

INTERIM REPORT OF AN
INVESTIGATION INTO A MARINE
CASUALTY INVOLVING THE
THE FV K MAR K
IN DONEGAL BAY ON
25 SEPTEMBER 2025

REPORT NO. MAIU/26018/INTERIM
(No.1 OF 2026)



AN tAONAD UM IMSCRÚDÚ TAISMÍ MUIRÍ
MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION UNIT

The Marine Accident Investigation Unit (MAIU) was established on 01 January 2026, under Section 7(1) of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Act 2025, to fulfil Ireland's statutory marine accident investigation obligations under Directive 2009/18/EC and under SOLAS regulations I/21 and XI-1/6.

The legislative framework governing the operation of the MAIU, the reporting and investigating of marine accidents, and the powers of MAIU investigators, are set out in the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Act 2025 (the "2025 Act").

The MAIU conducts marine safety investigations into accidents involving ships in Irish waters and Irish-flagged ships anywhere in the world. The purpose of a marine safety investigation is to establish the cause(s) of a marine accident with the objective of making safety recommendations to prevent future similar accidents. It is not the purpose of a marine safety investigation to attribute fault or blame.

The MAIU is independent in its operations and function from any officer of the Minister whose decision-making relates to maritime functions as set out in length in Section 10(3) of the 2025 Act.

The 2025 Act also provides for the dissolution of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) and sets out transitional investigation provisions whereby any ongoing investigation will continue to be dealt with and determined by the MCIB investigator concerned or an MAIU investigator, pursuant to the relevant statutory provisions and modifications.

Despite the dissolution of the MCIB, pursuant to Section 42 of the 2025 Act, this ongoing investigation continues to be dealt with under the legislative framework for the operation of the MCIB. The reporting and investigating of marine casualties and the powers of MCIB investigators is set out in The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000.

This report is published under and in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000, as amended by the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) (Amendment) Act 2022 and/or under and in accordance with the European Communities (Merchant Shipping) (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations 2011.

Section 34 of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act 2000, as amended by Section 12 of the 2022 Act, requires that, where the Board is unable to publish the report of an investigation of a marine casualty during the period of 12 months from the date of the marine casualty, it shall publish at least one interim report of the investigation within that period.

This is an interim report, and no conclusions should be drawn from its contents.



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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On the morning of 25 September 2025, Fishing Vessel (FV) K-Mar-K departed Killybegs, Co. Donegal, with one person onboard to engage in pot fishing in Donegal Bay. Weather conditions on the day were favourable, with light to moderate winds. The vessel proceeded from Killybegs Harbour towards the fishing grounds where the Skipper's pots had previously been set. The Skipper, who was familiar with the area, worked the pots while operating the vessel alone.
- 1.2 From the available evidence, the Skipper tended six strings of pots and was working on the seventh string when the incident occurred. The exact circumstances of the incident cannot be determined with certainty.
- 1.3 Shortly after hauling the seventh string, the vessel set course to the SSE consistent with the earlier activities of the day where strings were being moved to the south of the fishing ground. While the vessel remained underway and on autopilot, the Skipper fell overboard. The vessel continued under autopilot and subsequently ran aground.
- 1.4 The alarm was raised after the K-Mar-K was discovered aground west of Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo, with the engine running and in gear and with nobody onboard.
- 1.5 Search and rescue operations were initiated and coordinated by the Irish Coast Guard, with assistance from Arranmore, Ballyglass, Bundoran and Sligo Bay RNLI Lifeboats, together with local and commercial vessels. Despite these efforts, the casualty was located deceased on the evening of 27 September 2025 by a local vessel participating in the search, approximately 1.5 nautical miles (nm) northwest of the last known fishing location.



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