

Report on the Investigation of a Marine Accident.

Foundering of a Latvian f/v *GIDEON* in the Atlantic Ocean, May 25th 2005.



The purpose of investigation an accident is to determine its circumstances with aim of improving the safety of shipping and the avoidance of similar accidents in future. It is not take a position of criminal liability or liability for damages in connection with accident.

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Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

b.	born
C	temperature in degrees centigrade
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
DIMA	Division for Investigation of Marine Accidents
ER	ship's engine room
f/v	fishing vessel
FFD	fish factory deck
GT	gross tonnage
IMAB	Icelandic Marine Accident Board
IMO	International Maritime Organization
kW	kilowatt
LMT	Latvian Ministry of Transportation
LR	Lloyd's Register of Shipping (a classification society)
LSR	Latvian ShipRegister
LSSA	Lithuanian Seafarers Safety Administration
m	metre
m/s	metre per second
MAL	Maritime Administration of Latvia
MAYDAY	an international signal broadcast by a vessel in distress
ME	main engine
MRCC	Marine Rescue and Co-ordination Centre
n.m.	nautical mile
No.	number
NT	netto tonnage
p.	page
pcs.	pieces
SIA	liability limited (used after a name of a Latvian business or company)
T _a	draft aft
T _f	draft forward
TSBC	Transport Safety Board of Canada
UTC	Universal Time Co-ordinated
yr.	year
λ	longitude
φ	latitude

1. Introduction

The investigation of the marine accident has been carried out basing on the yr. 1997 IMO Resolution A.849 (20) *Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties* as amended by yr. 1999 IMO Resolution A.884 (21) *Guidelines for the investigation of Human Factors in Marine casualties and incidents*, as well as upon April 21st 2004 Regulations Nr.8 issued by the LMT *The Procedure of Marine Casualties Investigation*.

2. Synopsis

On May 25th, 2005 while working in the Atlantic Ocean – in the vicinity of *the Flemish Cap* fishing area - a fire broke out in the engine room of the *f/v GIDEON*. As evidenced by the crewmembers it was extinguished by the CO₂ fire extinguishing system. After the fire had been put out it was discovered that the vessel's ER was flooding fast. As the crew was unable to stop the flooding of the ER, the captain made a decision to abandon the vessel. The crew of the *f/v GIDEON* was evacuated to the Icelandic *f/v PETUR JONSSON*, working in the vicinity at the time of the accident site. At about 22:00 UTC, the *f/v GIDEON* foundered at $\varphi=47^{\circ}52', 7'N$, $\lambda=045^{\circ}18', 5'W$ but its crew was taken to the port of St. Jones in Canada.

3. Accident Investigation

The initial accident information supplied to the DIMA of MAL by the Riga MRCC was received on May 25th 2005. During the investigation process the inspectors of DIMA of MAL had no chance to visit the site of the accident, therefore in compliance with the annex to the yr. 1997 IMO Resolution A.849 (20) *The Code of Marine Accident Investigation* (clause Nr.6 on international co-operation) the DIMA of MAL addressed the administration of the TSBC requesting to help with the investigation of the accident:

- 3.1. On May 27th and 28th inspectors of the TSBC carried out a preliminary investigation in St. Jones – each of the 15 crew members were interviewed and collecting part of the documents necessary for the investigation. In June 2005 the administration of the TSBC handed all these materials, including the audio-taped interviews with the 15 crew members of the *f/v GIDEON* and photomaterials, over for utilization by DIMA of MAL;
- 3.2. The DIMA of MAL also sent inquiries seeking additional evidence from the seamen, nationals of Iceland and Lithuania, who were working on board the *f/v GIDEON* at the moment of the accident and succeeded in getting their queries dealt with and the relevant information supplied by IMAB (Iceland) and LJDA (Lithuania);
- 3.3. Materials on the vessel's technical condition – reports on ship's surveys, and ship's construction, plans and technical drawings of the ship's structures and systems as well as other kind of technical documentation - were supplied by the Inspectorate of the LR (Icelandic department);
- 3.4. **The Icelandic owner (manager) of the *f/v GIDEON*, the Icelandic Fish Captain and the ship's Chief Engineer, have shown complete disregard for additional accident information requests despite the fact that they were expressed to them over and over again.**

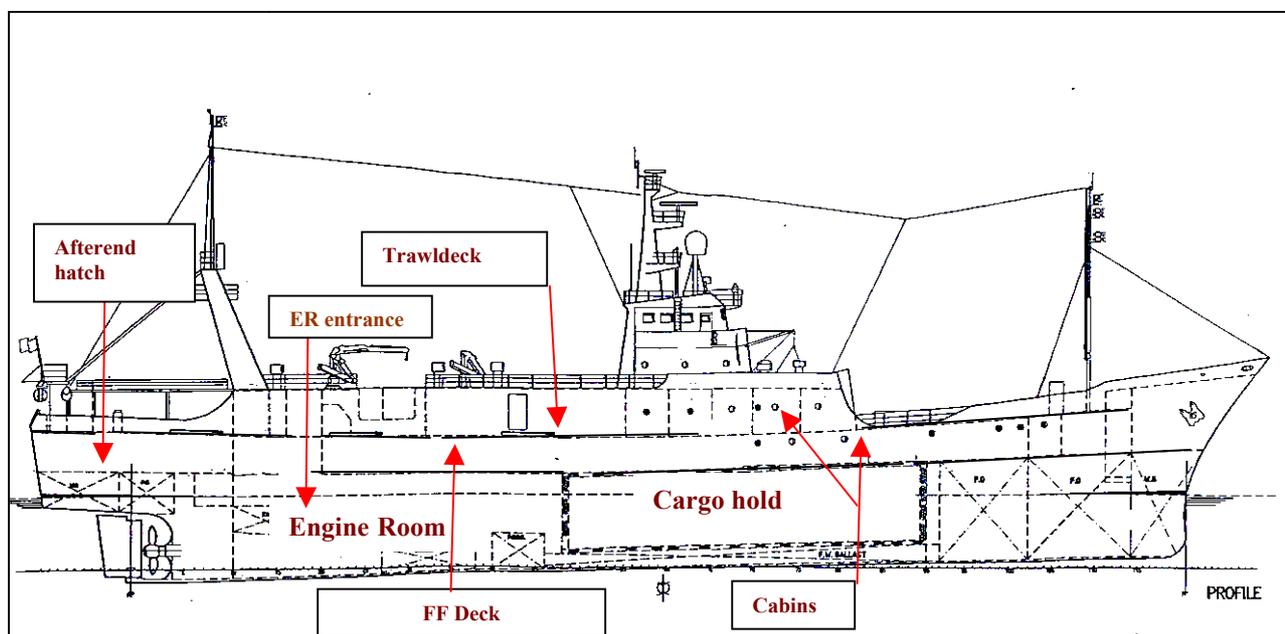
4. Weather conditions

As evidenced by the crewmembers, at the moment of the accident the weather conditions at the site of the accident were favourable: no wind, seaswell force 1, sunshine with the visibility of 8 n.m., the air temperature around +15°C, the water temperature around + 10°C.

