

THE RESCUE OPERATIONS ARE ONGOING – THE BUDAPEST POLICE HEADQUARTERS EXAMINES THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DANUBE SHIP ACCIDENT IN A PENAL PROCEDURE

A joint press conference was held by the Deputy Commissioner for Criminal Investigation of the Budapest Police Headquarters and the Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Disaster Management Directorate on the circumstances of the ship accident of 29 May 2019 and the subsequent search and rescue operations.

Police Colonel dr. Adrián Pál, Deputy Commissioner for Criminal Investigation of the Budapest Police Headquarters reported that the two ships collided at 21:05 on 29 May 2019 and that the first emergency call was received by the duty desk of the police 10 minutes later.

Beside the Police, members of the Directorate General for Disaster Management, the National Ambulance Service, the Counter Terrorism Centre, the Hungarian Defence Forces, the General Directorate of Water Management, the Nationwide Civil Self-Defence Organizations, the Pest County Search and Rescue Service and solitary firemen took part in the rescue operations. The assistance of several civilians was specifically highlighted and praised during the press conference.

According to the passenger list available to the authorities, 35 persons travelled on the sunken boat, 2 Hungarian citizens (being the crew of the boat) and 33 South Korean citizens. Following the accident, 7 persons were rescued from the river and 7 persons were found dead by the rescue forces, all being citizens of the Republic of Korea.

The search for the 21 missing persons is currently underway, along with the partner organizations, in Budapest and south from Budapest, on the whole Hungarian section of the Danube.

Colonel Zsolt Gábor Palotai, Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Disaster Management Directorate stated that the search and rescue operation was hampered by the high water level and fast flow of the Danube, the dark and the rain. He confirmed that the sunken boat was found by the Disaster Management, preparations are underway to hoist the sunken boat out of the river.

Dr. Adrián Pál said that several scenes are currently investigated, the Budapest Police Headquarters examines the circumstances of the accident in a penal procedure, by involving experts. He asked anyone who saw the accident, took picture or video of it or is in possession of substantial relating information to report at the police.

At the press conference, on behalf of the organizations taking part in the rescue operation, they expressed their sympathy and condolences to those affected by the tragedy and their relatives.