 7.1 The main reason why the "Sea Hamex" grounded was due to the weather conditions present at the time. The vessel did not have sufficient power to manoeuvre in these weather conditions taking into account the large wind area of the vessel. The Master stated that if he was approaching Rosslare Europort again in similar weather conditions that he would go to anchor and wait for the weather to improve.
- 7.2 If the vessel's anchors had been utilised earlier it is quiet possible that they may have succeeded in preventing the vessel from being blown aground. It is estimated that there was less than two shackles out on each anchor.
- 7.3 After the grounding, it would appear that the pumping out of the fresh water tanks aft allowed the vessel to bang off the sea bottom in the sea conditions present during the time approaching high water on the afternoon of 29th January 2003. If the vessel had remained on the bottom during this time it is likely that the subsequent hull damages would have been less severe. It was immediately after this banging that the increase in the soundings in tank 13 starboard was noted.
- 7.4 The Master of the "Sea Hamex" stated that he was informed by Rosslare Harbour radio, when approaching the port, that there was no pilot or tug available. He also stated that he was aware prior to his arrival that there were no tug available but as it was his first time in the port of Rosslare Europort, he would have taken a pilot if one had been available. However the Harbour Authority had been informed by the ships agent that the Master was satisfied and willing to berth on 27th January 2003 without a pilot or tug. The vessel was subsequently delayed by 24 hours and it was not possible to obtain a tug for the deteriorating weather conditions. In Rosslare, if there is no tug the pilot has no means to board a vessel. There was no copy of the Irish Coast Pilot (NP 40) on board the "Sea Hamex". In this publication it states "Pilotage" is not compulsory. A pilot can be obtained locally and should be arranged through the Port Authority. 24 hours notice is required". The Irish Coast Pilot also states "Tugs are available".

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is strongly recommended that Harbour Authorities take into account all aspects of a vessel's manoeuvring capabilities in conjunction with the weather conditions present before allowing a vessel to proceed to a berth in a port under their jurisdiction. The presence or absence of pilots and/or tugs would also need to be taken into account in reaching a decision. Following this incident Rosslare Europort have put in place berthing restrictions taking into account wind speed and direction, manoeuvring capabilities of the vessel, presence of a tug and the Master's experience of the port.
- 8.2 Rosslare Europort should give further serious consideration to establishing a system of compulsory pilotage for the port. Other ports operate such a system incorporating the issuing of pilotage exemption certificates to suitably qualified regular users of their ports. If a compulsory pilotage system had been in place on this occasion, it is quiet possible that the pilot's advise may have been to defer berthing until the weather had moderated. On this occasion the consequences could have been far worse as the "Sea Hamex" luckily did not make contact with any other vessel or any ramp and there was no pollution resulting from the grounding.
- 8.3 Harbour Authorities should ensure that information contained in nautical publications, that relate to their area of jurisdiction is correct and kept up to date.
- 8.4 Rosslare Harbour should immediately carry out a thorough risk assessment of all activities within its jurisdiction and issue guidelines to all vessels entering its port jurisdiction.

## 9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 A summary of the Rosslare Europort VTS recording of the arrival of the "Sea Hamex" in the port on 28th January 2003.
- 9.2 Chart extract for the approaches to Rosslare Europort.
- 9.3 Chart extract for Rosslare Europort.
- 9.4 Photographs showing the "Sea Hamex" aground in Rosslare Europort.
- 9.5 Met Eireann weather report.

- 9.1 A summary of the Rosslare Europort VTS recording of the arrival of the "Sea Hamex" in the port on 28th January 2003.

**Rosslare Europort**  
IRELAND'S PREMIER FERRYPORT

**SUMMARY of VTS RECORDING OF GROUNDING OF SEA HAMEX.**  
**Tues 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003.**