5. Particulars of the ship, the shipowner and the charterer.

The *f/v Gideon* was under the ownership of GIDEON BALTIC Ltd, established in Riga on May 19th 2004. According to the founding contract of the company, the constituting members of GIDEON BALTIC Ltd. are two citizens of Iceland and one citizen of Denmark. Its management board consists of two people – the chairman (a citizen of Latvia) and a board member - a citizen of Iceland, the auditor being a citizen of Latvia. On behalf of every constituting member the establishing contract was signed by the Chairman who had been mandated by the ship's owner. On April 22-nd, 2005 the ship was chartered by the SKAGA till January 1st 2006.

Ship's Name	GIDEON
Ship's former name	CORDELLA, OLGA
IMO No.	7304857
LSR No.	LVR 0835
Call sign	YLAO
Port of registry	Riga
Flag state	Latvia
Registered owner	GIDEON BALTIC, Ltd
Manager	SKAGA, Ltd
Ship type	Fishing vessel
GT	1535
NT	460
Length overall	68.88 m
Width	12.65 m
Draft	T _f =4.2; T _a = 5.8m
Built	1971
Main engine type/power	Mirrlees Blacks/ 2388kW



6. Ship's registration (Flag)

Registration (flag) of the *f/v GIDEON* had been changed several times due to the changes in the ship's ownership as follows:

- 6.1. The *f/v OLGA* (the previous name of the *f/v GIDEON*) was first entered into the Latvian Ship Register by its then owner BURINIEKI Ltd. on June 30th 2003;
- 6.2. On August 10th 2004 as the ship came under the ownership of GIDEON BALTIC Ltd. its name *OLGA* was changed to *GIDEON*;
- 6.3. On November 11th 2004 the Latvian Ship Register issued a permission (expiring on October 14th 2006) allowing to enter the *f/v GIDEON* into the Commonwealth of Dominica Maritime Register on the basis of the bareboat charter, the bareboat charterer being *Alfa Fishing Ltd.*, c/o Bergvin Jonsson, Fellsmula 16, 108 Reykjavik, Iceland;
- 6.4. On April 1st, 2006 application of the shipowner GIDEON BALTIC Ltd and the charterer *Alfa Fishing Ltd.* asked the Norwegian branch of the Commonwealth of Dominica Maritime Register (Hamangskogen 60, 1338 Sandweek, Norway) to temporarily (for a period of 4 months) delete the *f/v GIDEON* from the Commonwealth of Dominica Maritime Register, their purpose being for this time period to have the ship entered into the Latvian Ship Register;
- 6.5. On April 22nd 2005, on the basis of the application of the Chairman of the Board of GIDEON BALTIC Ltd. the *f/v GIDEON* was entered into the Latvian Ship Register with the registration term expiring on July 31st 2005.

7. Ship's Crew

The multinational crew of the *f/v GIDEON* consisted of seafarers, nationals of 4 different countries, 5 of them being from Latvia, 3 from Iceland, 5 from Lithuania, and 2 from Byelorussia. The shipmaster and ship's officers included in the crew list had the following qualifications:

- 7.1. The **Master**, b.26.02.1954.in Latvia, a holder of Certificate of Competency Nr 502/04, issued 22.04.2004. in Riga. Qualifications - **Master on fishing vessels**;
- 7.2. The **Fish Captain**, b.16.06.58.in Iceland, a holder of Certificate of Competency A6, issued 18.02.2002. in Reykjavik. Qualifications – **Master on ships of up to 500 GT engaged in costal waters, Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch** - no restrictions;
- 7.3. **Mate**, b. 27.11.1971. in Iceland – possessing no certificate of competency;
- 7.4. **Chief Engineer**, b.30.06.1958.in Iceland, a holder of Certificate of Competency VF1, issued 17.05.2001.in Reykjavik. Qualifications - **Chief Engineer**;
- 7.5. **Second Engineer**, b.01.10.1961.in Latvia, a holder of Certificate of Competency Nr. 709/99, issued 11.08.1999. in Riga.(**expiry date - August 2004**). **Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch on ships with the ME power over 750kW**;

7.6. The IMO crew list of the f/v *GIDEON*;

IMO CREW LIST					
					Page No. 1
		Arrival	X	Departure	
1. Name of ship GIDEON		2. Port of Arrival/Departure St. John's		3. Date of arrival/departure 26.05.2005	
4. Nationality of ship LATVIA		5. Port arrived from HAFNARFJORDUR			6. Nature and No of identity document (seaman's passport)
	9. Rank or rating	10. Nationality	11. Date and place of birth		
1	Captain	Latvia	26.02.54 Lithuania		240338 (S)
2	Fish captain	Iceland	16.06.58 Iceland		A1071565 (P)
3	Ch.eng.	Iceland	30.06.58 Iceland		A1000015 (P)
4	Mate	Iceland	27.11.71 Iceland		A196078 (P)
5	Observer	Latvia	22.10.59 Latvia		236120 (S)
6	2nd eng.	Latvia	01.10.61 Russia		241716 (S)
7	Technolog.	Latvia	16.08.51 Latvia		208442 (S)
8	Sailor	Latvia	22.10.53 Belorussia		229559 (S)
9	Motorman	Lithuania	20.12.60 Lithuania		JK020702 (S)
10	Sailor	Lithuania	21.08.52 Ukraine		JK023605 (S)
11	Sailor	Lithuania	21.01.53 Lithuania		JK026856 (S)
12	Motorman	Lithuania	04.02.50 Russia		JK012916 (S)
13	Sailor	Lithuania	10.06.75 Lithuania		JK017496 (S)
14	Sailor	Belarus	06.07.63 Belarus		BT0000326 (S)
15	Cook	Belarus	02.09.68 Belarus		BT0000864 (S)
16					
17					
18					
19					

7.7. A copy of the Second Engineer's Certificate;

DIPLOMA KOPIJA
COPY OF CERTIFICATE
Nr. 709/99

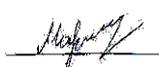
Vārds
Uzvārds
Dzimšanas datums 01.10.1964

Kvalifikācija Sardzes mehānikis uz kuģa ar galvenā dzinēja jaudu virs 750kW
Competency of Engineer officer 750kW or more

Atestāta Nr. 1350
Atestāta izsn. dat. 11.09.1999

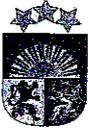
Izsn. Iestāde Latvijas Jūrnieku reģistrs
Izsn. datums: 17.08.1995

