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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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Geneva, 11-13 October 2006

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON MEASURES AIMED AT  
PROMOTING TRANSPORT BY INLAND WATERWAYS**

Follow-up to the Pan-European Conference on Inland Waterway Transport

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

At its forty-ninth session, the Working Party was informed that on 13 and 14 September 2006, a Ministerial Conference on Inland Waterway Transport would be organized in Bucharest as a follow-up to the Rotterdam Conference of 2001.

Reproduced below is a discussion paper prepared by the secretariat with the help of a consultant on possible follow-up by SC.3 to the Bucharest Conference for consideration by the Working Party.

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE  
ON INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT  
(Bucharest, 13-14 September, 2006)**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Taking into account the experience accumulated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in following up the decisions of the Rotterdam Conference through the development of a Plan of Action<sup>1/</sup> aimed at monitoring the realization of the Conference's decisions, the secretariat found it appropriate to do the same with the follow-up to the Bucharest Pan-European Conference on Inland Waterway Transport.

2. Since the Rotterdam Conference, the role of UNECE as a central intergovernmental body dealing with the pan-European standard setting in inland navigation has grown up mainly due to the development of Europe-wide technical, safety and manning requirements.

3. Elaboration and adoption in March 2006 of the Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (annex to resolution No. 61)<sup>2/</sup> may serve as an example of this work. The adoption of the Recommendations was mainly a result of the Rotterdam Declaration that called for closer cooperation between UNECE, the European Commission (EC) and river commissions.

4. Acting in accordance with the Plan of action for the implementation of the European agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN)<sup>3/</sup>, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3): (i) elaborated and adopted the "Inventory of Most Important Bottlenecks and Missing Links in the E waterway network"<sup>4/</sup>; (ii) prepared and approved the first set of amendments to AGN Agreement<sup>5/</sup> that enters into force shortly and is supposed to facilitate the accession to the Agreement of more UNECE member countries which have not yet become its Contracting Parties; (iii) considers currently a possibility to amend the AGN Agreement with additional provisions concerning the prevention of unauthorized external influence on inland waterway infrastructure; and (iv) initiated the work on the development of concrete sea-river routes in the context of the AGN agreement.

5. A decision has been taken to undertake an economic study on the restoration of navigation on the Dnieper – Vistula – Oder waterway through the setting up, to this purpose under the auspices of SC.3, of a Group of Rapporteurs on this issue.

6. All this time, the UNECE has actively cooperated within different international fora dealing with inland navigation that took place under the EC, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR) and the Danube Commission (DC).

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<sup>1/</sup> See resolution No. 250 of the Inland Transport Committee, document ECE/TRANS/139.

<sup>2/</sup> The text of resolution No. 61 may be found in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/172.

<sup>3/</sup> See resolution No. 252 of the Inland Transport Committee, document ECE/TRANS/152.

<sup>4/</sup> Resolution No. 49 of the Working Party, document TRANS/SC.3/159 and Corr.1.

<sup>5/</sup> See document TRANS/SC.3/168/Add.1.

7. Thus, in response to the request by the Rotterdam Conference<sup>6/</sup>, the Group of Volunteers consisting of representatives of member countries, the EC, UNECE, CCNR and the DC, elaborated the “Inventory of existing legislative obstacles that hamper the establishment of a harmonized and competitive Pan-European inland navigation market, together with recommendations as to how to overcome those obstacles” that was later approved by the Working Party SC.3.<sup>7/</sup> This document gives a realistic assessment of the existing situation as far as the legislation governing international transport by inland waterways is concerned and contains proposals on possible solution of the legislative obstacles identified, addressed to Governments and interested international agencies including UNECE.

