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This document is a translation made by SHK of the original response in Swedish to the safety recommendation. In case of discrepancies between this translation and the Swedish original text, the Swedish text shall prevail in the interpretation of the response.

Ministry of Defence

Division for Civil Defence, Department for
Civil Protection

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Swedish Accident Investigation Authority
Box 6014
102 31 Stockholm

Statement as a consequence of the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority's final report (SHk 2025:03) MARCO POLO – grounding in Northern Hanö Bay

In its final report (SHK 2005:03) concerning the grounding of MARCO POLO in Northern Hanö Bay, the Swedish Accident Investigation Authority (SHK) issued a recommendation to the Swedish Government to investigate how society's ability to deal with major shipping accidents can be enhanced. According to SHK, the investigation should review the roles and responsibilities of the organisations concerned and the potential to share geographic information and clarify responsibility for the clean-up of oil following a shipping accident. An investigation of this nature should, according to SHK, also include measures that can reduce the risk of shipping accidents due to disruptions or interruptions of GNSS.

The Ministry of Defence is able to establish that several measures have been implemented by the Government and the authorities concerned that are relevant in this context.

The Government Offices of Sweden (Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure) is considering giving an investigator the task of analysing the prerequisites for transferring responsibility for air-sea rescue from the Swedish Maritime Administration to another authority with a rescue services remit, for example the Coast Guard or the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). The aims of this include enhancement of Sweden's maritime and aeronautical rescue capabilities.

In December 2024 the Government has given the contingency authorities, among them the Coast Guard, the Swedish Transport Agency and the Maritime Administration, the task of ensuring that these authorities have the ability to take action proactively and strongly when dealing with both peacetime emergency situations and in the event of war and the threat of war.

These authorities are to report on the action taken and the results of this no later than 1 March 2026.

Work is ongoing within the scope of the National Collaborative Group for Oil Damage Protection to produce a national contingency plan for dealing with shipping accidents involving marine contamination. This plan is to include how emergency responders are to collaborate to ensure that maritime oil spills are tackled effectively and also that a national training programme and directions for oil damage protection exercises are produced. This work, which is being led by the Coast Guard, is to be completed during 2025.

Work is ongoing with the scope of the contingencies sector Rescue Services and Protection of the Populations, for which MSB is responsible, to produce guiding principles for clarifying responsibilities and roles between central government and municipal actors in the event of oil clean-up in coastal waters and ports. This work is to be completed in 2025.

The purpose of the Geographic Information Protection Act (2016:319) and Geographic Information Protection Ordinance (2016:320) is to protect information of importance to total defence and there is already an existing opportunity to decide on sharing of geographic information when a need arises, for example in the event of an emergency response. Taking into account the time sensitivity that often characterises accidents, affected authorities are able, within their current remits, to collaborate before an accident has occurred so that effective contact pathways and systems for sharing relevant information are always in place in the event of an emergency response.

Disruptions of GNSS services and their impact on civil aviation and shipping are addressed in the Government's defence and security strategy for space (Government decision of 4 July 2024 FÖ2024/01325 I:8). Furthermore, stress is placed on the importance of national infrastructure with an alarm function for monitoring GNSS services in order to understand and manage disruptions as part of a national space situation report. One of the focuses of the strategy is for Sweden to take action to ensure redundancy and robustness in terms of access to space services. In the spring amending budget for 2025 (Government decision of 10 April 2025, Govt bill 2024/25:99), the Government has proposed measures for ensuring that shipping and aviation have access to robust time and position data in order to reduce their vulnerability in the event of GNSS disruptions.

As part of this it is proposed that MSB's appropriations be increased for coordinating the work to make the robust and encrypted PRS service from the EU's Galileo programme available in Sweden.

All in all, the action taken, planned and ongoing within the area is deemed to enhance society's ability to deal with major shipping accidents.

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Malin Bohlin
Director