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CCNR engages dialogue with social partners to look into the need to modernise rules on crew composition and rest time

Strasbourg, 19.11.14 – On 5 November 2014, the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) held a round-table discussion in Strasbourg on the rules on crew composition and on rest time. The purpose of the discussion was to engage dialogue with the social partners (EBU, ESO, ETF) in conjunction with the police (AQUAPOL) in order to consider whether the various dimensions of the corresponding regulations are still in line with grass-roots reality, or whether they need to be brought up to date. The meeting resulted in a fruitful discussion in an enlarged circle of stakeholders, and made it possible to identify difficulties being encountered and areas for consideration in the future.

It is now more than 25 years since the CCNR introduced the present rules on crews and on navigation and rest time. Not only the technical evolution of inland navigation and the use of modern electronic tools but also the demands being made on vessel operation have evolved considerably in the intervening period, making it legitimate to question the pertinence of the regulations currently in force. This requires thorough discussion, involving all the parties concerned by the regulations, so that the legislators' work can be guided as effectively as possible.

This round-table discussion was the first step in a process of concertation with the social partners, expressing the CCNR's desire to involve all the stakeholders concerned as early as possible in the process. Its aim was to provide a solid foundation for the work of the CCNR's Committee and Working Group on Social Questions, Employment and Training. The meeting was attended by representatives at the European level of both employees (ETF) and employers (ESO, EBU) in inland navigation, as well as by representatives of the river police responsible for applying the regulations in force (AQUAPOL).

A number of dimensions were broached in the course of the meeting. An item on **technical developments** since the introduction of the regulations on crews navigating on the Rhine and on the characteristics of the fleet provided an opportunity to raise questions in connection with the composition of crews and the demands made with regard to crew members. A second stage in the meeting covered the relevance of the regulations on **operating methods** and on **navigation and rest time**. The meeting concluded with discussion on the issue of **access to the profession**, the power of attraction of jobs in inland navigation, and training, and the difficulties currently being encountered in these areas.

The discussion demonstrated the usefulness of a more thorough analysis of the possibilities for making some of the provisions of the current regulations more flexible in the light of the actual situation of the sector, while continuing to ensure a high level of security for both crew members and navigation. It was also proposed that the empirical evidence of this evolution should be complemented using a scientific approach, also taking into consideration the use of new electronic tools (including the digital tachograph and the electronic service record book). These areas for further consideration will enable the CCNR to make real progress on these topics in the coming months.

The discussion was fully within the remit of the strategic aim of Vision 2018 regarding the modernisation of training and qualifications for crew members, which is one of the priority areas for the Dutch Presidency of the CCNR.

About the CCNR (www.ccr-zkr.org)

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine 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 Central Commission's activities now reach beyond the Rhine and are directly concerned with European navigable waterways more generally. The Central Commission works closely with the European Commission as well as with the other river commissions and international organisations.

More information about  at: www.vision2018.org

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