8. Particular attention should be paid to the organization in Paris on 22-23 September 2005 of a Workshop “Pan-European Cooperation towards a Strong Inland Waterway Transport: on the Move”. The Workshop was organized jointly by UNECE, ECMT, CCNR and DC, and allowed in an informal atmosphere to discuss and decide upon a number of issues that could be put forward on the agenda of the Bucharest Conference of Ministers in 2006.<sup>8/</sup>

9. At the same time, the European Commission elaborated its Integrated European Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport (NAIADES).<sup>9/</sup> The main purpose of the Programme is to ensure a fuller use of the market potential of inland navigation and improvement of its image. The Programme focuses on five strategic inter-dependent areas for a comprehensive Inland Waterway Transport policy: Market, Fleet, Jobs and Skills, Image and Infrastructure.

The provisions of the Bucharest Declaration and of the Communication of EC often coincide.

## II. DECLARATION OF THE PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT<sup>10/</sup>

10. The Conference that took place in Bucharest did not dwell on problems and unaccomplished tasks but concentrated on the identification of objectives and actions to be taken with a view to promoting inland water transport and its integration into multimodal chains.

11. The Bucharest Declaration established the following strategic areas for action:

- ***Harmonization and integration of the regulatory framework;***
- ***Coordinated development of inland waterway transport;***
- ***Infrastructure development and environment.***

12. It is the above-mentioned objectives that the Pan-European cooperation between governments and international organizations should aim at in the field of inland waterway transport.

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<sup>6/</sup> See item 13 of the Rotterdam Declaration, document TRANS/SC.3/2001/10.

<sup>7/</sup> See document TRANS/SC.3/2005/1.

<sup>8/</sup> A summary of discussion and conclusions of the Workshop may be found in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2006/3.

<sup>9/</sup> See document ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2006/5.

<sup>10/</sup> The text of the Declaration may be found in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2006/11.

### III. PROPOSALS ON POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP TO THE BUCHAREST CONFERENCE <sup>11/</sup>

#### ***Harmonization and integration of the regulatory framework***

*Item 1: Ministers welcome the progress made in the harmonization of technical requirements for inland waterway vessels, where equivalency has been established between the rules of different organizations. They call the organizations concerned to ensure that equivalence is preserved in the future maintenance as these requirements evolve aiming at mutual recognition of ship certificates.*

#### Actions to be taken

13. To continue the work within UNECE on further improvement of technical requirements for inland navigation, bringing as close as possible the standards in force within EC, UNECE, CCNR and DC.

14. The Working Party SC.3, assisted by the Group of Volunteers should continue drafting the chapters on technical requirements for inland navigation vessels that are currently missing in the annex to resolution No. 61 but are available in the EC and CCNR prescriptions.

15. To encourage the member Governments to apply, as wide as possible, the provisions of the “Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels” (annex to resolution No. 61) and other technical standards agreed at an all-European level, with a view to achieving the mutual recognition of ships’ certificates issued on their basis and avoiding double inspections.

16. The Working Party SC.3, assisted by a Group of Volunteers should launch the elaboration of specific technical requirements for sea-river vessels.

*Item 2: Ministers consider the free movement of crew members Europe-wide as a strategic priority in view of the opening and integration of markets. It is essential for the functioning of the sector. Therefore, they invite governments to facilitate such free movement and urge also the following specific actions:*

- *The River Commissions, the European Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe are called to continue their efforts for the mutual recognition of boatmaster licenses.*
- *The River Commissions concerned are invited to rationalize requirements for the specific knowledge and experience needed for the navigation on certain river stretches.*
- *The European Commission and the River Commissions are invited to continue their efforts, in close co-operation with their social partners, to harmonize job descriptions.*
- *Education and training institutes in the field of inland shipping are invited to actively co-operate and to create, together with the River Commissions, a European network aiming at the facilitation of exchanges on national educational programmes and vocational training.*

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<sup>11/</sup> The numbering of proposals follows the text of the Declaration, item by item, with the exception of items that are not directly related to the activities of UNECE.

Actions to be taken

17. To complement the Programme of work of the Working Party SC.3 for 2006-2010 as "Continuing activity", priority 1 with a new element concerning the free movement of crew members across Europe. To study a possibility for the development of an all-European uniform Riverfarers' Identity Document. To call upon States members to encourage the facilitation of such a free movement of crew members.