LJR vadītāja paraksts 
(Zīmogs)

Apliecības Ipašnieka paraksts 



- 7.8. As declared in job contract Nr.03/2005 since April 28th 2005 the **Latvian Shipmaster** had been on board the ship in the capacity of **the Mate**, however, due to production needs, since 01.05.2005. he had been temporarily appointed **Shipmaster** of the *f/v GIDEON* by GIDEON BALTIC Ltd order Nr.3 signed by the Chairman of the GIDEON BALTIC Ltd on 11.05.2005;
- 7.9. The 5 seafarers from Latvia signed the job contract with the SKAGA Ltd on April 28th 2005. (expiry date October 28th 2005.);
- 7.10. The ship's owner (manager) **failed to supply** the job contracts of the other crew members;
- 7.11. Contrary to the demands of the *Minimum sea manning document* the crew did not include a **Chief Mate**;
- 7.12. Ranked second in the Crew list was the Icelandic *Fish Captain*, whose qualifications according to the Certificate of Competency was *Master on ships of up to 500 GT engaged in costal waters (In actual fact, the functions performed by him on board the ship were those of a Master)*;
- 7.13. Ranked 3-rd in the Crew list was a citizen of Iceland possessing no relevant Certificate of Competency and declared in the crew list as *Mate*;
- 7.14. Instead of two Officers of Engineering Watch the crew list included only one. The Certificate of Competency possessed by the officer of the Engineering watch had run out on August 11th 2004;
- 7.15. *The Minimum safe manning document of the f/v GIDEON (p.1.)*

LATVIJAS REPUBLIKA REPUBLIC OF LATVIA			
			
APLIECĪBA PAR KUĢA APKALPES MINIMĀLO SASTĀVU MINIMUM SAFE MANNING DOCUMENT			
Latvijas valdības vārdā Latvijas Jūras administrācija izdevusi šo apliecību saskaņā ar 1974.gada Starptautiskās Konvencijas par cilvēku dzīvības aizsardzību uz jūras V/14.2 noteikumu, ar grozījumiem, prasībām.			
Issued under the provisions of Regulations V/14.2 of the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA, 1974, as amended under the authority of Government of Latvia by the Maritime Administration of Latvia.			
Kuģa vārds Name of ship	GIDEON		
Pazišanās signāls Call sign	YLAO	SJO numurs IMO number	7304857
Kuģa tips Type of ship	zvejas fishing	Pieraksta osta Port of registry	Rīga Riga
Bruto tīrpība atbilstoši Gross tonnage according to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •nacionāliem noteikumiem •to National Regulations •1969.gada Starptautiskajai Tīrpības konvencijai •International Tonnage Convention, 1969 		
Galveno dzinēju jauda (kW) Main Propulsion Power (kW)	2388		
Mašīntelpa ir periodiski bez uzraudzības (jā/nē) Periodically unattended machinery space (yes/no)	nē no		
Kuģošanas rajons Trading Area	neierobežots unrestricted navigation		
<p>Kuģim, kurš minēts šajā apliecībā, ja tas kuģo jūrā, tiek noteikts apkalpes minimālais sastāvs pēc skaita un amatiem, kas nav mazāks, kā zemāk minētajā tabulā: The ship named in this document is considered to be safely manned if, when it proceeds to sea, it carries not less than the number and grades/capacities of personnel specified in the table below:</p>			

7.16. *The Minimum safe manning document of the f/v GIDEON (p.2).*

Amats Grade/Capacity	Kvalifikācijas dokumenta STCW konvencijas noteikums Certificate (STCW regulation)	Skaitis Number of persons
Kapteinis Master	II/2, IV/2	1
Vecākais stūrmanis Chief Mate	II/2, IV/2	1
Sardzes stūrmaņi Officers in Charge of a Navigational Watch	II/1	1
Vecākais mehāniķis Chief Engineer Officer	III/3	1
Sardzes mehāniķi Officers in Charge of an Engineering Watch	III/1	2
Sardzes matroži Ratings Forming Part of a Navigational Watch	II/4	3
Sardzes motoristi Ratings Forming Part of an Engineering Watch	III/4	1
Speciālas atzīmes, ja tādas ir: Special requirements or conditions, if any		
<p>Aplicība izsniegta _____ Rīgā _____ (vieta) _____ 2005. gada 22. aprīlī _____ (datums) Issued at _____ Riga _____ (place) on the _____ April 22, 2005 _____ (date)</p> <p>Aplicība derīga līdz _____ 2010. gada 21. aprīlim _____ Date of expiry (if any) _____ April 21, 2010 _____</p> <p> Z. V. _____ Nr. _____ 05.0066.06 _____ No _____ _____ Latvijas Jūras administrācijas Kūģošanas drošības inspekcijas vadītājs Head of the Maritime Safety Inspectorate of the Maritime Administration of Latvia _____ A.Ošs</p>		

8. Onboard Watches

As evidenced by the Latvian *Master* and the ship's log book entries watches on board the *f/v GIDEON* had been organized in two shifts according to the following pattern:

- 8.1. From 00:00 till 12:00 the bridge watch was in charge of the Latvian *Master*;
- 8.2. From 12:00 till 24:00 the bridge watch was stood by the Icelandic *Fish Captain*;
- 8.3. The engine room watches were stood for 8 hour periods alternately by the Chief Engineer (Iceland) with Motorman No.1 (Lithuania) and the Second Engineer (Latvia) and Motorman No.2 (Lithuania) according to a rolling schedule;
- 8.4. Two fish processing teams were working in the fish processing unit in two shifts – alternating after every 6 hours. (On the day of the accident both the teams were working in one shift).

9. Working language on board the ship

The investigation revealed that during the voyage the crewmembers of the *f/v GIDEON* had been communicating in three different languages:

- 9.1. Russian – used by 12 people - the seafarers from Latvia, Lithuania, and Byelorussia;
- 9.2. Icelandic – used by the 3 Icelandic seafarers;
- 9.3. English – used by the Latvian *Master* to communicate with the Icelandic seafarers. The English of the other 11 crewmembers must have been poor or very poor as suggested by the fact that during the post-accident interviews the crewmembers had to evidence through an interpreter;
- 9.4. The Chief Engineer of the *f/v GIDEON* was an Icelander, the Second Engineer- a Russian. While carrying out their basic duties – servicing of the ship's machinery - the Second Engineer was expected to orally communicate

with the Chief Engineer. The fact that the TSCB inspectors had to interview the Second Engineer through the interpreter (when interviewed by the TSCB inspectors the Latvian *Master* mentioned that the Second Engineer needs an interpreter) suggests that the Second Engineer's knowledge of English was very poor. Given that the Chief Engineer could not speak Russian, it is doubtful that a normal communication between the two engineers might have happened.

