

Baltic Ace sinks

A UECC operated car carrier has sunk off the Dutch coast after colliding with a containership.



A huge rescue operation is underway in the North Sea to try to rescue the crew of the 2000-ceu **Baltic Ace** (built 2007).

Initial reports say 11 of the ship's 24 crew have been rescued following the collision with the 707-teu **Corvus J** (built 2003).

The Dutch coastguard said the Baltic Ace "almost certainly has sunk" following the incident about 40 miles from Rotterdam.

Crew members were found on four life rafts and were being pulled to safety by two helicopters and three lifeboats which were dispatched to the scene.

"We have found life rafts, and the people in them are being picked up by helicopters," coastguard spokesman Peter Verburg is quoted as saying.

In a statement, the Dutch defence ministry said two navy patrol ships were helping in the search. "Helicopters are trying, in strong wind and high waves, to bring the people to safety," the ministry said.

Verburg said the twelve-man crew of the Corvus J was still on board the ship, which was helping in the rescue operation.

The coastguard spokesman said the cause of the collision was not known. "At the moment we are solely focused on getting the people to safety," he said.

The Baltic Ace was heading from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge to Kotka in Finland and the Corvus J was on its way from Grangemouth in Scotland to Antwerp, Belgium.

The Baltic Ace is on charter from Ray Shipping, while the Corvus J is owned by Germany's Jungerhans Reederei.

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