

RIS has arrived in inland navigation!

Conclusions of the CCNR from the 3rd Workshop on River Information Services held on November 13th, 2008 in Strasbourg

One of the primary conclusions of the 3rd RIS-Workshop organised by the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine was that the key technical development work for River Information Services (RIS) in Europe has drawn to a close and the information services are steadily being implemented for the benefit of inland navigation. In the view of the Central Commission, the fact that the event was attended by over 70 delegates from a broad range of sectors within inland navigation who had travelled from various countries in Western and Central Europe, clearly shows that the Workshop catered to a need for information on the subject in European inland navigation and likewise confirmed a widespread interest in a cross-border exchange on RIS.

At the forefront of the Workshop was Inland AIS the Automatic Identification System specially developed for inland navigation. Experts addressed both technical aspects and how various European states had either implemented the system or intended to do so. Representatives of the inland navigation sector explained that they would accept RIS so long as it brought a tangible benefit for inland navigation and provided that both the protection of data transmitted and the privacy of inland navigation personnel were guaranteed.

Other presentations during the Workshops dealt with

- The state of RIS development in Europe,
- Experiences and expectations the inland navigation sector has on RIS,
- Current developments in Notices to Skippers, Electronic Reporting in Inland Navigation, and Inland ECDIS

Finally well-known manufacturers demonstrated practical applications based on presentations and exhibits. All the presentations from the Workshop have been uploaded onto the CCNR website at www.ccr-zkr.org

Additional conclusions from the Workshop may be summarised as follows:

- RIS is widely accepted in inland navigation.
- Technical standards for RIS have been developed and will be updated.
- Clear headway is being made in implementing RIS.
- Effective protection for both data and the privacy of inland navigation operators furthers swift implementation of RIS.
- The intensive dialogue between the authorities and the inland navigation sector on RIS implementation must be pursued.
- To ensure the continued success of RIS it is vital that sufficient resources be allocated, particularly within the competent waterway authorities. The sooner the relevant services have proven their benefits, the sooner the necessary resources will be put in place.
- Both the integration of RIS across national borders and onboard the vessels can increase the benefit of RIS.
- Now more than ever, logistics specialists and freight forwarders must be engaged in the further development of RIS.

Given that the event was very well-received, the organisers agreed that a fourth RIS-Workshop would be held by the CCNR in 2011. It would however deal less with technical issues, focussing instead on the services provided. Equally, it seemed necessary for an interim check to be carried out to establish what improvements RIS should undergo, and to see whether certain projects or information services could be suspended.