18. To continue the work on application and updating the Recommendations on Minimum Manning Requirements for the Issuance of Boatmasters' Licences in Inland Navigation with a view to their Reciprocal Recognition for International Traffic (annex to resolution No. 31).

19. Together with CCNR and DC to rationalize and unify as much as possible the requirements on checking the knowledge by boatmasters of specific stretches of inland waterways and their skill in coning vessels on those stretches. To consider, with the participation of shipping companies, the harmonization of crew members' job profiles.

20. To study possible inclusion into the Programme of work of the Working Party the establishment, jointly with river commissions, of a European network aiming at the facilitation of exchanges on national educational programmes and vocational training in inland navigation.

*Item 3: Ministers welcome the ongoing harmonization of civil law in order to facilitate the full utilization of inland waterway transport in Europe. They urge all river states in Europe to adhere to the Convention on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterway and invite the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine in association with the Danube Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, to revise the Convention on the limitation of liability in inland navigation with a view to enlarging its geographical application.*

Actions to be taken

21. To include in the agenda of the Working Party SC.3, the question of practical implementation by member Governments of the provisions of the Budapest Convention on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterway (CMNI) and its impact on national legislation.

22. Jointly with river commissions, to initiate the revision of the Strasbourg Convention on the Limitation of Liability in Inland Navigation (CLNI) with a view to converting it into a Pan-European legal instrument, by including this item into the Programme of work of SC.3.

*Item 4: Taking into account the increased integration of inland waterway transport in Europe and with a view to maintaining the high safety and security level of inland navigation, the coordination and exchange of information between national authorities should be further strengthened, with the purpose of facilitating inspection of vessels and to avoid duplication in controls. Ministers invite the River Commissions to take initiatives in this field in close cooperation with national authorities.*

Actions to be taken

23. UNECE, acting in close cooperation with the European Commission and river commissions, should encourage the elaboration by member countries of national policy in this regard. The question of “transport and security” should be retained on the agenda of the Working Party. In this connection, the elaboration and adoption of Annex IV of the AGN Agreement, concerning the security on inland waterways, should be accelerated.

*Item 5: Ministers consider that the existing legislation should be rationalized and simplified, subject to maintaining the best levels of safety and providing for the possibilities offered by new technologies. Furthermore, the administrative framework should be improved through streamlining formalities and procedures. For these purposes, they call upon the European Commission, the River Commissions and all other organizations involved to undertake the necessary actions.*

Actions to be taken

24. In the framework of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport, to initiate the consideration of items aimed at the simplification of national legislation of member countries taking into account the opportunities offered by new technologies without prejudice to the level of safety.

25. In this regard, all stakeholders, including member countries, EC, UNECE, ECMT and river commissions, are invited to take into account the findings and recommendations of the Group of Volunteers on legislative obstacles, as reflected in TRANS/SC.3/2005/1.

***Coordinated Development of Inland Waterway Transport***

*Item 6: Ministers recognize the need for the promotion of inland waterway transport as a commercially attractive and environmentally compatible mode of transport through coordinated action. They invite all the involved actors to contribute to the realization of the NAIADES programme, which covers for the first time all the areas of actions, and which should serve as a basis for action also at Pan-European level.*

*Item 7: In this context, Ministers invite the governments of the states that are not members of the European Union to also take the necessary initiatives in the interest of the realization of NAIADES in their countries. Ministers also invite the European Community to make full use of mechanisms to support these countries in financial and technical terms.*

Actions to be taken

26. UNECE should actively promulgate the advantages of transport by inland waterway and indicate the problems it is facing through the regular (once every ten years) publishing of the White Paper on Trends in and Development of Inland Navigation and its Infrastructure<sup>12/</sup> and through the improvement of its content.

27. To carry on cooperation with other stakeholders on questions relating to the improvement of institutional structure in inland navigation, preserving however the experience gained and

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<sup>12/</sup> The last edition of the “White Paper” was undertaken in 1996, see document TRANS/SC.3/138.

positive results of work by the existing institutions, including UNECE, and taking into account the potential they possess.

