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COLLISION IN THE STRAIT OF CANAKKALE

Communication by the Government of Turkey

The attached communication received from His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey is circulated pursuant to the request of His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey.

3926n/ta

SAFETY OF NAVIGATION IN THE TURKISH STRAITS  
COLLISION ON 12 DECEMBER 1994 IN THE STRAIT OF ÇANAKKALE

1. On 12 December 1994, around 05.40h. (local time), a 41.700 DWT Greek bulk carrier Captain Nicholas (177m. in length) and a 30.320 DWT grt Greek Cypriot tanker Athenian Harmony (171m. in length) collided in the Çanakkale Strait off Cape Nara.

2. The Southbound vessel Captain Nicholas, with a cargo of iron-steel (37.875 ton) was grounded in the vicinity of Kilya light.

The Athenian Harmony was loaded with 25.360 tons of gasoline and bound for the Black Sea port of Constanza in Romania.

3. Both vessels sustained material damage. There was no loss of human life. Necessary precautions have promptly been taken by the units in the area and rescue operations have been undertaken.

4. Immediately after the collision, maritime traffic in the Strait of Çanakkale had to be temporarily suspended. As of 09.30h., in the morning of 12 December, the Strait was opened for one-way traffic, following the initial safety precautions. This allowed for clearing the transiting vessels in the Straits and avoiding, to the best possible extent, concentration at the entrances of the Strait.

Subsequently, in view of the fact that the grounded Captain Nicholas in the vicinity of Kilya light obstructed the visibility of the said light in the northern direction, and in order to avert the danger of sinking of the vessel which has sustained considerable damage, two-way maritime traffic in the Strait of Çanakkale had to be temporarily suspended in the evening of 12 December, and one way traffic arrangements have been instituted for night passages, as appropriate, for reasons of safety of navigation. Two-way maritime traffic conditions have been fully restored as of 14.12.1994.

5. The full results of the investigations are not available yet.

The preliminary findings as regards the circumstances and causes of the collision are provided herebelow:

5.1 The two vessels failed to comply with the requirements of Traffic Separation Scheme established in the Strait of Çanakkale.

5.2 Both vessels have been strongly advised to avail themselves of pilotage services, due to adverse weather conditions and low visibility. They failed to do so.

5.3 Likewise, both vessels have ignored the repeated calls of the traffic stations and advice and warnings issued by them with regard to safe navigation in the prevailing circumstances.

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