

CCNR AND VIADONAU ONLINE WORKSHOP “SHORE POWER AT BERTHS”

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On 3 February, more than 160 participants from 14 European countries met in the virtual conference room of the [Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine \(CCNR\)](#) and [viadonau](#) to discuss shore power supply in berth areas.

Hans-Peter Hasenbichler, viadonau’s Managing Director, and Yann Quiquandon, representing the French presidency of the CCNR, inaugurated the workshop and in their welcoming addresses outlined the challenges facing the inland navigation sector in the years ahead. Of critical importance in this is emissions reduction and the associated infrastructure changes. The objective of achieving a zero-emissions inland navigation sector by 2050 affects not only inland navigation vessels’ propulsion systems but also the power supply for operating shipboard installations while at berth. Joint efforts are required to reduce or largely eliminate both greenhouse gas/pollutant and noise emissions. Last but not least, this is an important contributing factor to the acceptance of, and thus to being granted, berth areas, especially in city centres.

STANDARDS

The workshop kicked off with a presentation on how European standards are developing both ashore and aboard, as well as on progress with the development of shore power connections in the Netherlands, and the standards prevailing there. It was emphasised that what is needed is not only international standardisation of the shore power connection but also harmonisation of the operating and payment system, and the elimination of what from the participants’ perspective are the loopholes in standards that still exist, for example for connections between 125 and 250 amperes.

USERS’ PERSPECTIVE

There was a report from the users’ perspective on practical experience with the use of shore power connections. In particular, this raised the issue of the user-friendliness of shore power installations, for example as regards not only technical availability and the standardisation of connections, but also the necessary contacts in the event of technical problems. There was consensus among the representatives of the inland navigation sector on the fact that berths must be seen as part and parcel of the overall inland navigation system. Berths have an important role to play in the navigation sector, especially for the crew. Human needs need to be front and centre of the inland navigation system. Last but not least, this means that the focus needs to be on the health and safety of inland navigation personnel in the workplace.

PROVIDERS’ PERSPECTIVE

Initial experience with pilot projects for equipping berths with shore power is now available and further pilot projects are on the drawing board. Representatives of authorities and operators alike pointed to the need for action and clarification regarding operational, technical, and practical aspects, such as adequate currents and the laying of cables when vessels are at berth side by side. It transpired that there are not yet answers to all the questions and that there is a continued need for the exchange of information beyond the inland navigation sector. The shipboard requirements and environment need to be considered in conjunction with those relating to the infrastructure ashore and developed in parallel. Last but not least, developments in the installation of accumulators aboard ship for independent power supply while at berth need to be borne in mind.



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SHORE POWER FOR PROPULSION

The workshop also looked ahead to other future challenges. The question was asked what future modes of propulsion might look like. The CCNR roadmap offers some early indications in this regard. It is anticipated that the need for electricity for propulsion will increase in the years ahead and that this will pose fresh challenges for shore power networks. A further challenge will be the ability to provide enough sustainably produced electricity for the inland navigation sector. Come what may, future developments need to be monitored attentively.

PODIUM DISCUSSION

In the ensuing discussion the participants agreed that supplying shore power to vessels at berths is an important contribution to achieving the emissions targets and viability of the inland navigation sector, not least in the context of the CCNR's roadmap and of the European "Green Deal". The participants called for state and European Commission support, which is indispensable for successful implementation. Partnerships need to be forged, with "outside the box" thinking required as well. Berths – and other aspects of the inland navigation sector – should follow a corridor approach, for example to align the distribution of shore power connections with needs.

CONCLUSION

The workshop was one in a series of activities which began with the workshop on berths staged by the CCNR and viadonau in Vienna in 2018, which need to be progressed jointly in the interests of the navigation of the Rhine and of European inland navigation. Through these activities, both organisations are pursuing the central demand of the representatives of the inland navigation sector for an internationally coordinated implementation, and for an open dialogue with interested parties.

The workshop lent important momentum to the various issues and provided a platform for an open discussion involving all waterway transport stakeholders. Decision-makers and planners still have much work ahead of them. The challenges should be tackled jointly with solutions being agreed internationally and in an interdisciplinary manner. The inland navigation sector plays an important role in coping with the consequences of climate change and therefore requires vigorous support.

Information on the workshop and on the presentations are to be found on the CCNR website at: <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020155-en.html>.

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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