28. To initiate the elaboration of a comprehensive strategic policy for inland navigation, extending beyond the EC and covering also such countries as Belarus, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine and Switzerland.

29. The UNECE secretariat should monitor the implementation of the follow-up to the Bucharest Declaration and, at the same time, should follow the actions by the European Commission aimed at the implementation of the NAIADES Programme to ensure cooperation between UNECE and EC. The European Commission should, in particular, be informed of the decisions of UNECE member Governments concerning the maintenance and further development of inland waterway infrastructure (AGN network, “Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E waterway Network” (Blue book), “Inventory of Most Important Bottlenecks and Missing Links in the E waterway Network”, “Economic Study of the Danube – Oder – Elbe Connection” and the situation regarding the elaboration of the Economic Study on the Dnieper – Vistula – Oder Waterway Connection).

30. A Workshop should be organized in cooperation with EC and international financial institutions on practical realization of recommendations of the High-Level Group on the Extension of Major trans-European Transport Axes (TEN-T) to the Neighbouring Countries in order to identify the most prioritized projects capable of being supported from relevant EC funds and from financial institutions such as EBRD, etc.

*Item 8: Ministers invite the shipping industry in close cooperation with freight forwarders, operators of other transport modes and ports, to develop new markets and to expand reliable door-to-door transportation, inter alia by reducing delays in the transshipment of containers in seaports.*

#### Actions to be taken

31. To request the UNECE secretariat to periodically invite the representatives of shipping interests and ports from different European regions to participate in the work of different subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee with a view to identifying and taking into account the needs of the industry to attend to this decision of the ministerial conference.

*Item 10: Ministers invite the industry to continue modernization of the fleet in order to further improve logistics efficiency and environmental performance. Investments in the fleet should aim to facilitate continued use of smaller waterways and improve the reliability of transport in the context of extended periods of shallow water levels.*

#### Action to be taken

32. The Working Party SC.3 should consider the possibility for the preparation by member Governments together with river commissions, of particular studies on fleet modernization and enhancing of its efficiency. To carry out studies with a view to identifying the most efficient

types of vessels to be used on the so-called “Great European Transport Circle”<sup>13/</sup> including the stretches of coastal sea routes.

33. Possible development of additional provisions to AGN Agreement aimed at the integration of inland navigation, sea-river shipping and short sea crossings.

*Item 11: Ministers call upon the European Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the River Commissions to reinforce environmental standards, in order to further improve the environmental performance of inland waterway transport compared to other modes.*

#### Actions to be taken

34. To encourage member Governments to practically apply in their national legislations the provisions of UNECE Recommendations relating to the prevention of water and air pollution by inland shipping, in particular, chapters 8A and 8B of the “Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels”.

35. In cooperation with EC and river commissions, to regularly review the environmental standards taking into account the technological progress and the ever-increasing demand for the protection of the environment.

*Item 14: Ministers invite the competent authorities to facilitate the establishment, in cooperation with the industry, of promotion and development centres and to nominate national focal points for promoting and supporting inland waterway transport and sea-river shipping.*

#### Action to be taken

36. To invite member Governments to establish national centers for the promotion and development of inland waterway transport and designate national coordinators which should contribute to the development of effective mechanisms for cooperation between authorities and inland transport sector and facilitate the development of policy aimed at the achievement of concrete results.

#### ***Infrastructure development and the environment***

*Item 16: Ministers, having in mind the AGN and the TEN-T network, note the intention of the European Commission to initiate a European development plan for improvement and maintenance of waterway infrastructure and transshipment facilities. They also support the recommendations issued in 2005 by the High-Level Group on the Extension of Major trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighbouring Countries.*

#### Actions to be taken

37. To go on with the improvement and maintenance of a modern and efficient network of inland waterways as a key element of the pan-European transport system and a basis for its further development. To consider the elimination of bottlenecks in the E waterway network as a pivotal point for the establishment of a sustainable and efficient inland waterway network. To

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<sup>13/</sup> Rotterdam – North Sea – Baltic Sea – Volga-Baltic Waterway – Volga – Don – Azov Sea – Black Sea – Danube – Rhine – Rotterdam.

this purpose, to regularly come back and review the “Inventory of Most Important Bottlenecks and Missing Links in the E Waterway Network”.

