

## AUTUMN 2020 PLENARY SESSION OF THE CCNR

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As for its spring 2020 plenary session, the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) held its autumn session on 02 and 03 December by videoconference. The session was chaired by Mr Michel-Etienne Tilemans, the President of the CCNR (Belgium).

The plenary session began on 02 December, in restricted composition, and continued on 03 December in “extended” format with the participation of three Observer states (Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Ukraine), two intergovernmental organisations (Danube Commission, Moselle Commission) and the European Commission, as well as 13 non-governmental approved organisations (AQUAPOL, EBU, EDINNA, ERSTU, ESO, ETF, FEPI, IACS, IVR, PIANC, SEA Europe, UECC, VBW). Mr Raphaël Wisselmann attended the plenary session for the first time as Chief Engineer, having succeeded Mr Gernot Pauli in July 2020.

Besides renewed discussions on the health crisis and its serious repercussions for navigation of the Rhine and European inland waterways, the draft roadmap for reducing inland navigation emissions, and automated navigation, were among the principal topics addressed during the meeting. Amendments to the [RPN, RVIR and RPR Regulations](#) were also on the agenda, as was the adoption of the new Regulations on the right of complaint.

### REDUCTION IN INLAND NAVIGATION EMISSIONS: AN INITIAL DRAFT CCNR ROADMAP SUBMITTED TO STAKEHOLDERS FOR CONSULTATION

It will be recalled that the [Mannheim ministerial Declaration](#) of 17 October 2018 set ambitious targets for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants by 2035 and 2050 respectively. In signing this Declaration, the ministers of the Member States responsible for inland navigation entrusted the CCNR with the task of drawing up a roadmap to achieve these objectives.

The draft roadmap was first presented at the December plenary session: it marks yet further progress in the implementation of the Mannheim Declaration. The key players in European inland navigation were able to contribute and exchange views on this vital emissions reduction topic, and on the draft roadmap in particular. An additional consultation, the format of which remains to be defined, will be held in the spring of 2021. The adoption of the roadmap by the CCNR is scheduled for June 2021 at the spring plenary session.

The roadmap, which will be regularly revised by the CCNR, is an essential public policy tool for the energy transition and for a more environmentally friendly inland navigation sector. In particular it contains:

- definitions that are required if it is to be properly understood and estimated emissions in 2015
- transition pathways for reducing inland navigation emissions as a function of vessel type and technology
- a preliminary implementation plan and follow-up activities.

This roadmap incorporates the findings of the [“CCNR studies on the energy transition to zero emissions inland navigation”](#), with which the major European inland navigation players are also associated. The CCNR considers the roadmap to be an important potential contribution to the current European policy of inland navigation greening, akin to that made in particular by the Green Deal or Green Pact for Europe.

### AUTOMATED NAVIGATION ALSO AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CCNR'S ACTIVITIES

#### Directing and coordinating work on automated navigation within the small navigation Committee (RN)

The Central Commission decided to concentrate work on automated navigation within the small navigation Committee (RN), the terms of reference of which have just been updated. The aim is to deal

### 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.*

with automation issues within a single body, these issues being inherently complex, dense, and cross-cutting in nature.

This policy decision also enables several objectives to be addressed:

- understanding automated navigation as a whole at Rhine rather than at sectoral level;
- ensuring that the work is clearly visible to the profession and pilot project sponsors wishing to conduct trials on Europe's leading navigable inland waterway;
- ensuring safe and prosperous navigation of the Rhine;
- considering automated navigation to be likely to contribute to greater safety on the Rhine, and to the sustainable development of inland navigation;
- pooling the CCNR's resources to address cross-cutting issues relating to automation.



# CCNR

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In this context, the small navigation Committee:

- will address all automation-related matters with the involvement of experts in the various fields (depending on the type of subject addressed: technical, nautical, HR, legal...),
- and will examine requests to authorise pilot projects and prepare draft decisions enabling temporary derogation from the provisions of CCNR regulations at Rhine corridor level.

For the period 2020-2021, the RN Committee will be chaired by the Netherlands and the Vice-Chair provided by Belgium.

