



Statens haverikommission
Swedish Accident Investigation Authority

M/S Estonia Preliminary Assessment: Underwater Survey is planned to start in July 2021

The preliminary assessment is performed by the Estonian Safety Investigation Bureau, the Finnish Safety Investigation Authority and the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority. The three authorities announced in December 2020 that underwater operations would be needed in order to complete the preliminary assessment.

After requests from the authorities, the governments of Finland and Sweden have initiated legislative procedures to amend their respective national legislation in order to remove the legislative obstacles to such underwater examinations. The ambition is that these amendments will enter into force on 1 July 2021.

The Estonian Safety Investigation Bureau and the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority are planning to carry out a pre-survey at the accident site during summer 2021. It will mainly focus on examining the sea bottom conditions and be a preparation for further investigation measures. The covering work that began in the 1990s meant that large amounts of sand were spread out around the ship. Furthermore, geotextile was used to strengthen the seabed. In addition, it is known that there have been landslides on the bottom that have moved some bottom material. In order to be able to assess how these conditions affect e.g. future photographing of the ship there is a need to first examine the ship's position and the conditions of the sea bottom.

In this work the Safety Investigation Authorities cooperate with experts on geology as well as universities. A research vessel from Stockholm university and an Estonian multipurpose icebreaker of the Estonian Transport Administration will be used for the pre-survey.

Based on the results provided by the pre-survey, a procurement will be carried out for further underwater operations which, among other things, involve the use of cameras to document the ship by photogrammetry. It is currently likely that this larger survey will take place in the spring of 2022.

Further Information:

Estonia (OJK): Executive Director Rene Arikas, +372 6256314, rene.arikas@ojk.ee

Sweden (SHK): Deputy Director General Jonas Bäckstrand, +46 8 508 862 82, jb@havkom.se

