

Another Mediterranean car ferry suffers fire

A Mediterranean car ferry was disabled by fire shortly after it left the Italian port of Bari in the Adriatic last night for the Albanian port of Durrës. Italian press agency Ansa reported that the fire broke out at 0100 h local time in the engine room of the Adria Ferries vessel, **FRANCESCA**, seven miles out of Bari.

The fire was put out by crew members and there were no casualties among the 260 passengers and crew members, according to the agency, but the vessel was left without engine power and had to be towed back to Bari.

The new emergency comes just two weeks after a violent fire broke out aboard the Trasmediterranea-Acciona car ferry, **SORRENTO**, off the island of Mallorca, leading to the evacuation of 156 passengers and crew.

That fire, which occurred in daylight shortly after the vessel left Palma de Mallorca for Valencia on the Spanish mainland, is thought to have broken out in a lorry in one of the vessel's car decks.

The cause of the fire aboard the **FRANCESCA** is so far unknown, according to Ansa.

The **FRANCESCA** left Bari at 2300 h local time Tuesday and was due to arrive in Durrës at 0800 h Wednesday. Passengers told Ansa that they were told to put on lifejackets and to gather ready to embark in the lifeboats, but that the order to evacuate was not given. At about 0230 h, they were told that the fire had been put out.



The **NORMAN ATLANTIC** as seen from the **THOMSON CELEBRATION** (ex-Noordam) in the port of Bari, Italy.

Photo : Richard Blundell - Staff Captain - Thomson Celebration ©

In Bari, the vessel joined the **NORMAN ATLANTIC**, which has been moored at there since mid-February after a fire during a night crossing from Igoumenitsa in Greece to Ancona in Italy, in which 11 people died. That fire is also thought to have started on one of the vessel's vehicle decks.

GEEN BRONVERMELDING, Overname uit: DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2015 – 138