

SPRING 2019 PLENARY SESSION OF THE CCNR

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Strasbourg, 29 May 2019 - The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) held its spring plenary session on 29 May 2019 chaired by Mr Achim Wehrmann, the head of the German delegation. Representatives of the European Commission, Moselle Commission, the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR), Luxembourg and of the Czech Republic attended this plenary session as observers.

The ongoing work and thinking relating to adoption of the Mannheim Declaration by the relevant ministers of the Member States last October featured prominently in the plenary session. The fruitful collaboration with the European Union, specifically in the context of the new contractual relationship 2019-2021 between the CCNR and the European Commission, as well as the positive and sustained collaboration with the other international organisations in the inland navigation arena were also highlighted. Other important topics were addressed during the meeting, such as adapting CCNR regulations to take account of the updated ES-TRIN 2019, ongoing work on amending the Regulations for Rhine navigation personnel (RPN) and the economic situation of inland navigation in Europe.

MANNHEIM DECLARATION: ONGOING WORK AND THINKING

The [Mannheim Declaration](#), adopted at the turn of the year by the Member States of the CCNR, addresses the most important challenges facing waterway transport, to which the Central Commission, in conjunction with its partners, wishes to provide tangible responses. The prosperity and safety of inland navigation, the fruitful collaboration between the CCNR and all the major players in the transport arena, the promotion of new technologies (including digitalisation and automation) together with the sustainable development of inland navigation are the Declaration's primary objectives.

In particular, the plenary session saw a first step towards implementing the Mannheim Declaration with the launch of a CCNR study on "The financing of the energy transition for a zero emissions European inland navigation sector". The Mannheim Declaration thereby sets itself the objective, to the extent possible, of ending emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants by 2050 and instructs the CCNR to instigate the development of new financial instruments for achieving this objective. A particular objective would be to enable this study's findings to be incorporated into the European Union's multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027

The plenary session was also an opportunity to discuss the initial work and thinking currently ongoing following the signing of the Mannheim Declaration, the short-term (2023) objective being the publication of a progress report by the CCNR on achievement of the Declaration's goals. Special attention was given to:

- The work of the European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation (CESNI) (see paragraph below for more information);
- The work on automation in inland navigation, with a first international definition by the CCNR adopted in December 2018, the discussions within the various committees involved in regulatory work or, the day before, on pilot projects in the automated navigation arena;
- The CCNR's involvement in the various European level initiatives, including the *Waterborne technology platform*, the *Green shipping expert group* or the *NAIADES II Implementation Group*;
- Participation, as a stakeholder, in the discussions proposed by the European Commission on "Good Navigation Status" (GNS) and support for its development. The correspondence group on the GNS (comprising experts from nine European countries as well as the CCNR, the Danube Commission and the Sava Commission) has completed its work with a recommendation on appropriate objectives for rivers and canals;
- Support for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T);

- Monitoring of European level environmental and safety-related consultations and policies.
- The organisation, in November 2019, of a workshop on climate change and low water levels and their impact on inland navigation;
- The topic of moorings, their location, their equipment and connection to the power supply, also to include electrically propelled vessels. In this respect, next year the CCNR will organise a workshop on electrical propulsion systems;
- The revision of the CCNR's Regulations for Rhine navigation personnel (see paragraph below for more information).



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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CCNR AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The CCNR once again welcomed the continued and fruitful collaboration with the European Union, and in particular with the services of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE). This cooperation was endorsed by the signing of a new tri-annual financial framework (2019-2021) which came into force in January 2019 and which is intended to support joint activities under the 2013 Administrative arrangement. The work modules identified for the next three years concern in particular technical requirements for vessels, professional qualifications for navigation personnel, inland navigation information technologies, Market Observation work and the concept of "Good Navigation Status", as well as essential support functions for these activities. The holding of a first coordination meeting between the DG MOVE and the Secretariat of the CCNR on 20 May 2019 provided confirmation of the successful launch of this new cycle and was an opportunity to discuss the next steps to be implemented, as well as the outlook for future cooperation beyond 2021.

The [European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation \(CESNI\)](#) and its activities once again featured prominently on the agenda of the May 2019 plenary session. The [meeting of the CESNI on 10 April 2019](#) in Strasbourg was thus the opportunity to adopt several adjustments to its 2019-2021 work programme and also saw the setting up of new temporary working groups in the professional qualifications field, on quality management (CESNI/QP/QM) and crew requirements, as well as the granting of approved non-governmental organisation to the [European Maritime Heritage \(EMH\) association](#).

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CCNR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER KEY INLAND NAVIGATION PLAYERS

The CCNR again welcomes its constructive and continued collaboration with other river Commissions, the UNECE, the ICPR, the Observer States, approved NGOs and all the major players within the inland navigation sector, in Europe and internationally.

The plenary session on 29 May afforded the opportunity to inform participants of the signing of a joint declaration of intent to promote the sustainable development of transport by ship by the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers (GSGP) and the CCNR. The declaration will enable the establishment of a collaborative venture between the CCNR and the GSGP, thus continuing the efforts to forge closer relations between the CCNR and other river commissions, including those beyond Europe. This declaration will formalise the dialogue between the CCNR and GSGP Conference commenced several years ago.

The head of the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR), Mrs Schulte-Wülwer-Leidig, reported on the preparations in hand for the 16th conference of Rhine ministers (13.02.2020, Netherlands). She took stock of the implementation to date of the "Rhine 2020" programme for ecological restoration, improving water quality, for managing the risk of flooding and climate change and low water-related aspects, emphasised the interrelation with navigation and outlined future challenges.

