Risk Intelligence and ICS

**BALTIC SEA SECURITY BRIEF**

June 2025

*Members are invited to consider the following report of security updates in the Baltic Sea, noting the scope of the agreement between Risk Intelligence and ICS.*

*In accordance with the scope of the agreement between ICS and Risk Intelligence, members are requested not to circulate the report further in its entirety. Members may precis the report or use extracts from it to help advise members on key issues or to assist in enquiries. In such cases, Risk Intelligence should be acknowledged as the source of the information.*

**General Trends**

Since the beginning of 2025, there is an apparent trend of increasing military activity in the Baltic Sea, with NATO countries' increasingly ready to act against some vessels calling at Russian ports. While various incidents of damage to critical underwater infrastructure have played a part in making NATO countries more assertive, inspections have mainly been enforced since January 2025, when the EVENTIN started to drift uncontrollably off Germany and was seized by German authorities out of fears of an oil spill. This incident served to create a new precedent for NATO countries of increased scrutiny on vessel documentation, insurance, and safety standards when transiting their territorial waters.

These actions have prompted increased naval exercise activities in the Baltic from all coastal states. Some of the exercises that have and will continue to take place are escort training, signalling training, drone flights, and collaborative exercises amongst multiple nations.

It is important to note, however, that the recent tit-for-tat vessel scrutiny and detainment does not necessarily suggest a dangerous increase in geopolitical tensions in the area. It is notable that there has been complete silence by the Kremlin on the recent detainment of the GREEN ADMIRE in Russian territorial waters. This indicates cautiousness from the Russian government on the incident, suggesting that the Kremlin is aware that they are geographically limited in projecting power over shipping in the Baltic Sea. They cannot apply significant pressure to any larger NATO ports due to limited jurisdiction outside of Russian territorial waters, denying them ability to take policing action in relevant shipping lanes. The route into the Estonian port of Sallimäe, where the GREEN ADMIRE departed from, is the sole exception due to dangerous shoals in the area, requiring large vessels to transit via Russian territorial waters. Detaining vessels will therefore not be an effective deterrent, but likely only trigger more NATO responses.

The Russian government’s cautiousness may also be caused by the high economic importance of exports out of the Baltic ports in Ust-Luga and St Petersburg. Further escalation of the situation from the Russian side may encourage NATO countries to apply increasing pressure to vessels calling at these ports. The Kremlin is already highly concerned with the increasing interest in targeting Russian-bound ships in the Baltic, and they are likely weighing their options carefully. This level of caution may be further enhanced given the latest EU sanctions package as well as the increasing demand for proper insurance and safety standards by NATO countries.

**Recent Events in the Baltic**

JAGUAR:

The JAGUAR/BLINT (IMO 9293002) was intercepted by the Estonian navy for a check of documentation on 13 May 2025. The vessel refused to cooperate, leading to an Estonian attempt to board it in Estonian waters. During the attempted boarding, a Russian SU-35 fighter jet arrived at the scene as deterrence, leading to the Estonians aborting the boarding operation.

GREEN ADMIRE:

Russian authorities detained the GREEN ADMIRE (IMO 9927196) on 18 May in Russian territorial waters after its departure from the Estonian port of Sallimäe. Before its detainment, the exact location of the vessel is uncertain as there was reported AIS spoofing in the area. Held for 24 hours, she resumed course on 19 May.

SUN:

On 21 May, the Polish Navy took action to drive away the SUN (IMO 9293117) from its position in neutral waters close to an undersea power cable linking Poland and Sweden. Prior to this action, the vessel loitered for 96 hours in this position.