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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Inland Water Transport****Sixty-third session**

Geneva, 6–8 November 2019

Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda

Current situation and trends in inland water transport:**High-level events relevant to European inland water transport****Outcome of the high-level events dedicated to European inland water transport, adopted in 2018****Note by the secretariat****Mandate**

1. This document is submitted in line with cluster 5: Inland Waterway Transport, paragraph 5.1 of the programme of work 2018-2019 (ECE/TRANS/2018/21/Add.1) adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its eightieth session (20-23 February 2018) (ECE/TRANS/274, para. 123).
2. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport may wish to take note of the outcome of the ministerial conferences dedicated to the milestone dates for the development of river navigation in Europe, held in 2018: (a) the Ministerial declaration “150 years of the Mannheim Act – the driving force behind dynamic Rhine and inland navigation” adopted at the sixth congress of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) (Mannheim (Germany), 17 October 2018), transmitted by the CCNR secretariat (annex I), and (b) Communiqué of the Ministerial conference on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the Belgrade Convention (Belgrade, 29 June 2018), transmitted by the secretariat of the Danube Commission (annex II).

Annex I

Mannheim Declaration “150 years of the Mannheim Act – the driving force behind dynamic Rhine and inland navigation”

Congress of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine on 17 October 2018

The inland navigation ministers of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, the French Republic, the Netherlands and the Swiss Confederation met in Mannheim on 17 October 2018 to mark the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Revised Rhine Navigation Act (“Mannheim Act”) and adopted the following declaration relating to the “Basel Declaration” of 16 May 2006 and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine’s Strategy dating from 2017:

1. WE acknowledge the Mannheim Act and the principles enshrined therein and emphasise the fundamental importance of the Act to the prosperity of the economy and of inland navigation in the Rhine river basin.

WE affirm the central role of the Mannheim Act in the fruitful collaboration on Rhine and inland navigation matters between the Riparian states and Belgium within the framework of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) and are prepared to furnish the CCNR with the appropriate financial resources.

WE welcome the CCNR’s leading and pioneering role as a centre of excellence for Rhine and inland navigation in Europe and wish to build on this.

2. WE support constructive collaboration between the CCNR and the European Union (EU), the other river commissions, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the associations recognised by the CCNR and all other inland navigation players.

WE commend the valuable contributions all participants have made to the sustainable ecological, social and economic development of inland navigation.

3. WE emphasise the central role of the European Committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) as an innovative, efficient and practical body, and welcome the sought-after extension of its remit.

WE are endeavouring to achieve a lasting partnership between CESNI and the EU based on long-term joint financing.

4. WE emphasise the need for up-to-date, workable and harmonised environmental and safety regulations in Rhine and inland navigation.

To further improve the ecological sustainability of inland navigation, we task the CCNR to develop a roadmap in order to

- reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35% compared with 2015 by 2035,
- reduce pollutant emissions by at least 35% compared with 2015 by 2035,
- largely eliminate greenhouse gases and other pollutants by 2050.

WE point to the need for new financial instruments to achieve these environmental objectives and entrust the CCNR with the task of leading this development.

5. WE call on the CCNR to press ahead with development of digitalisation, automation and other modern technologies, thereby contributing to the competitiveness, safety and sustainability of inland navigation.
6. WE wish to reinforce the role of inland navigation as an economically relevant means of transport with a high potential for development and innovation.

WE therefore request the CCNR,

- in conjunction with the member states, to ensure faster and more efficient inland vessel cargo handling in seaports,
- to accelerate the integration of inland navigation into digital and multimodal logistic chains,
- to work towards better coordination between national development programmes and provide transparent information about them.

7. WE are aware of the importance of well-trained shipboard personnel and the challenge of having to replace increased age-related departures in the near future.

WE task the CCNR

- with developing up-to-date and flexible crew regulations that also take account
- of social issues and rapidly changing working conditions aboard and ashore as a result of new technologies,
- with contributing yet further to enhancing the attractiveness of careers in inland navigation, for example through targeted advertising campaigns.

8. WE request the CCNR to report on progress with implementation of these goals in 2023.

This Joint Declaration was signed in Mannheim on 17 October 2018 in five copies in German, English, French and Dutch, all language versions being equally valid.