10. Technical condition of the ship (the inspection of the LR classification society)

The information about the technical condition of the ship was supplied by the inspectors of the Reykjavik Department (Iceland) of the LR classification society, who carried out extensive survey of the vessel from 28.01.2004. to 11.10 2004. The general technical condition of the ship as revealed by machinery-, special-, docking- and annual tests etc., was found to be good:

- 10.1. The piping and valve system of the ship tested on 30.01.2004. and found to be in good condition;
- 10.2. The ship's forepeak-, port/starboard- and stern- ballast water tanks examined during the time period of 23.02. 2004.- 11.10. 2004. – steel considered to be good; coating– poor;
- 10.3. The condition of all the fuel and fresh water tanks – good;
- 10.4. All machinery overhauled considered as applicable satisfactorily;
- 10.5. Insulation resistance measurements considered to be satisfactorily;
- 10.6. All pumps, tested with special emphasis on fire and bilge pumps found to be in good working condition;
- 10.7. All sea water (copper pipes) in the ER found in good condition or “like new”;
- 10.8. Thickness measurements of the hull did not reveal any serious diminution except minor corrosion damage in the upper part.

11. Ship's fire-alarm and detection systems.

The investigation materials which are at the disposal of the DIMA of MAL evidence that the fire alarms of *f/v GIDEON* had been fully operational, because on September 10, 2004 the fire alarm and detection equipment of the *f/v GIDEON* was examined by the inspectors of the company *Security Center of Iceland*. It was established that the ship's fire alarms were fully operational and the ship was equipped with the following fire alarm detectors and alarms:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 11.1. <i>Cerberus</i> - type <i>Ionic</i> smoke detectors | 31 pcs; |
| 11.2. <i>Cerberus</i> , <i>Apollo 65</i> - type heat detectors | 16 pcs; |
| 11.3. <i>Cerberus</i> - type manual fire alarm stations | 9; |
| 11.4. <i>Cerberus</i> - type alarm bells | 6 pcs; |
| 11.5. <i>Compax HPM4</i> - type sirens (Tayphoon) | 3; |

These are the fire alarm and security system deficiencies eliminated following the *Security Center of Iceland (SCI)* inspection of the *f/v GIDEON*:

- 11.6. A new fire alarm panel installed;
- 11.7. In the ship's ER - two heat detectors replaced (according to the SCI inspectors there had been at least 6 fully operational detectors installed in the ship's ER);
- 11.8. In zone 2 - earthing repaired and 4 smoke detectors replaced;

11.9. The faulty electric circuit of the fire bell has been repaired and two signal horns replaced (1 - on the FF deck, 1 - in the ship's ER).

12. Ship's Deck Log Book

The Deck Log Book of the *f/v GIDEON* had been filled in carelessly and in poor quality ignoring a number of the Latvian Maritime legislation requirements.

12.1. The Log Book entries do not comply with the demands of Paragraph 278. *Ship's Log Books (The Maritime Code of Latvia Section G.)* The Log Book had (unofficially) been numbered as No.1 and it had been started as late as 00:00 hours on 12.05.2005., the vessel already having entered high seas at the position $\varphi=60^{\circ}52,7'N$, $\lambda=031^{\circ}18,5'W$. (The vessel left the port of *Halfnarfjodur* on May 10th 2005);

Forma K-1

APSTIPRINĀTS
ar Latvijas Republikas Satiksmes
ministra pavēli Nr. 16/07-50
1993. 6. oktobrī

KUĢA ŽURNĀLS
DECK LOG BOOK

Nr. 1

Kuģa vārds GIDEON
Ship's name

Pazišanās signāls YLAD
Identification signal

Reģistrācijas Nr. un osta RIGA LVQ0835
Ship's registration No. and home port

Kuģa īpašnieks SIA "Gideon-Baltic"
Owner of ship

Žurnāls sākts 2005.g. 12. " may
Log Book commenced

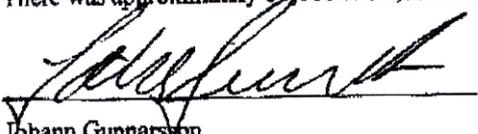
Žurnāls pabeigts 199 .g." "
Log Book completed

F/v GIDEON Deck Log Book. Title page

Kuģa koordinātes 24.00: Ship's position at 24.00:		Platums Latitude _____	Garums Longitude _____
Noietais attālums jūras jūdzēs: Distance in Nautical Miles:		Diennakti Days run _____	No reisa sākuma Voyage run _____
Laiks Hours	14. Sardze Watch		15. Kuģa krājumi uz 12.00 Ship's supplies at 12.00
00-04	Cvetkov		Mazuts Fuel oil _____ mt
04-08	Cvetkov		Dīzeļdegviela Diesel oil _____ mt
08-12	Cvetkov		Saldūdens Fresh water _____ mt
12-16	Gunnarsson		70
16-20	Gunnarsson		Balasta ūdens Ballast water _____ mt
20-24	Gunnarsson		

Signature next to the Icelandic *Fish Captain's* name in the ship's Deck Log Book

There was approximately



Johann Gunnarsson
May 28th, 2005
At St John's Newfoundland

A copy of the original signature of the Icelandic *Fish Captain*.

- 12.3. The Log Book had been in Russian and contains very scarce information about the operations of the ship. The ship's Deck Log Book carries no information about the amounts and stowage of fuel, ballast water and the ship's catch and has a number of other drawbacks;
- 12.4. In compliance with Article No.3 of *Instructions for filling in the ship's Deck Log Book* and according to good sea practice, the entries into the Ship's Deck Log Book are made by the Officers on Watch and/or the Shipmaster (recording their watch personally);
- 12.5. Contrary to Article 19 of the *Instructions for filling in the Ship's Deck Log Book* and Article 2 of paragraph 21 of section C of the *Law on the Board of the Maritime Matters and Marine Safety* the Log Book has neither been registered somewhere nor approved by someone;

Kuģa žurnāla Nr. ostas Reģistrā
The Port's Register Number of Log Book

Žurnālā tipogrāfiski iesietas, sanumurētas un cauršporētas 140 lappuses.
In this Log Book there are 140 pages binded, numbered and sewed.

