

FOR NAVIGATION PERSONNEL BETTER PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE – COMPETENCE AT THE HEART OF THE NEW EU DIRECTIVE ON THE RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN INLAND NAVIGATION

Ref: CC/CP (17)12



Strasbourg, 4 December 2017 – The European Union's Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) Council has just finally adopted the text of the new directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation. The European Parliament had already adopted it at first reading with a very large majority on 14 November 2017. The directive should be signed in the Parliament on 14 December prior to being published in the Official Journal of the EU. The directive will come into force 20 days after publication and envisages a four-year transposition period. The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) welcomes this adoption, which simplifies access to professional qualifications and improves mobility for navigation personnel – from boatman to boatmaster. This adoption also marks a fruitful and innovative cooperation between the CCNR and European Union which saw the emergence, in 2015, of the European Committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI).

The adoption of the directive will enable the legal frameworks that apply on the Rhine and in Europe to be simplified and harmonised, providing a high level of safety with a competence-based approach for all navigation personnel from now on. The dawning of this new era in inland navigation will not only increase labour force mobility but will also promote the attractiveness of jobs in this sector and have a positive effect on navigational safety.

Basing itself on the text of the directive, the CESNI committee will draw up and adopt competence standards for:

- boatmasters (management level) and, for the first time, boatmen (operational level),
- practical examinations and vessel handling simulators
- physical and mental fitness,
- radar navigation,
- navigating on inland waterways of a maritime character,
- liquefied natural gas experts and passenger navigation experts.

The CESNI will also define harmonised models for boatmasters' certificates, service record books and logbooks. Furthermore, it will also recommend harmonised standards for the training of persons wishing to start work on a vessel (deck-hand). The standards thus developed and adopted by the CESNI will lend substance to the new legal framework of the directive and will enable other organisations to use them in turn, akin to the ES-TRIN, the European standard laying down technical requirements for inland navigation vessels.

The CCNR adopted its first regulation on boatmasters' licences in 1922 to ensure that boatmasters' were adequately qualified and has been developing its regulations ever since. Since the end of the 1990s, the CCNR has extended its expertise to the European level, starting by recognising sailing times not just on the Rhine but throughout the EU. From 2008 onwards, the CCNR, with seven other European countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia), has established administrative arrangements that have made it possible to recognise their boatmasters' certificates, service record books and two training schools (Romania and Czech Republic) on the Rhine, thus laying the foundations of a European co-operation. The recognition of the two training schools was the first time that an approach based on the competencies tables inspired by the maritime model "STCW" was used to determine the equivalence between the Rhine states and Romania as well as the Czech Republic.

The need to modernise and thoroughly review existing Rhine regulations within a European framework prompted the CCNR to begin initial preparatory work on vessels powered by LNG, vessel handling simulators, competencies and physical and mental fitness, involving these seven European countries in particular. These preparations fed into CESNI's work, in particular the drafting of the EU directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and for the future CESNI standards on the subject.

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 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.

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 harmonise European legislation on inland navigation. The CESNI Committee brings together the member States of the CCNR and of the European Union, the European Commission, international organisations, including river commissions, and representative non-governmental organisations; the Committee's Secretariat is provided by the CCNR.

The standards adopted by CESNI are available here: <https://www.cesni.eu>



CCNR

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