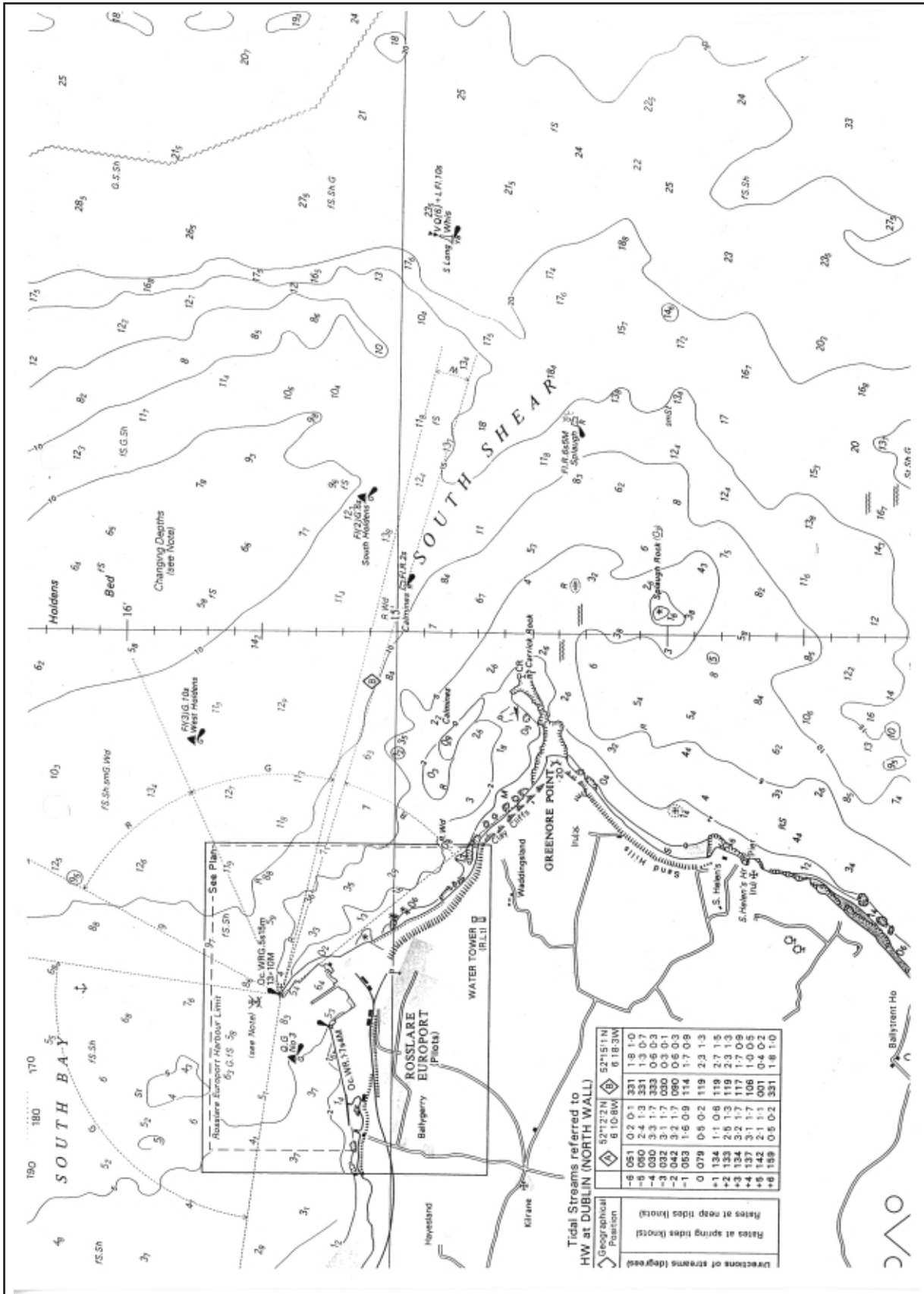
Time	Wind		Remarks
	DIRECTION ° (T)	SPEED [knots]	
1012	257	36.6	SH passing S. Long following Normandy.
1015	244	25.9	
1028	260	32.3	SH Passing W Holdens
1030	264	37.4	SH TO VTS CONVERSATION VHF CH 12 - Confirming Berth 3 location - Berth 4 Clear - Advised by HM to come well clear of Breakwater before swinging to stbd. and to keep both anchors clear.
1035	265	38.6	
1038	268	39.4	SH Passing Breakwater
1040	282	32.6	SH TO VTS CONVERSATION VHF CH 12 - Unable to swing SH proceeding outwards.
1044	283	32.6	SH Clear of Breakwater. Proceeds to take wide turn to Port.
1055	277	33.1	SH approaching from NW.
1058	277	34.5	SH Passing No 3 Buoy
1102	283	38.1	SH lands on end of Berth 1.
1106	282	35.8	SH attempts to come off Berth 1 - swing to Port to clear Berth 4 - HM Advises SH to let go Port Anchor.
1108	279	36.9	HM attempts to contact SH
1109½	275	28.4	EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT and VTS advise SH to come ahead to avoid collision with ED.
1111	273	30.3	HM observes Port Anchor being let go.
1112	285	30.3	HM observes SH grounding
1112¾	281	30.5	HM observes Stbd Anchor being let go.
1113	277	26.0	SH advises HM that vessel is aground - Master instructed by HM to land two headlines ashore.

