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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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Item 7(b) of the provisional agenda

**WORK OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE STANDARDIZATION
OF TECHNICAL AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN INLAND NAVIGATION**

Updating the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI)

Transmitted by the Governments of Austria

Note: At its fiftieth session, the Working Party had an extensive exchange of views on the proposal by Austria of the possible upgrading of CEVNI to an international agreement thus forming a common basis for all European traffic regulations. The Working Party expressed its generally positive attitude to this proposal, although it was not sure if CEVNI should, as a result, be converted into a binding legal instrument. The secretariat was requested to issue the proposal of Austria in Informal document No. 3, as a formal working document of SC.3 and invited Governments and river commissions to study it and give their reaction to the proposal of Austria **by 1 February 2007**. It was agreed to come back to this issue at the fifty-first session of SC.3 with due regard to the reaction by Governments and river commissions and possible recommendations of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/174, para. 40).

The proposal of Austria is reproduced below for comments by Governments and River Commissions and for further consideration by the Working Parties SC.3/WP.3 and SC.3.

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 sub-regional CEVNI transpositions (e.g. Police Regulations for the Navigation of the Rhine (RPNR), Basic Rules of Navigation on the Danube (DFND), 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 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 Working Party on Inland Water 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 the River Information Services (RIS).

7. In this context it also has to be taken into account that Inland ECDIS, as the basis for the RIS services, is already referring to CEVNI.
