

Subject: European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI)

1. Traffic regulations are one of the most important components to ensure the safety of navigation on inland waterways. UNECE is providing a common basis for traffic regulations on European waterways with CEVNI, the European Code for Inland Waterways.
2. Most of the national and international transpositions (e.g. Rheinschiffahrtspolizeiverordnung, DFND of Danube Commission, national traffic regulations) contain amendments and deviations from CEVNI, which are based on geographical, nautical or historical specifics of the waterways.
3. Neither boatmasters nor the experts of the various national or international groups who are responsible for these regulations know all the differences between the local regulations and CEVNI. Most of the skippers know the version of the traffic regulations which is valid in their own country, and they assume that the regulations of other countries are more or less similar. Most of them are aware of some of the most important deviations in other countries but none of them is able to know all the differences. Therefore the boatmasters of two vessels on international waterways are often acting on the basis of different traffic regulations. This situation is unsatisfactory for safety.
4. As it seems to be impossible to skip all local deviations and amendments and to agree on one common set of traffic rules for all the inland waterways in Europe, it would be desirable that the competent authorities and the international organisations rely on CEVNI as one common set of rules while allowing the necessary flexibility for river basin specific, regional or national deviations. Nevertheless, in such case they should be obliged to mark all the deviations from CEVNI in their regulations.
5. In the light of these considerations the Principle Working Party on Inland Waterway Transport might wish to discuss if this goal could be achieved by **upgrading CEVNI to an international agreement forming a common basis for all the European traffic regulations**. National and international bodies could maintain their right to amend the CEVNI rules as far as it is necessary to ensure safety on their specific waterways, as long as the original text of CEVNI is part of their regulations and all the amendments and deviations are clearly marked.
6. This would:
 - provide easy access to the applicable traffic rules,
 - ensure that boatmasters are aware of the local rules,
 - prevent misunderstandings between boatmasters and
 - provide a basis for database oriented information systems for boatmasters, e.g. within the framework of RIS.
7. In this context it has also to be taken into account, that Inland ECDIS as the basis for River Information Services is already referring to CEVNI.