Capt. Aedan Jameson, Harbour Master.

# APPENDIX 9.2

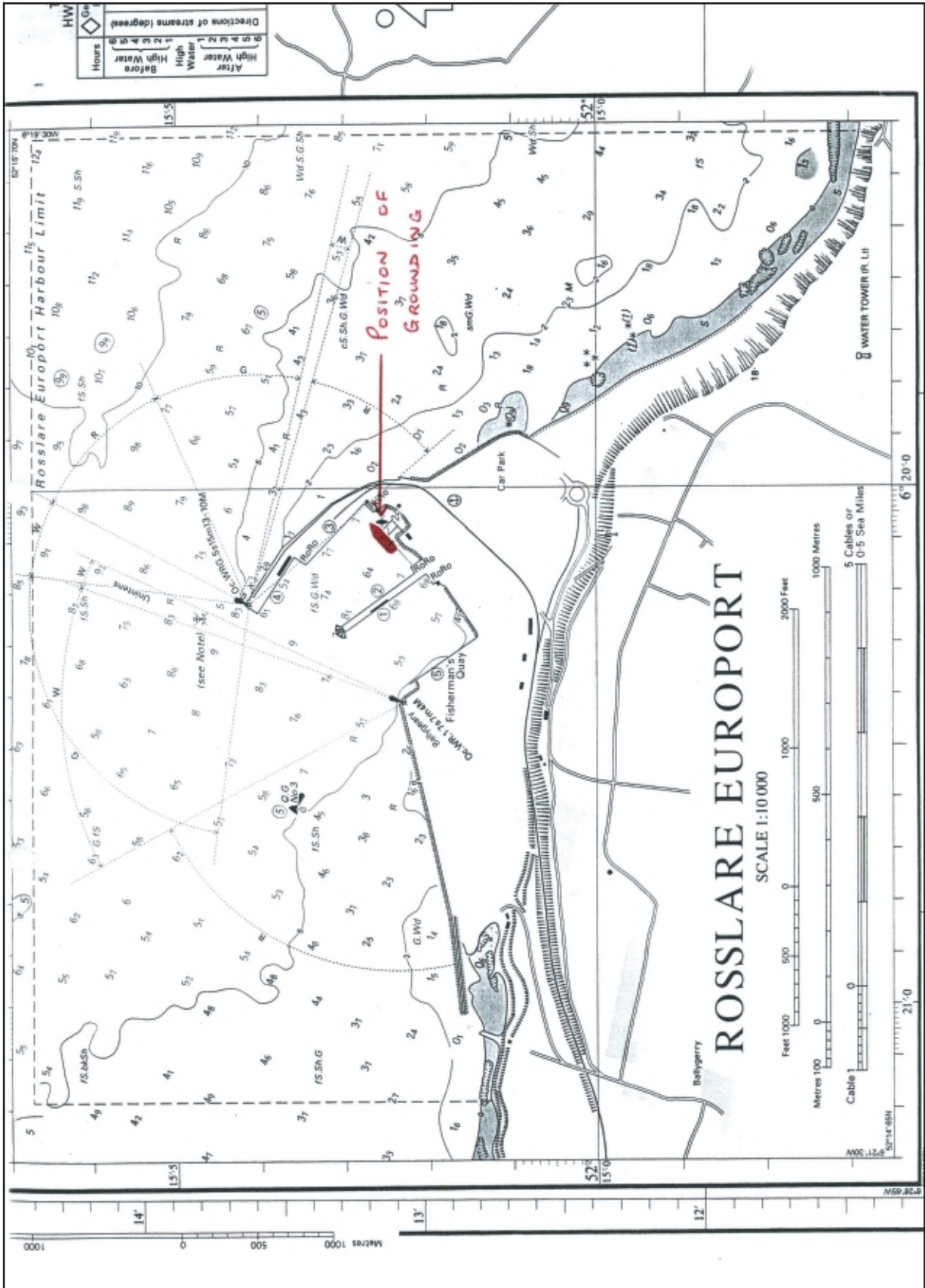
CONTD.

