



PRESS RELEASE

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) has for the first time authorised the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for inland navigation as part of its recommendations under the Rhine Vessel Inspection Regulation – an important step for inland navigation, as it is safe, environment-friendly, and economically attractive.

Strasbourg, 30 January 2012. On Saturday 21 January, the CCNR authorised the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a fuel for combustion engines on inland navigation vessels on the basis of a highly detailed recommendation in respect of the self-propelled tanker “Argonon”, owned by the Dutch company Deen Shipping.

The decision-making procedures incumbent on the CCNR by virtue of its competences, concerning authorisation of the use of LNG as a fuel for navigation on the Rhine, were set in motion as soon as development of the “Argonon” project was announced in February 2011. There are also plans for other inland navigation vessels using LNG to be put into service in the near future.

The specific risks involved in using this fuel have been studied in detail in recent months by the CCNR’s Working Group on the Inspection Regulation, together with the important progress this “clean” technology will help to achieve in terms of environment policy. Close cooperation with the navigation profession, the shipbuilding industry and the classification companies has made it possible for the CCNR to issue a recommendation which will contribute to the development of inland navigation without affecting its safety and good order.

On the basis of a recommendation under Article 2.19 (3), of the Rhine Vessel Inspection Regulation (“RVBR”), the provisions of its Articles 8.01 (3) and 8.05 (1),(6),(9),(11) and (12) are to be waived in respect of the self-propelled tanker “Argonon” until 30 June 2017. The use of LNG is considered to be sufficiently safe as long as the conditions laid down by the CCNR in its recommendation are observed at all times. These conditions set a strict framework for the various specific aspects connected with using a fuel of this kind, such as the method of construction and the classification of the vessel, the regular inspection and maintenance of the LNG propulsion system, the procedure for fuelling, and the training of the crew. The vessel’s owners are also required to send an annual assessment report to the CCNR Secretariat for circulation to the CCNR’s member States.
