



Maritime safety measures in key position in preventing accidents at sea – actions taken to prevent major maritime accident looming in the future

The EfficienSea Project promotes maritime safety in the Baltic Sea

The European Union's Baltic Sea Region Programme has granted an unprecedented 8 million euro for the EfficienSea project promoting maritime safety in the Baltic Sea. The aim of the project in which 17 partners from six countries, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland and Estonia, participate is to make the Baltic Sea safer for transports of both passengers and goods. The project started at the beginning of 2009 and will continue for three years.

Finland's share of the received project funding amounts to 1.1 million euro, of which the European Union provides 75 percent. The rest is raised inside the country, where the ministry of employment and the economy provides the greatest share. The Finnish Maritime Administration acts as Finland's country coordinator and it also leads one of the largest work packages.

The EfficienSea project consists of four work packages, besides administration and communication.

The Finnish Maritime Administration takes part in all the work packages.

The Swedish Maritime Administration manages the work package where recruitment challenges are addressed to diversify the education and make marine professions more attractive.

The Danish Maritime Administration is responsible for the work package focussed on improving the communication of maritime information between the vessels' communications systems and the land-based systems.

The Norwegian Coastal Administration manages the work package where traffic and environmental data from the Baltic Sea is compiled into a usable form for the different partners.

The work package concerned with development of risk identification tools for vessel traffic is managed by the Finnish Maritime Administration. The work package is managed by Senior Inspector **Tommi Arola** from the Traffic Department of the Finnish Maritime Administration. The objective is to build a system that automatically tracks the movements of the vessels. On the basis of such information developing traffic situations can be assessed, potentially dangerous situations ahead detected and warnings issued in time. Forming such a situation picture of the traffic situation at sea is a familiar concept used for example in air traffic management. The system that is built will help in preventing traffic accidents at sea and in avoiding environmental catastrophes in the Baltic Sea, a particularly sensitive sea area.

From Finland the Helsinki University of Technology and the polytechnic Kymenlaakson Ammattikorkeakoulu also participate in the project, besides the Finnish Maritime Administration.

New maritime safety measures in the Sea of Åland

The new traffic separation scheme that has been approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the surveillance of vessel traffic will be introduced in the Sea of Åland on 1 January 2010. The scheme provides separate traffic lanes for vessel traffic in different directions and ships of great draught have their own, separate deep-water route. There are many busy crossings at sea where the traffic flow from east-to-west, consisting mainly of passenger ships, meets the cargo traffic flowing from south-to-north. Security zones have been established in these areas and ships warned of crossing traffic.

The Finnish Maritime Administration will start traffic surveillance at the same time as the new traffic separation scheme is introduced. Traffic violations will be reported to the flag state of the ship concerned. Traffic violations have been registered and reported already from 2003 in the Gulf of Finland area.

The traffic separation scheme and the surveillance of vessel traffic will reduce the risk of groundings and collisions in the Sea of Åland area.

Improving navigation security in the Gulf of Finland

Finland, Estonia and Russia have jointly decided to propose improvements in the traffic separation scheme in the Gulf of Finland to the International Maritime Organization (IMO). New ports have been built on the coasts of the Gulf of Finland and simultaneously old ports have been expanded and developed. There are, for example, plans to expand the port of Ust-Lugan in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, which will increase vessel traffic in the Gulf of Finland in the future.

The proposed improvements also include a widening of the traffic lanes in the Gulf of Finland, amendments in the traffic separation scheme so that it would better meet the requirements of the current traffic flow that has changed in the Gulf of Finland and the establishing of a new security zone in the area. The proposed amendments would come into force in July 2010, at the earliest.

Further Information:

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