## 9.2 Chart extract for the approaches to Rosslare Europort.





9.3 Chart extract for Rosslare Europort.



NOT TO USE FOR NAVIGATION

## APPENDIX 9.4

CONTD.

9.4 Photographs showing the "Sea Hamex" aground in Rosslare Europort.





9.5 Met Eireann weather report.

The winds for the Met Eireann Rosslare Station on the 28th January 2003 were as follows

at 1000 hours, the average wind speed was 15 knots over a 10 minute period and a maximum of 33 knots for a 3 second gust.

at 1100 hours, the average wind speed was 17 knots over a 10 minute period and a maximum of 38 knots for a 3 second gust.

At 1200 hours, the average wind speed was 22 knots for a 10 minute period and a maximum of 43 knots for a 3 second gust.

## 9. INDEX OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

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Irish Coast Guard  
MCIB Response

Irish Coast Guard  
GARDA CÓSTA na hÉIREANN



Mr Dick Heron  
Secretary  
Marine Casualty Investigation Board  
Department of Communications,  
Marine & Natural Resources  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2.

28<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2003.

Re MCIB 68 Draft Report – Car Carrier MV SEA HAMEX 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2003.

Dear Mr Heron,

The Irish Coast Guard has no comment or observation to make concerning this report.

Yours sincerely,

**Eamon Torpav**  
SAR Operations Manager  
IRCH HQ.

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.  
An Roinn Cumarsáide, Mara agus Acmhainní Náidúrtha, Lána Chill Mochargán, Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire.  
Tel: +353 | 678 2324, Fax: +353 | 678 2269, Email: admin@irishcoastguard.ie

**MCIB RESPONSE**

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

# CORRESPONDENCE

CONTD.

## Oesterreichischer Lloyd (Master of "Sea Hamex") MCIB Response

*Oesterreichischer Lloyd*

M.V. CETAM NICEA



2<sup>nd</sup> December 2003

Marine Casualty Investigation Board  
Leeson Lane  
Dublin 2, Ireland.

DRAFT Report of the investigation into the grounding of the Malta registered car carrier "Sea Hamex" at Rosslare Europort, Co. Wexford on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

Dear Sir,

As you may see I am presently employed on m/v "Cetam Nicea" and I have received a copy of the draft report of above incident.

Herewith I'd like to inform you that I have no any comments or observation to make on this draft report.

Yours sincerely

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Captain ZDRAVKO SEFEROVIC  
Former Master of m/v "Sea Hamex"

## MCIB RESPONSE

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter.

Rosslare Europort

20

Tarnród Eireann Terminal Building Rosslare Europort Co. Wexford IRELAND	
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Mr Dick Heron  
 Secretary,  
 Marine casualty Investigation Board,  
 Leeson Lane,  
 Dublin 2.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2003.



Dear Sir,

**Your Ref: MCIB 68**

Thank you for a copy of the Draft Report on the above incident, and the opportunity to make comment therefrom.

Paragraph	Comments
3.5	Change 0012 to 1012.
5.2	The vessel refloated due to the Port Anchor being relocated into the middle of the harbour, at high tide, by a small workboat. Subsequently, ropes were run out to Berth 2 and 3 to maintain her floating position until the arrival of the Tug.
8.3	Referring to paragraph 7.4, this recommendation appears invalid for this particular incident.
8.4	It appears from the wording of this paragraph that, at the time of the incident, there did not exist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Any guidelines to vessels.</li> </ul> This would be factually incorrect.  The Risk Register, established in 1995, has been reviewed and up-dated in early February 2003, subsequent to the incident.

If I can be of further assistance, please get in touch.

Best regards,

*J. Aedan R. Jameson*

Capt. Aedan Jameson.  
 Harbour Master.

Tphn: 353 53 57920 Fax: 353 53 33206 Mobile: 353 87 2598535 Email: aedan.jameson@irishrail.ie

## MCIB Response

### **MCIB RESPONSE TO THE LETTER FROM ROSSLARE EUROPORT OF 25TH NOVEMBER 2003**

The MCIB notes the contents of this letter and has amended the Report where appropriate. However, in relation to paragraph 8.3 of the letter the recommendation has been inserted as the information contained in the Irish Coast Guard Pilot (NP 40) does not reflect fully the situation at Rosslare Europort. Tugs are not available in the port but must be obtained from elsewhere. Also there is no pilot boat available so that a pilot can board an incoming or disembark from an outgoing vessel.