Apstiprināts _____ **ostas kapteiņa dienestā.**
Certified in _____ Harbour Master's Office _____

Žurnāla apstiprinātāja uzvārds un amats
Official's Name and Post _____

Paraksts:
Signature: _____

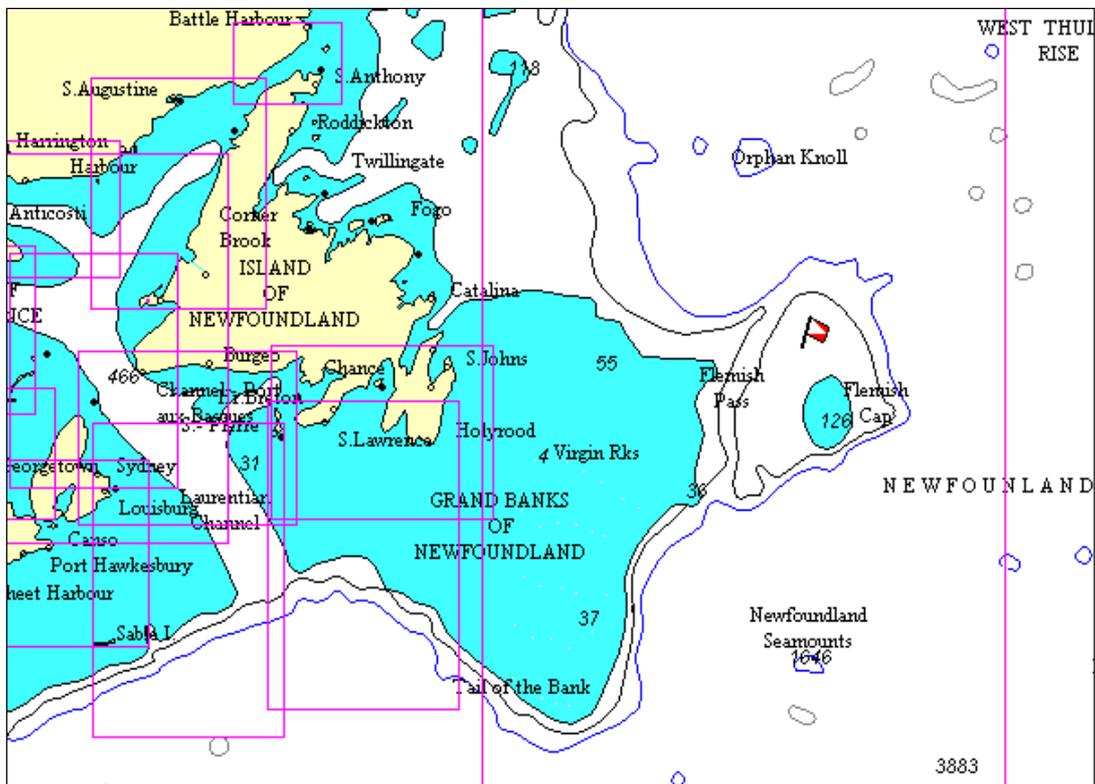
Datums
Date _____

The Log Book has neither been registered nor approved.

12.6. It has to be stated that in the process of filling in the Deck Log Book of the *f/v GIDEON* Articles 10, 11, 12, 14, and 19 of *Instructions for filling in the ship's Deck Log Book* had been ignored.

13. The site of the accident.

The f/v *GIDEON* foundered in the Atlantic Ocean in the vicinity of the shoal of *Flemish Cap*, 200 n.m. off the Canadian zone in the position of $\varphi=47^{\circ}52,7'N$, $\lambda=045^{\circ}18,5'W$, in the depth of approximately 300 m.



14. Sequence of events as testified by the crewmembers.

On May 10th 2005. the f/v *GIDEON* left the port of Halfnarfjodur in Iceland heading for the fishing area in the vicinity of the shoal of the *Flemish Cap in the Atlantic Ocean* 200 n.m. off the Canadian zone, and reached it on May 16th 2005. On May 25-th the vessel was on its way from one fishing ground to the other (fishing square 3M).

- 14.1. At 12:00 a change of watches took place on board the ship: the Icelandic *Fish Captain* took over the bridge watch from the Latvian *Master*, who went to take a rest after the night's watch. In the ship's ER the Chief Engineer took over the watch from the Second Engineer who together with a motorman who also had just finished his night shift went to take a rest. There had been no complaints about the ship's propulsion and the Chief Engineer went to his cabin. The remaining 10 crewmembers were working on board (all in one shift), where they were preparing (changing) the fishing gear for the new fishing ground;
- 14.2. At 13:00 the Chief Engineer visited the ER, where everything was found to be functioning properly, then he went to the workshop located on the FF deck to work there. (He did not specify what exactly he had been busy with);
- 14.3. At 13:56 the Icelandic *Fish Captain* (according to his explanatory note), standing his navigational watch on the bridge, sighted thick black smoke coming from the ventilation manholes of the ER (when being interviewed by the TSBC inspectors he claimed not having heard the fire alarm because at the moment he had been in the toilet). He slowed the ship down and stopped the ME. Then the ship's fire alarm went off. The Latvian *Master*, woken by

- the alarm, and having noticed black, thick fire coming from the ship's ER, headed for the bridge;
- 14.4. At 13:56-14:00 *The Mate* (rank according to the crew list) who had been working on the deck noticed a fire in the vessel's ER and having informed other seamen about it headed for the bridge, where reported the fire to the Icelandic *Fish Captain*. The Second Engineer had been woken by a sailor. The motorman, who had been standing the watch together with the Second Engineer had already been awake;
 - 14.5. As evidenced by the Chief Engineer, at 14:00 a blackout occurred on board the ship. The Chief Engineer headed for the ER (there is no time specified in his explanatory note) but failed to enter it because of the thick black smoke coming from the ER. Also his other attempt to enter the ER through the other entrance failed because of the black thick smoke there. The head count was carried out and ventilation manholes closed (for the purpose of hermetisation). The Icelandic *Fish Captain* sent a MAYDAY message over the radio and established a contact with the ships in the vicinity.
 - 14.6. At 14:23/30, following the order of the Latvian *Master*, the Second Engineer together with the Chief Engineer activated the CO₂ fire extinguishing system in order to extinguish the fire in the ER;
 - 14.7. At 15:35 two crewmembers – smoke divers (the Second Engineer and the Motorman No 2 dressed in fireman's outfits) were sent to the ER with the purpose of establishing the cause of the fire there. On entering the ER the Second Engineer was not able to see anything apart from the water in the ER, on the ME's deck because of the poor visibility (1-2m) caused by thick, black smoke there, which he had immediately reported to the Latvian *Master*. The Latvian *Master* ordered the smoke divers to return to the main deck;
 - 14.8. At 15:45 the smoke divers descended into the ship's ER again, where they noticed the water having already reached the level of the main switch board;
 - 14.9. At 15:50 the crew was ordered to prepare for abandoning the vessel;
 - 14.10. At 16:20/30 the Second Engineer once again looked into the ER from the FF deck and noticed that the water had already reached the deck of the FFD;
 - 14.11. At 17:29 arrived the Icelandic *f/v PETUR JONSSON* and the evacuation of the crew of the *f/v GIDEON* was started by a motorboat of the *f/v PETUR JONSSON*;
 - 14.12. At 17:50 the Icelandic *Fish Captain* saw the water being already on the deck of the FFD;
 - 14.13. At 18:00 the last crewmembers – the Latvian *Master* and the Icelandic *Fish Captain* – abandoned the ship. It had taken the motor boat of the *f/v PETUR JONSSON* to travel to and from the *f/v GIDEON* three times to evacuate all the 15 crewmembers;



14.14. At 19:00 the crew of the f/v *GIDEON* were transferred from the f/v *PETUR JONSSON* to the fishing patrol boat *JEAN CHAROT*;

14.15. At 22:00 the f/v *GIDEON* with approximately 6 tons of processed fish, about 90 000 litres of heavy fuel oil and about 3,000 litres of luboil on board foundered.