Annex II

Communiqué of the Ministerial Conference on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the Belgrade Convention

Danube Commission - Strengthening the partnership in free navigation on the Danube

Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, 29 June 2018

On 29 June 2018, the Ministerial Conference was held at the Palace of Serbia in Belgrade on the occasion of marking the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, more commonly known as the Belgrade Convention. The ninetieth jubilee meeting of the Danube Commission takes place following this conference. The Republic of Serbia, as the host of the whole event, has organized and opened the exhibition “70 Years of the Belgrade Convention” at the premises of the Palace of Serbia on 28 June 2018, ahead of the Ministerial Conference.

The Danube Conference in Belgrade, which was attended by 163 members of state delegations as many as 83 accredited journalists, commenced its work on 30 July 1948. During the Conference substantial agreements on a new navigation regime on the River Danube were reached. The Convention re-established the freedom of navigation. Its application contributed to the improvement of economic and cultural ties as well as the strengthening of trust along the Danube. For the first time in the history of Danube navigation, the new convention established a uniform navigation regime with common traffic regulations as well as a single regulatory body for the River Danube. The first Article of the Belgrade Convention guarantees free navigation on the Danube and non-discriminatory port charges for merchant ships and goods of all countries "on the basis of equality in respect of port and navigation charges, and conditions for merchant shipping". The Belgrade Convention was adopted at the last session of the Conference on 18 August 1948, and entered into force on 11 May 1949.

Given the complexity of historical circumstances in which the Convention on the Danube Navigation Regime was signed and the Danube Commission (DC) was formed, as well as the fact that the Convention is still in force and operational today, the extent of the changes, the Belgrade Conference of 1948 brought about for the Danube, became clearly visible. There is a continuity of the free navigation regime from the distant 1815, 1856 and 1921, with the principle of the "Danube-River of Cooperation" becoming the foundation of seven decades of existence of the Danube Commission and the duration of the Belgrade Convention. That is why the year 1948 – representing the turning point for navigation on the Danube in recent history - is placed in the DC's coat of arms, along with symbols representing the river navigation.

Today, the Danube Commission has 11 member countries: The Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. At the beginning of the 21st century, the DC entered into a close cooperation with now 10 observer countries. Since 2001, this status has been granted to: the Republic of Turkey, the French Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, the Republic of Cyprus, and Montenegro. In addition, the DC's meetings are attended by the representatives of important international organizations: The European Commission (EC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube (ICPDR), the International Sava

River Basin Commission (ISRBC), the Moselle Commission and the Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

The modern trends in the countries of Europe have created conditions in which certain articles of the Belgrade Convention need to be actualized and adapted to the new conditions in the transport sector.

At the sixtieth session of the DC in 2002, by agreement of the Member States, the work of the Preparatory Committee for the diplomatic conference was renewed in light of revising the Convention on the Danube Navigation Regime in accordance with the new geopolitical circumstances, but still on the basis of non-discrimination and mutual benefit of the Contracting Parties, respecting the sovereign rights and economic interests of the states. The audit process is still ongoing.

In view of new political, economic and environmental challenges, DC member states and all relevant stakeholders aim collectively at the enhancement of safety and security by means of improving common regulations for Danube navigation. Modal shift should be tackled jointly in favour of inland waterways. Further development of the DC, whose 70th anniversary is celebrated in 2018 today in Belgrade, should be considered in the light of new ideas and changing political circumstances.

Bearing in mind everyone's desire for the Danube to become a single traffic, cultural and natural space, the active participation of the DC in the implementation of projects for improving the conditions of navigation on the Danube, with the acceptance of all the requirements of environmental protection, is an imperative for the further development of the countries in the Danube Basin. In that sense, the DC, with its traditional role in the field of navigation and in enhanced cooperation with other organizations, encourages the role of safe, environmentally friendly and economically efficient water transport. The DC Member States are promoting multimodality and balance of development of all modes of transport, since the European inland waterways of international significance should be fully integrated into the European Transport Network.

All the stakeholders support the necessary investments in the development of river infrastructure (except in any built infrastructural facilities, the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or later partial or complete demolition of which would cause unjustifiable negative environmental impact) that include waterways, ports, fleet modernization, digitalization and education, improvement of administrative procedures, and the development and application of Intelligent Transport Systems which shall ensure the environmental benefits of Inland Waterway Transport and resistance to climate change, thus preserving the Danube as a cornerstone of the common European house.
