

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INSPECTION OF INLAND NAVIGATION VESSELS

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Vienna, April 27, 2018 – The third joint meeting of the bodies responsible for the inspection of inland navigation vessels was held in Vienna from April 24 to 26, 2018. This meeting, organised under the auspices of the European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation (CESNI), follows on from the meetings in Budapest (2008) and Wrocław (2012).

Almost 80 experts from 12 CESNI Member States, the classification societies and river commissions, answered numerous questions on the practical application of the technical prescriptions for inland navigation vessels and took part in an intensive exchange of opinions and experience at several rounds of discussions.

Participants were welcomed by Vera Hofbauer, Head of the Shipping Department at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and Vice-Chair of CESNI. She particularly emphasised the key role of the European standard laying down technical requirements for inland navigation vessels (ES-TRIN) in promoting the convergence of regulatory frameworks at European level, including on the Rhine and Danube, and called for continued respectful cooperation within CESNI to ensure the consistent application of this standard. Max Bühler, the Commissioner for Switzerland, was a knowledgeable and efficient chairman.

After the three days of the meeting, the 50 questions submitted by the experts on the application of the ES-TRIN had been largely answered. The expert discussions on the application of the technical requirements also generated numerous proposals for harmonised interpretations.

Moreover, this meeting was also an opportunity to inform experts in the field about how CESNI works, the evolution of international regulatory frameworks and the ES-TRIN's entry into force in October 2018.

Notwithstanding CESNI having made possible convergence between European regulatory frameworks, what is now required is the correct implementation of the ES-TRIN to maintain a high level of safety, to limit the environmental impact and to ensure fair inland navigation conditions. The role of the Inspection body experts in this implementation, and in supporting the emergence of innovation was especially highlighted.

The meeting also allowed enough time for personal exchanges with counterparts from other countries, assisted by the interesting outline programme arranged by the Austrian hosts in Vienna, a city with a special atmosphere. The contacts made or renewed at the meeting will without any doubt promote international collaboration among the experts.

The results will be published by means of the database for the application of technical requirements "ES-TRIN-faq". They also might give substance to further work in CESNI, in particular future amendments of the ES-TRIN.

ABOUT THE CESNI

The European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation (CESNI) was set up in 2015 under the auspices of the CCNR in order to adopt technical standards in various fields, in particular vessels, information technologies and crews, to which European level and international regulations respectively, notably those of the European Union and of the CCNR, may refer with a view to application. The CESNI Committee comprises the Member States of the CCNR and of the European Union, the European Commission, international organisations including the river commissions and approved organisations, as well as Observer States. Its secretarial function is provided by the CCNR.

CESNI's role is to contribute to the adoption by common consent of uniform standards on the Rhine and the entire European Union inland waterway network with a view to

- enhancing safety and environmental protection within the river transport arena,
- promoting inland navigation careers and making the sector more attractive, and
- facilitating transport operations and promoting international trade.

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