The chronology of the accident is based upon the evidence given by the crewmembers. The evidence of the Latvian *Master*, the Icelandic *Fish Captain*, the Chief Engineer and the Second Engineer are very vague, provide no details of the accident and fail to clearly reveal the course of events.

15. Aftermath of the accident.

After the "fire" and flooding of the ship's ER the f/v *GIDEON* foundered at about 22:00 UTC on May 25th 2005. in position of $\varphi=47^{\circ}52,7'N$, $\lambda=045^{\circ}18,5'W$ to the depth of about 300 m. All 15 crew members of the f/v *GIDEON* were evacuated from board the ship and taken to the port of St.Jones.





16. Accident analysis

16.1. *On the ER-fire on board the f/v GIDEON*

The analysis of the investigation materials cause a suspicion that the fire in the ER of the *f/v GIDEON* might have been staged. This kind of suspicion is based on a number of facts:

- 16.1.1. There are photographs at the disposal of the investigation taken from board the *f/v PETUR JONSSON* and other ships showing the *f/v GIDEON* before sinking and in the process of sinking. Neither of these photographs show anything that could be considered a trace left by fire;



Ships port side after the fire



Starboard side after the fire

- 16.1.2. No sign of "fire" can be traced on the white painting of the ship's deck constructions (the masts, superstructure etc.) bears, as the white painting is neither blackened with soot nor burnt;
- 16.1.3. Near the *f/v GIDEON* no smoke can be noticed in the atmosphere (it is sunny, no wind blowing);
- 16.1.4. When comparing the photographs of the *f/v GIDEON* to a photograph where a fire on board a similar *f/v SOZIDANIE* has been pictured (sunny weather, no wind blowing), then clearly visible traces of a fire on the masts of the ship can be noticed. **Not even a slightest trace of a fire can be noticed when examining the photographs of the *f/v GIDEON*.**



Fire on board the *f/v SOZIDANIE*

- 16.1.5. The testimonies of the smoke divers considered to be true (thick black smoke due to which one hour after flooding of the CO₂ extinguisher the visibility in the ship's ER had been 1-2 m) they would suggest a large-scale fire having happened in the ship's ER, consequently after the fire had been extinguished there would have been smoke coming from the ship's ER for several hours which could be seen on the photographs. Traces of fire - the blackened with soot painting and, possibly, also burns – should have been noticeable on the white painting of the surfaces of the ship's superstructure and/or deck constructions;
- 16.1.6. The Shipmaster of the *f/v PETUR JONSSON*, who evacuated the crew of the *f/v GIDEON*, has confirmed that, when his vessel had approached the *f/v GIDEON* at the closest distance possible (approximately 5 m off its side), he could not see any traces of fire, however he had noticed a few hatches and doors not having been closed.

16.2. Foundering of the *f/v GIDEON*

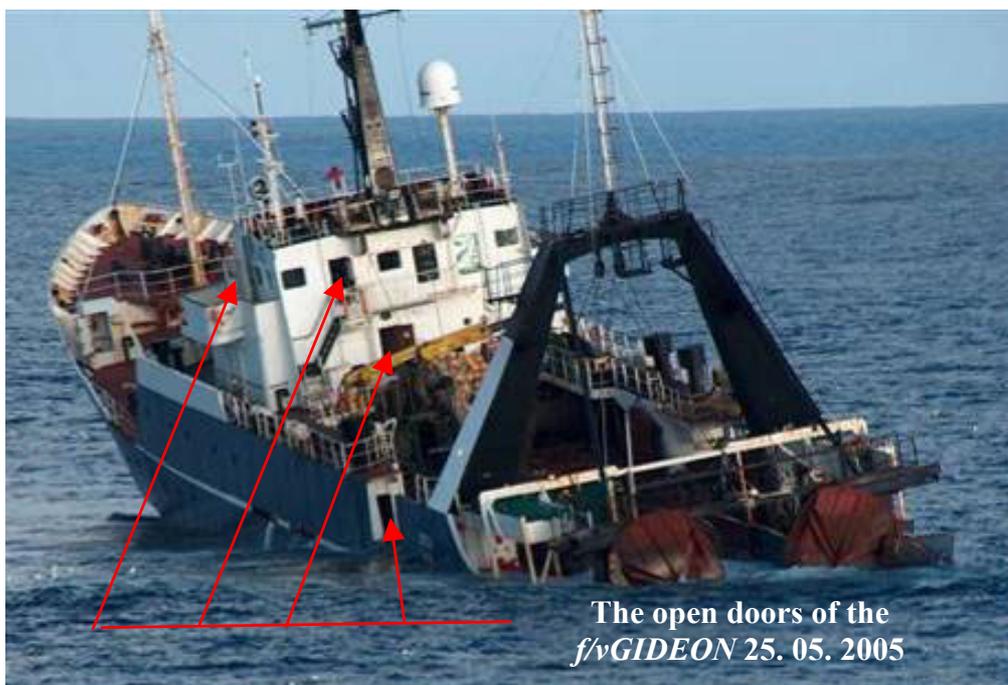
At about 16:20/30 (approximately 3 hours after everything in the vessel's ER had been found functioning properly) the vessel's ER was already full of water – this suggests of water flooding the ER very fast. In the course of investigation not a single substantiated version had been found as to why an intensive flooding had started in the vessel's ER. because it has been established that :

- 16.2.1. The vessel had not been involved in a collision with another vessel or object;
- 16.2.2. There had been no explosion in the vessel's ER;
- 16.2.3. The vessel had not suffered in a storm (her hull had not been put under structural strain);
- 16.2.4. The crew had given no information (had expressed no complaints) about unsatisfactorily condition of the ship's hull, balast- fuel- and other tanks and/or systems which might have caused a leak or any other obvious reason for the water rapidly entering the vessel's ER. The Chief

Engineer, who had worked on board this ship only for 3 weeks noted in his report that during the voyage there had been a problem with the shaft generator, which at times used to switch off due to decrease in voltage;
16.2.5. The rapid flooding of the ship's ER confirms the evidence given by the Master of the *f/v PETUR JONSSON* as to the ship's hatches and doors not having been closed;



Information supplied by IMAB



16.2.6. Due to the fact that the investigation did not manage to obtain a single evidence that would logically explain the reasons for the flooding of the ship's ER, deliberately evil actions of the crewmembers as the reason for foundering of the vessel cannot be excluded.

