



Maritime &
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Agency

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Dear Name

Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) report on the investigation into the flooding and partial sinking of an *inflatable migrant boat* resulting in the loss of at least 27 lives in the Dover Strait on 24th November 2021.

The MAIB investigated this incident, and the final report included the following recommendations:

2023/110 - The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is recommended to build on existing liaison with French authorities to devise a tracking and identification system that, to the greatest extent possible, removes the possibility of confusion and error when compiling an overview of small boats attempting the crossing; and

2023/111 - The Maritime and Coastguard Agency and UK Border Force are recommended to develop procedures for achieving, as far as is practicable, an overview picture of migrant boat activity during periods when aerial surveillance is limited to rotary wing aircraft or is unavailable.

The following actions have been taken with respect to implementing the above recommendations:

2023/110 - HM Coastguard has built on existing liaison with French authorities to devise a live internet-based tracking and identification system that, to the greatest extent possible, removes the possibility of confusion and error when compiling an overview of small boats attempting the crossing. This live tracker has been used on every day that crossings have occurred for over a year and has resulted in no small boats entering the UK Search and Rescue Region (SRR) without them being first recorded by the French Coastguard in the live tracker. In addition to the daily discussions that take place between MRCC Dover and CROSS Gris Nez on crossing days, monthly (virtual) and quarterly (physical) meetings take place between the UK and French Coastguards to identify any further potential improvements that could be implemented in future, even though the current system has proved robust for over a year. It is recommended that this Recommendation be considered complete and closed accordingly.

2023/111 - HM Coastguard works alongside UK Border Force and has developed and implemented procedures for achieving, as far as is practicable, an overview picture of migrant boat activity during periods when aerial surveillance is limited to rotary wing aircraft or is unavailable. In addition to intelligence cueing from the live tracker shared by the French Coastguard as highlighted above, extensive arrays of surveillance cameras are used on the French coast (to detect launches) and the UK coast (to detect arrivals), backed up by the provision of additional surface search vessels (5 x Crew Transfer Vessels (CTVs), 2 x Small Boat Recovery Vessels, 3 x Border Force contracted RHIBs, and RNLi All-Weather and Inshore Lifeboats as tasked) with a further 3 x Fast Reconnaissance Vessels due to commence operations for Border Force in Q3 2024. The French Coastguard has similarly enhanced its surface vessel laydown with up to 6 vessels routinely available for tracking and shadowing small boats that refuse rescue in the French Search and Rescue Region, with additional SNSM [the French equivalent of the RNLi] Lifeboats available for SAR operations as required. The possibility of aerial surveillance being limited has also been reduced by Border Force contracting a larger Dash-8 maritime surveillance aircraft that can fly in more challenging conditions, thus reducing the likelihood of fixed-wing aircraft being unavailable for tasking. HM Coastguard and UK Border Force meet daily to discuss the surveillance plan to detect small boats, with fortnightly tactical and operational meetings to discuss any observations and options for future improvement, in addition to monthly strategic meetings to assess any future requirements in light of the potential for changes in Organised Crime Group behaviour. Notwithstanding the upcoming enhancement of the 3 x Fast Reconnaissance Vessels, it is recommended that this Recommendation be considered complete and closed accordingly.

In view of the above, I would be grateful if you could note in your records that this recommendation is considered to be implemented and therefore closed.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Data

Claire Hughes
Director
HM Coastguard