AMENDMENT OF CCNR REGULATIONS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE UPDATED ES-TRIN

At its plenary session in December 2017, the CCNR had incorporated a reference to the ES-TRIN 2017/1 (European standard laying down technical requirements for inland navigation vessels) in the Rhine Vessel Inspection Regulations (RVIR), the Rhine Police Regulations (RPR) and Regulations for Rhine navigation personnel (RPN).

The CESNI recently adopted a new edition of the ES-TRIN (2019/1). The latter includes in particular requirements for electrical propulsion systems and fire-fighting installations, but especially sustainable solutions, developed in close consultation with the profession, following the 2014 moratorium on transitional provisions.

At the plenary session on 29 May 2019, the CCNR adopted a resolution jointly amending the 3 regulations (RVIR, RPR and RPN) to refer to the ES-TRIN 2019/1. The backdrop to this is the coordinated approach with the European Union to implement the ES-TRIN 2019/1, with effect from 1st January 2020, by means of a reference in the CCNR's and EU's respective legislative frameworks.

Indeed, the implementation of uniform technical requirements on the Rhine and throughout the European Union's inland waterway network addresses the CCNR's desire to enhance governance at a European level in the regulation of inland navigation and enables safe and orderly navigation to be improved yet further.



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REVISION OF THE REGULATIONS FOR RHINE NAVIGATION PERSONNEL (RPN) IN CONJUNCTION WITH DIRECTIVE (EU) 2017/2397 ON PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The working group set up by the Committee on social issues, employment and professional training (STF) to prepare the revision of the RPN gave a progress report on its activities. The tasks carried out especially concern the incorporation of the new qualifications into crew requirements, licences and specific authorisations. In accordance with the guidelines drawn up by the CCNR, this extensive revision primarily aims to modernise the regulations on professional qualifications by ensuring that the RPN is capable of incorporating the ES-QIN (European Standard for Qualifications in Inland Navigation). The CCNR will also ensure consistency with directive (EU) 2017/2397. Other issues were raised in the context of this revision that might result in amendments or additions to regulations currently in force.

The outstanding issues include sector knowledge (aligning the RPN and the directive), harmonising the procedures for recognising qualifications and mandatory possession of a licence for recreational craft (of 20 m and more in length instead of 15 m and of 15 horsepower instead of 5 horsepower). An impact analysis, which will be presented with the future draft resolution, will explain the proposed changes.

A first review of the revision of the Regulations for Rhine navigation personnel is scheduled for the meeting of the STF Committee in October 2019. The Committee could decide to submit a stabilised version to the CCNR's 2019 autumn plenary meeting for consideration. Adoption could then ensue in 2020 once all the consultations, notably those with the European Union, have been concluded.

ECONOMIC SITUATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION IN EUROPE

In partnership with the European Commission, in April 2019 the CCNR published its biannual [Market Overview study](#), providing abundant information on the situation of European inland navigation in the 3rd quarter of 2018. The April 2019 Market Overview contains detailed quantitative information on inland waterway transport demand in the Rhine and Danube basins and in the major European inland navigation countries, as well as data on vessel load factors, freight rates, turnover and container transport. The report also contains specific information on inland navigation in Romania.

As for the new 2019 annual Market Observation report on inland navigation in Europe, it will provide an exhaustive overview of the market situation and developments in inland navigation in Europe during 2018 and will be published in September. In particular it will address the subject of low water and container transport, freight rates, the fleet, employment, river cruises and the future outlook for European inland waterway transport. For the first time, the 2019 annual report will dedicate a chapter to day-trip vessels,

passenger vessels without cabins operating by day on waterways, canals and lakes.

2018 was characterised by a prolonged low water period throughout the second half of the year. The Rhine and its tributaries, the upper and middle Danube and the upper and middle Elbe were especially affected. The disruption of logistics chains resulted in considerable economic losses, particularly affecting container transport and the carriage of chemical and petroleum products, iron ore and other industrial raw materials. Another consequence of the protracted low water period was the sharp hike in transport prices, especially on the Rhine. In October and November 2018, freight rates for liquid bulk transport were thus four times higher than normal for ARA-Rhine trade (ARA: Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Antwerp).

The CCNR resolution adopted in the plenary session incorporates the main findings of the new 2019 annual Market Observation report and will be available on the CCNR website in July. As for the CCNR's full annual and biannual reports and fact sheets, they can be downloaded as a PDF in German, French, Dutch or English at <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020800-en.html> or consulted directly online at: <https://www.inland-navigation-market.org>.

FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

The next plenary session of the CCNR will take place on 04 December 2019 at the Palais du Rhin in Strasbourg. The December meeting will coincide with the end of the German presidency before the future Belgian presidency commences, with effect from January 2020.

The CCNR will also be celebrating the 100th anniversary of its presence in Strasbourg in 2020, 1920 having witnessed the organisation's first plenary session at the Palais du Rhin. 2020 will also see the holding of the first joint plenary session with the Consultative Conference on approved non-governmental organisations. Additional information will be communicated in the forthcoming months.



ABOUT THE CCNR

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) is an international organisation that exercises an essential regulatory role in the navigation of the Rhine. It is active in the technical, legal, economic and environmental fields. In all its areas of action, its work is guided by the efficiency of transport on the Rhine, safety, social considerations, and respect for the environment. Many of the CCNR's activities now reach beyond the Rhine and are directly concerned with European navigable waterways more generally. The CCNR works closely with the European Commission as well as with the other river commissions and international organisations.



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