16.3. The Shipmaster.

16.3.1. In compliance with the international and national maritime legislation, and good sea practice there is one captain on board the ship, who commands the crew and is responsible for the ship's overall safety, management and navigation business, and carries out the main duties on board the ship;

16.3.2. Paragraph 273. (*Maritime Code* of Latvia, Chapter XXIX) The Shipmaster. Powers of the shipmaster states:

“...(1) *the Shipmaster commands the ship's crew and is responsible for the ship's overall management and navigation, and carries out the necessary measures for onboard implementation of the requirements as stated in the Latvian norms and legislation...*

...*(2) The employer ensures the Shipmaster with the resources enabling the captain to realize his duties ...”.*

16.4. The formal and actual functions of the Latvian Master on board the f/v *GIDEON*

Formally, it was the Latvian *Master* who in compliance with the requirements of *The Maritime Code* of Latvia and other legislation had to carry out the duties of the shipmaster on board the f/v *GIDEON* (the flag state Latvia), however, in practice he, (following the orders of the shipowner and/or charterer) did not have (was not granted) this opportunity. The facts leading to the conclusion that the duties of the shipmaster had not been carried out solely by the Latvian *Master* are as follows:

16.4.1. The oral evidence of the Latvian Master: the leadership in onboard operations, while fishing on the fishing grounds, in the procedure of handing over the fish in ports, in maintaining communication with the coast and in other activities on board the ship were carried out by the Icelandic *Fish Captain* (fearing to lose his job the Latvian *Master* did not dare to complain about this kind of violation of his legal rights);

16.4.2. The Icelandic *Fish Captain* had been standing the navigational watch on the bridge when the fire was discovered in the ship's ER. Instead of immediately reporting the fire to the Latvian *Master* (as the legal Shipmaster on board the vessel), raising a fire alarm, starting hermetization and fighting the fire, the Icelandic *Fish Captain*, without having received any prior consent from the Latvian *Master* had already established contact with the Icelandic f/v *PETUR JONSSON* and had started talks about the evacuation of the crew of the f/v *GIDEON* (as evidenced by the Latvian *Master*);

16.4.3. Distribution of onboard watches:

- The watch from 00:00 till 12:00 was stood by the Latvian *Master*;
- The watch from 12:00 till 24:00 was stood by the Icelandic *Fish Captain* (good sea practice suggests that in situations, when navigational watches on board the ship are stood by two navigators, the shipmaster stands the watch during the day and takes the rest at night while his partner stands the watch at night but takes the rest during the day);

- 16.4.4. The location of the cabins of the Latvian *Master* and the Icelandic *Fish Captain* confirms the leading role taken by the Icelandic *Fish Captain* on board the ship :
- The cabin overlooking the fore end of the ship, was inhabited by the Icelandic *Fish Captain* (following good sea practice, this enables the shipmaster, to control the navigational situation, without leaving his cabin);
 - The cabin facing the ship's after end (formerly the Chief Engineer's cabin) was inhabited by the Latvian *Master*.
- 16.4.5. The actions taken by the Latvian *Master* and the Icelandic *Fish Captain* during the occurrence:
- The Icelandic *Fish Captain* was working on the bridge and maintained radio communications with other vessels;
 - The Latvian *Master* commanded extinguishing of the fire and reported the developments on the bridge to the Icelandic *Fish Captain*. (from an interview with the TSB inspectors);
 - As evidenced by the sailors, the order to abandon the ship had been given by the Icelandic *Fish Captain*.
- 16.5. ***The actions taken by the ship's Officers on Watch during the occurrence and the conflicting evidence given by the crewmembers:***
- 16.5.1. The Icelandic *Fish Captain* who was standing the watch at the moment of the accident gave conflicting information as regards the alarm(s). According to one of the versions he noticed black thick smoke coming from the ventilation manholes of the ship's ER and heard the fire alarm, while on the bridge at about 13:56. According to his second version he had not heard the alarm as he had been in the WC at the moment. (from the interview with the inspectors of the TSBC), According to the evidence obtained from other crewmembers the Icelandic *Fish Captain* had been informed about the fire by the Icelandic *Mate*;
- 16.5.2. The fire-alarm could not but go off at the initial phase of the fire and it could not but had to be heard on the bridge, the deck and possibly in the workshop (where according to the reports the Chief Engineer had been working at the moment);
- 16.5.3. The Officer on Watch standing the bridge watch at the moment of the occurrence (the Icelandic *Fish Captain*) was supposed to raise the fire-alarms soon as the fire had been discovered;
- 16.5.4. A group of smoke divers had to be sent to the ship's ER, which (possibly) could have extinguished the fire at its initial stage;
- 16.5.5. The Chief Engineer was said to have taken over the ER watch from the Second Engineer at around 12:00, while the ship was underway with all the equipment and ER machinery functioning properly. From 12:00 till 13:00 the Second Engineer was in his cabin. At around 13:00 he visited the ER where everything was found to be functional, then up to the moment when the fire was detected (13:56) he had been working in the workshop located on the FFDeck. The Motorman on Watch could not be found in the vessel's ER, as he had been ordered to do welding on the deck;
- 16.5.6. Having left the ER unattended (without being watched) from 12:00 till 13:00 and from 13:00 till 14:00 the Chief Engineer had ignored the

demand as regards keeping a constant watch in the ship's ER as required in the *Minimum Safe Manning Document*;

16.5.7. The evidence given by the Chief Engineer stating that it had been impossible for him to enter the vessel's ER because of the smoke there is conflicting with the evidence given by the Motorman (the one who stood daily ER watches together with the Second Engineer) who reported to have seen **the Chief Engineer (his clothes soaking wet), leaving the vessel's ER** around the moment when the Icelandic *Ffish Captain* noticed the fire and notified others about it.