38. To support the efforts of countries concerned (Belarus, Poland and Ukraine) with regard to possible restoration of the Dnieper – Vistula – Oder waterway link. To encourage the commencement of work of the Group of Rapporteurs with a view to preparing a feasibility study on the establishment of the above waterway connection, if possible, already in 2006-2007.

*Item 17: Ministers recognize the need to improve the multi-modal network by ensuring at the national level better balance for the investments between transport modes through, inter alia, guidance for financing maintenance and prioritizing improvement of waterway infrastructure. Reliability of inland navigation should be aimed at through harmonized fairway depths for interlinked waterway networks, respecting the need to integrate environmental protection in the development of inland waterways.*

#### Actions to be taken

39. No particular action is expected by UNECE. At the same time, UNECE, the European Commission and river commissions should encourage their member Governments to improve on a national level the technical parameters of inland waterways through the modernization of their infrastructure and maintaining sufficient fairway depths as a possible alternative to the construction of new infrastructure of other land modes of transport.

40. To continue to study the questions of financing of inland waterway development. Certain basic aspects of possible distribution of cost among beneficiaries as well as the main economic indicators for such infrastructure development could become a subject of a White Paper on financing the infrastructure of inland waterway transport.

*Item 19: Ministers consider that in case of the establishment of a framework for infrastructure charging and the internalization of external costs, such framework should be applied to all modes on an equal basis allowing a level playing field between transport modes. However, the consequences for traffic flows on inland waterways should be carefully considered.*

#### Action to be taken

41. This item is a matter of practical governmental transport policy. Nevertheless, an exchange of views could take place within the Working Party SC.3 on this issue. A Workshop could also be organized jointly by UNECE, ECMT and river commissions with participation of representatives of the industry, ports and inland waterway administrations (managers) with a view to discussion and elaboration of approaches to the solution of this issue.

*Item 20: Ministers recognize the importance of implementing River Information Services (RIS), based on the established framework of standards and general principles, in order to contribute to the safety and environmental performance of inland navigation, optimize the use of the infrastructure and facilities and facilitate market observation. They call all the actors involved to support the rapid implementation of these services, where possible through concerted actions.*

Actions to be taken

42. To continue the work on implementation of the “Guidelines and Recommendations for River Information Services” (RIS) on European inland waterways on the basis of the standards adopted.

43. To encourage Governments to actively establish the RIS services on their inland waterways of international importance in accordance with agreed general principles, unified standards, norms and regulations.

44. UNECE should complete during 2007-2008, the development of all the RIS related standards and establish a mechanism for their regular updating in cooperation with EC, river commissions and relevant international expert groups.

*Item 21: Ministers invite the river commissions for navigation and environment of the Danube and the Rhine to establish procedures for a structured dialogue on environmental issues concerning inland waterway infrastructure projects and to support these processes, taking into account the conclusions of the “Study on the Development of Infrastructure and Protection of the Environment” elaborated under the auspices of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport. All riparian states are invited to actively commit to supporting this work.*

Action to be taken

45. To recommend the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and its Division on Environment, Housing and Land Management to take part in the above-mentioned activities and establish a good cooperation with the above-mentioned intergovernmental organizations.

*Item 22: Ministers invite the European Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the River Commissions and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport to actively promote and monitor the implementation of the various actions of this Declaration.*

Action to be taken

46. The present Plan of action after its approval by SC.3 and adoption by the Inland Transport Committee should be considered as an instrument aimed at the promoting and monitoring the decisions appearing in the Bucharest Declaration.

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