### **Prorogation of the validity period of the international definition of levels of automation in inland navigation until 31 December 2022**

At its plenary session in autumn 2018, the CCNR adopted the [first international definition of levels of automation in inland navigation](#) with a validity period limited to 31 December 2020 ([resolution 2018-II-16](#)).

The international definition of levels of automation in inland navigation is widely used by pilot projects in inland navigation, national authorities and international institutions such as the UN-ECE or the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (PIANC). Moreover, the Police Regulations Committee has developed an inventory of pilots and research projects that is available, and regularly updated, at the following address: [automation.ccr-zkr.org](#). There are currently 27 national and international projects underway in the CCNR's Member States.

The Police Regulations Committee has set up a Group of volunteers to work on updating the international definition of levels of automation in inland navigation, but the task is complex and requires more time for the experts to present a concrete proposal for revising the current definition. The CCNR has therefore decided to prorogue the validity period of the definition until 31 December 2022

### **AMENDMENT OF CCNR REGULATIONS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE NEW EDITION OF THE ES-TRIN**

The CESNI recently adopted a new edition of the ES-TRIN (2021/1). This edition includes requirements for lithium-iron accumulators, the reduction in the sound level thresholds for a vessel both underway and stationary, and portable fire extinguishers. These requirements were developed in close consultation with the profession.

At the plenary session, the CCNR adopted a resolution jointly amending the 3 regulations RVIR, RPR and RPN) to refer to the ES-TRIN 2021/1. This decision is part of a coordinated approach with the European Union to implement the ES-TRIN 2021/1, with effect from 01 January 2022, by means

of a reference in the CCNR's and EU's respective legislative frameworks.

Indeed, the implementation of uniform technical requirements on the Rhine and throughout the European Union's inland waterway network addresses the CCNR's desire to enhance governance at a European level in the regulation of inland navigation, and enables yet further improvements to safe and orderly navigation.

### **ADOPTION OF THE NEW REGULATIONS ON THE RIGHT OF COMPLAINT**

The Central Commission adopted the new Regulations on the right of complaint and accompanying explanatory report. Under article 45(a) of the Revised Convention (or "Act of Mannheim"), the processing of complaints is one of the CCNR's powers. These complaints may relate both to the application of the aforementioned Convention and the implementation of regulations and measures jointly agreed by the CCNR's Member States.

The first and previous edition of the Regulations on the right of complaint dated from 1992. They aimed to establish a procedure for the processing of complaints and rules for appointing rapporteurs for the various complaints lodged. As for the re-drafting of the right of complaint that has been in process since 2016, its primary objective was to better reflect the nature of the right of complaint, defined as a non-judicial "diplomatic remedy", which aims not to adjudicate on an individual case but to provide an interpretation of the Act of Mannheim in the event of a dispute. This interpretation, originating as it does from the States that are parties to the Act of Mannheim, is authoritative.

### **THE CCNR'S CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

The plenary session on 03 December was yet another ideal opportunity to address the CCNR's cooperation with the European Commission (DG MOVE), especially within the current framework, which runs until 2022. Concerning the preparation of future collaborative arrangements, the CCNR reiterated its deep commitment to a substantial, enduring, and effective partnership with the European Union.

The Central Commission also once again welcomed the productive work done by the CESNI or "European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation". As a reminder, this Committee held its last meeting online, on 13 October 2020, chaired by Vojtech Dabrowski, representing the Czech Republic. In particular, the Committee adopted the new 2021 editions of the European standard laying down technical requirements for inland navigation vessels (ES-TRIN) and of the Test Standard for the Inland AIS. The CESNI also

published the first frequently asked questions "FAQ" in the field of professional qualifications and undertook a first reading of the ES-RIS (European Standard for River Information Services), adoption of which is scheduled in April 2021. Finally, the CESNI adopted a report containing recommendations on the harmonised use and maintenance of RIS Index and other reference data required by the RIS standards, such as the ERDMS (European Reference Data Management System). The full outcome of the [meeting on 13 October 2020](#), which was the subject of a detailed report at the plenary session in December, is available on the CESNI website.