16.6. ***The conclusions of the TSBC inspectors about the Incident/ Accident based on the the interviews of the crew of the f/v GIDEON in St.Jones:***

16.6.1. For several months the catch has been poor;

16.6.2. The last / previous three months the ship had been in lay on;

16.6.3. Less than a month had passed since the vessel returned into fishing business;

16.6.4. The catches had been very poor;

16.6.5. The Icelandic *Ffish Captain* had informed (complained to) the ship's owner about the poor catch a few hours before the fire broke out;

16.6.6. The whole crew, with the exception of the cook, had been assembled on the deck an hour before the fire broke out;

16.6.7. From 13:00 till 4:00 (the time period when the fire had ben detected) the Chief Engineer had been alone in the ER and/or in the adjacent workshop;

16.6.8. The Chief Engineer was unable to specify when asked by the investigators what he had specifically been doing during the hour that he spent working in the vessel's workshop (the answer given had been – “doing the routine jobs”);

16.6.9. With the workshop located near the vessel's ER and the doors being open, the Chief Engineer had not noticed any signs of fire in the vessel's ER until ME had been slowed down;

16.6.10. According to the Chief Engineer, the watertight door between the vessel's ER and the FF deck had been closed, but while foundering the water had already been observed / noticed on the FF deck;

16.6.11. The Icelandic *Ffish Captain* had ordered the crew to be prepared to abandon the ship before the water had been discovered in the vessel's ER;

16.6.12. Another Icelandic fishing vessel (*f/v PETUR JONSSON*) happened to be in an hour's voyage from the *f/v GIDEON*;

16.6.13. The weather conditions had been ideal for the evacuation of the crew from *f/v GIDEON*;

16.6.14. On visiting the vessel's ER after the flooding of CO₂ the Second Engineer failed to find any traces of fire there;

16.6.15. Even after the arrival of the *f/v PETUR JONSSON* no attempt had been made to pump the water out of the vessel's ER;

16.6.16. The Icelandic *Ffish Captain* had been very concerned about the safety of the crewmembers (during the evacuation).

17. Conclusions

The scope and the content of the material available to the investigation precluded identifying the time, location and causes of the fire on board the *f/v GIDEON*, **(if we are prepared to concede that the fire had been an actual fact)** as well as establishing reasons for the flooding of the vessel's ER:

17.1. ***The DIMA of MAL could not succeed in obtaining the required amount of information and materials necessary for establishing the actual circumstances of the ship's destruction due to the following reasons:***

17.1.1. Sinking of the vessel precluded her examination;

17.1.2. There was no chance for the inspectors to visit the scene of the accident, therefore the inspectors of the DIMA of MAL interviewed only the five crewmembers living in Latvia. The interviews with other crewmembers were audiotaped, and supplied by the inspectors of TSBC;

17.1.3. No one of the crewmember interviews (with the exception of that of the a motorman) contained conclusive as to the the course of events during the occurrence;

17.1.4. No external factors, having possibly served as a cause of the flooding of the vessel's ER could be established;

17.1.5. Examination of the reports of the inspections of the LR on the technical condition of the *f/v GIDEON* revealed no discrepancies concerning the technical condition of the vessel's hull, her structures, installations, equipment or systems which due to their character might be considered to have caused the accident;

17.1.6. The Icelandic shipowners (the manager), the Icelandic *Fish Captain* and the Chief Engineer failed to supply with the following information requested by the investigation:

17.1.6.1. Technical diagrams for the ER fire detectors;

17.1.6.2. The information about the bilge water level alarms;

17.1.6.3. Information on the amount and disposition of fuel and balast in the tanks;

17.1.6.4. Information on the calculations of the vessel's floatability;

17.1.6.5. Job contracts (with the exception of those of the Latvian seafarers).

17.2. ***The analysis of the materials of investigation, the scarce evidence given by the crewmembers and the strange behaviour of the Chief Engineer cause a suspicion that the reason of the foundering of the vessel might have been deliberately evil actions of the crewmembers.***

17.3. ***The investigation revealed that the following discrepancies, related to functioning of a multi-national crew had been permitted on board the Latvian-flagged f/v GIDEON by its charterer SKAGA Ltd:***

17.3.1. Unjustifiable (non-sanctioned) transformation of the authority of the Latvian *Master* over to the Icelandic *Fish Captain*, who despite never having been formally appointed *Master* of a Latvian-flagged vessel, actually had been doing the duties of the shipmaster on board the ship despite the fact that his qualifications as stated in the *Certificate of Competency*, do not allow him to take up the post;

17.3.2. Existence of a certain language barrier between the Icelandic sailors on one hand and the Latvian, Lithuanian and Byelorussian sailors on the other hand due to the poor English knowledge of the latter could not have facilitated safe exploitation of the vessel.

- 17.3.3. Ignoring the safety drills on board the vessel – not a single safety drill had been carried out on board the vessel since 10.05.2005. when she went to sea, contrary to the requirements of Regulations No. 11 *Regulations on the Safety of Fishing Vessels* (Chapter VIII, Regulation No.3 Article No.1 Sub-clause (a) and Article 3) issued by the LMT on 30.04.2004. g;
- 17.3.4. Manning of the ship did not meet the requirements of the *Minimum Safe Manning Document*.

18. Recommendations

In order to ensure that the working practices on board the Latvian-flagged fishing vessels comply with the requirements of the Latvian legislation and international conventions the DIMA of MAL has produced the following recommendations:

18.1. *The owner and/ or the charterer shall:*

- 18.1.1. Ensure that the shipmaster is authorized to carry out his duties of a master on a Latvian-flagged ship as stated in the *Maritime Code* of Latvia [Chapter XXIX. Paragraph 272. Articles (1), (2), (3)] and the *Maritime Administration and Marine Safety Law* [Section C, Chapter II, Paragraph 23, Article (1)];
- 18.1.2. Ensure control over the adequacy and validity of the *Certificates of Competency* possessed by crewmembers;
- 18.1.3. In case of a multi-national crew ensure the working language on board the vessel. In case the working language on board the vessel is English testing of the sailor's English in crewing companies is highly recommended.

18.2. *The Maritime Safety Inspectorate, in the process of administering the flag-state inspections, shall exercise control over the following:*

- 18.2.1. Adequacy of the crewmember rankings to the vessel's *Crew list* and the requirements of the *Minimum Safe Manning Certificate*;
- 18.2.2. Adequacy and expiry dates of the *Certificates of Competency* possessed by the seafarers;
- 18.2.3. Onboard working language in case of a multi-national crew;
- 18.2.4. Administration of onboard drills (fire drills) in compliance with Regulations No.11. *Regulations on the Safety of Fishing Vessels*;
- 18.2.5. Adequate utilisation of the ship's Deck Log Book in compliance with the *Maritime Administration and Marine Safety Law* [Section C, Chapter I, Paragraph 21, Articles (1) and (2) and the Regulations on *Filling in the Ship's Deck Log Book*.

18.3. *The Registry of Seamen is recommended:*

- 18.3.1. To suggest developing of a conception of certification of foreign seafarers employed on board the Latvian-flagged vessels.
- 18.4. To encourage the captains of the fishing vessels to report the cases when the rights of the Latvian shipmasters have been violated by the shipowners and/or charterers as well as about other violations regarding functioning of a fishing vessel to the Maritime Administration of Latvia.

DIMA of MAL