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Working Party on Inland Water Transport

Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation

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UNECE online database of the E Waterway Network

Updates on the online database of the E Waterway Network

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At the forty-first session of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) in June 2012, the secretariat presented a first concept for an online database providing navigational characteristics of E waterways, as set out in the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network (Blue Book, second revised edition published in 2012).
2. During the year 2012 and following the feedback received from delegations, the secretariat developed a first version of the so-called “Blue Book database” and made it available online in English, French and Russian (http://www.unece.org/trans/main/sc3/bluebook_database.html).
3. The Blue Book, with its current electronic formats (WORD and PDF), does not allow many options for searching and sorting data, nor for using values for the purpose of calculations. The original purpose for the development of a database is the creation of an interface to easily search data and export them. The database will enable optimum use of the information available on the technical characteristics of E waterways and their related infrastructures.
4. Access to recent, updated information is a key feature of the Blue Book database. While the Blue Book is revised and published every 5 years, the database will be updated on receipt of new information by member States.

II. Scope of application and target audience

5. The Blue Book database, once further developed, will allow users to plan navigation routes, calculate distances between ports, evaluate costs and time of travel, etc.
6. It could be a useful tool for governments and academia, and all those who develop rules on transport infrastructures, or operate and maintain such systems. Representatives of the private sector, such as planners and carriers could also have a great interest in this application.
7. With this database, the secretariat will be able to make calculations and charts for publications and presentations, and for answering various requests for information from member States.

III. Developments made in 2012

8. During the first development phase that took place in 2012, data have been collated in the database, and search options by E waterway number or by country have been developed. The database now includes the following information:
 - Table 1 of the Blue Book (navigational characteristics of main inland waterways of international importance);
 - Annex I of the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN) (numbering of inland waterways of international importance);
9. At the fifty-sixth session of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) in October 2012, the secretariat demonstrated the first version of the database available in English. The secretariat made the Russian and French versions available online in December 2012.

IV. Further developments

10. To improve the database and make it a powerful application, the secretariat is planning to undertake the following activities in 2013:
 - Include data from Annex I of the Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the AGTC Agreement (inland waterways of importance for international combined transport);
 - Include parameters and technical characteristics of inland navigation ports of international importance (Table 3 of the Blue Book);
 - Improve search options, in particular by providing a map where waterway sections could be easily visualized and selected.
11. In the long-term, and subject to the availability of resources at UNECE, other developments could be envisaged, such as:
 - Including advanced search options, such as keyword search;
 - Including information on inland waterways locks of international importance (Table 2 of the Blue Book).
12. The secretariat invites SC.3/WP.3 to further test the application and provide their feedback and ideas for improvement (valerie.blanchard@unece.org).