The plenary session also revisited the [CESNI workshop](#) on the gathering of data on accidents occurring in inland navigation. The workshop was the subject of a report by Mrs Frouwke Klootwijk-de Vries, Secretary General of the IVR, who co-chaired the workshop with Mrs Vera Hofbauer (former Vice-Chair of the CESNI and Head of the inland navigation department (technical and nautical sectors) at the Austrian Federal Ministry of climate protection, the environment, energy, mobility, innovation and technology). The online event, held on 12 October, brought together more than 70 guests and speakers who were able to discuss current data gathering methods, data use and analysis, current deficiencies, as well as best practices and future work activities.



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The CCNR also thanked the German Presidency of the EU Council for organising a quality online event on inland navigation, on 20 November, in collaboration with the EBU. During this conference “Inland Waterway Transport – Key to the Green Deal”, its Secretary General had the opportunity for a brief presentation of the initial findings of the “CCNR studies on the energy transition to zero emissions inland navigation”. The CCNR also welcomed the announcement by its Secretariat of a strengthening of its relations with several Members of the European Parliament and their teams on various subjects of mutual interest. These numerous exchanges at European level were accompanied by international technical discussions on automation with the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers (GSGP Conference) on 29 October 2020, demonstrating the vigour of the joint declaration of intent signed between the two organisations in 2019.

Finally, the CCNR again welcomed the constructive and ongoing collaboration, in particular with the other river commissions, the UN-ECE, the ICPR, and the CHR. These traditional manifestations of cooperation were particularly evident, recently, in the joint participation in events and meetings, the publication of joint documents and in the context of the current Covid-19 crisis. The primary objective of the excellent collaboration between all the interested parties since March 2020 in relation to the pandemic, as well as the various measures enacted in response to the particularly difficult health and socio-economic context, including inland navigation, was to provide active support to the sector and to ensure that its activities continued to the greatest extent possible. There was no shortage of emphasis on the importance of the various recovery and resilience plans, both European and national, to cope with the ongoing crisis, and to prepare for the future. As in the past, the CCNR will remain attentive to ongoing developments associated with the health crisis, especially to ensure freedom of navigation on the Rhine.

## **ECONOMIC SITUATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION IN EUROPE**

In partnership with the European Commission, in September 2020 the CCNR published its [Market Observation 2020 annual report](#) on inland navigation in Europe and its [biannual Market Overview report](#) in November 2020.

The new November half-yearly report contains key figures for European inland waterway transport for the first half of 2020. Unsurprisingly, the Covid crisis has had very serious consequences for the carriage of freight and passengers. Accordingly, the carriage of freight on the Rhine declined by 11% in the first half of 2020 compared with the first half of 2019. The effects of the pandemic on the carriage of freight differed according to freight segment and region. The worst affected freight groups were iron ore and coal. But certain market segments avoided collapse, such as the carriage of cereals. Petroleum products experienced a temporary rise

owing to the rapid fall in oil prices, but the trend weakened shortly thereafter. Finally, the sector worst hit by the pandemic was passenger transport owing to the cancellation of river cruises and day trips from March 2020 onwards. As usual, the report also provides information on the impact of water levels and conditions on inland navigation, on freight rate movements, inland navigation turnover and on fuel costs in the first half of 2020. One chapter of the report is given over to Austria, where inland waterway transport accounts for a high modal share of imports from Eastern countries (in the Danube’s tri-modal corridor). River cruise traffic on the Austrian Danube rose 80% between 2010 and 2019, but the years 2020 and 2021 as well will see an abrupt interruption in this positive trend owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The CCNR resolution adopted during the plenary session supplements the information in the November 2020 report, notably by providing additional information on 2020 first half trends and on forecasts for the second half. The resolution will be available on the CCNR website in January. As a reminder, the CCNR’s full annual and biannual reports and fact sheets can be downloaded as a PDF in German, French, Dutch or English at <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020800-en.html> or consulted directly online at: <https://www.inland-navigation-market.org>.

## **FUTURE MEETING**

If the health situation so permits, the next spring plenary session will take place, face to face, on 01 and 02 June 2021 in Hasselt (Belgium), again under Belgian presidency.



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