

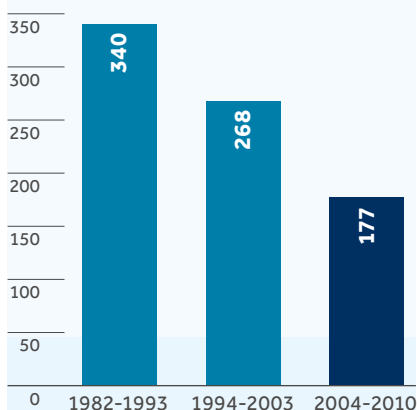
Safe passage through the Bosphorus?



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There is a constant need to draw a balance between efficiency of passage and safety – safety of the surroundings and of the vessels themselves.

Number of accidents



Source: September 9 University

The Bosphorus Strait experienced 785 ship accidents between 1982, when traffic density started to increase, and 2010. Following the implementation of the VTS in 2004, the number of accidents has noticeably reduced.

Each year, approximately 50,000 vessels pass through the Bosphorus Strait, around 20% of which are carrying dangerous cargoes. The surrounding city of Istanbul has a dense population of 14 million people, ferries cross between Asia and Europe constantly and, particularly to the north, fishermen are out in their small vessels. The strait is notoriously difficult to navigate and there is no obligation to have a pilot on board.

In the last 10 years, concern over the number of serious incidents occurring has led to a dramatic increase in security measures, for example:

- the Turkish Strait's VTS, introduced in 2003, aimed specifically at increasing safety of navigation and organising the traffic in a more effective way;
- the AIS system introduced in 2007, which automatically tracks vessels travelling through the Black Sea, Aegean and West Mediterranean;
- the Long Range Identification and Tracking System (LRIT), whose operation is governed by SOLAS, was introduced in Turkey in 2009, allowing the tracking of ships by satellite;
- the National Emergency Intervention Centre was introduced, which exists specifically to intervene when incidents do occur.

More recently, a one-way system was implemented – 12 hours in one direction, 12 hours in the other. This was initially introduced to facilitate the construction of a rail tunnel under the Bosphorus, but has been kept in place following completion of the tunnel.

Within The Standard Club membership, there have been very few incidents relating to collisions or groundings since these measures, in particular the VTS system, were introduced.

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