



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 July 2020

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

Sixty-fourth session

Geneva, 7–9 October 2020

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Outcome of the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation

Summary of the informal virtual meeting of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (29 and 30 June 2020)

Note by the secretariat

Mandate

1. This document is submitted in line with the programme of work of the Transport subprogramme for 2020 (ECE/TRANS/2020/21, chapter IV, table, section A, para. 11) adopted by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its eighty-second session (ECE/TRANS/294, para 136).
2. Due to COVID-19 measures the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) could not be held in Geneva according to the schedule approved by the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) at its sixty-third session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/210, para. 101). In order to ensure a smooth and efficient work of both Working Parties and a timely preparation for the upcoming sixty-fourth session of SC.3, a virtual informal meeting of SC.3/WP.3 was held on 29 and 30 June 2020 without the official interpretation as a virtual consultation for business-critical decisions.
3. The annex to this document contains a summary of discussions and proposals made at the meeting as an annex. The list of business-critical decisions adopted by SC.3/WP.3 under a silence procedure of 10 working days in accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe (EXCOM) is available in Informal document SC.3/WP.3 No. 25 (2020).

Annex

Summary of discussions and proposals made at the informal virtual meeting of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (29 and 30 June 2020)

I. Attendance. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

1. The Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (hereafter, the Working Party or SC.3/WP.3) held its virtual informal meeting from 29 to 30 June 2020, based on the provisional agenda circulated by the secretariat on 8 June 2020. Delegates were informed that only business-critical decisions would be possible, following the 10-day silence procedure necessary as per the decision of EXCOM.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Russian Federation, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. The following intergovernmental organizations attended the meeting: Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), Danube Commission (DC) and Mosel Commission (MC). European Commission was represented. Delegations of Confederation of European Maritime Technology Societies (CEMT), European Boating Association (EBA) and European River-Sea-Transport Union (ERSTU) were present. Delegations of Inland Waterway Transport Educational Network (EDINNA) and Maritime Academy of Harlingen, were present at the invitation of the secretariat.

3. Mr. F. Dionori, Chief of the Transport Networks and Logistics section, opened the meeting. He provided clarifications on the format of the meeting and the applicable procedure for the adoption of business-critical decisions, highlighted the current tasks and main topics to be discussed.

4. In accordance with the decision of the Working Party at its fifty-sixth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, paras. 7 and 8), Mr. I. Ignatov (Bulgaria) chaired the meeting and Mr. A. Afanasiev (Belarus) was the Vice Chair of the meeting.

5. The participants adopted the provisional agenda (Informal document SC.3/WP.3 No.11 (2020)) subject to the following modifications:

(a) Agenda item 4 (b) was supplemented with requirements for passenger vessels up to 24 m in length and up to 150 passengers;

(b) Agenda item 7 “Other business” was complemented with the following items:

- Data collection on benchmarking of transport infrastructure construction costs of waterways and ports
- Dates of the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party and modifications to the preliminary agenda;

(c) The title of agenda item 8 was modified as “Preparation of the list of decisions”.

II. Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation and actions to be undertaken under the framework of the Economic Commission for Europe (agenda item 2)

6. The participants exchanged information on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation and exceptional measures applied in the sector. The detailed information was provided by Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine, European Commission, CCNR, DC, MC and ERSTU (Informal document SC.3/WP.3 No. 13

(2020)). The presentations are available at www.unece.org/trans/main/sc3/wp3/wp3doc_2020.html (tab “Virtual informal meeting”).

7. Among critical issues were mentioned: (a) the suspension of passenger traffic and river cruises, (b) reduced cargo volumes transported by inland waterways; (c) the impact on cargo operations in ports and the operation of bridges and locks, (d) the validity of vessels’ documents, certificates, attestations and other documents of crews, (e) the replacement of crew members on board vessels and (f) safety and the health protection of the staff.

8. The speakers mentioned the measures implemented by member States, CCNR, DC and MC in order to ensure the continuity of transport of goods, prevent a complete stop of navigation and support the fleet operation. They included, in particular: (a) temporary measures for the extension and renewal of ship certificates and certificates of crew members; (b) special procedures to facilitate the replacement of crew members in foreign ports, including special certificates for crews of vessels engaged in international shipping; (c) joining a multilateral agreement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to compensate for the cancellation of refresher training sessions for Dangerous Goods Safety Advisers and ADN¹ experts; (d) procedures for urgent vessel repairs and (e) individual protective measures for crews and other staff in the sector and urgent actions in case of infection among the crew members.

9. The European Commission informed the participants about the following documents adopted at the European Union level in order to reinforce public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic:

(a) the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services and the Communication on the implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures, adopted on 23 March 2020. Member States were requested to designate internal border-crossing points of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) as “green lane” border crossings for land (road and rail), waterborne and air transport;

(b) Regulation (EU) 2020/698 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 2020 laying down specific and temporary measures in view of the COVID-19 outbreak concerning the renewal or extension of certain certificates, licenses and authorizations and the postponement of certain periodic checks and periodic training in certain areas of transport legislation (the so-called Omnibus).

10. CCNR informed the meeting about the resolutions adopted in relation to the COVID-19 crisis: resolution CCNR 2020-I-2 of 23 March 2020² and resolution CCNR 2020-I-4 adopted at its plenary session on 4 June 2020³, and the activities of the European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI), in particular, the discussion on the urgent need for a coordinated approach to measures for supporting the European inland navigation sector during the COVID-19 crisis held at its meeting on 30 April 2020, and the open letter published on 20 May 2020 with the CESNI recommendations for States in relation to the validity period of certificates, attestations and other inland waterway transport-related documents, vessel inspections and certification.

11. The secretariat informed the participants about the activities of UNECE related to the pandemic: (a) the Observatory on Border Crossings Status due to COVID-19; (b) a dedicated web page with information on the relevant short-term transport statistics, arranged by country and topic; (c) the outcome of the virtual meeting of the Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group Meeting on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 crisis held on 9 June 2020; this information was complemented by Mr. S. Turf, the Chair of SC.3. The secretariat further informed the meeting about the press release by European Barge Union (EBU) on the Ministerial Conclusions of Danube Ministers of Transport on effective waterway rehabilitation and maintenance anticipating COVID-19 challenges issued on 29 June 2020.

¹ The European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways.

² www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/covid19/pre20_18fr_final.pdf.

³ www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/resolutions/ccr2020-Ifr.pdf.

12. The participants noted the following:
 - The COVID-19 outbreak had a severe economic impact on the inland water transport sector as a whole and a smooth operation of transport chains, including the reduction of cargo volumes transported by inland water transport since March–April 2020, which might result in a reduction of transport activity
 - The most affected were passenger traffic and the work of vessel crews, including the replacement of crew members
 - The renewal of vessel certificates and certificates of crew members was significantly hindered
 - The sector needed to harmonize the exceptional measures taken by countries in connection with the COVID-19 crisis, in particular, to address legal issues and ensure equal conditions for all players
 - Among the lessons learned from other inland transport modes were insufficient coordination between countries and national transport authorities, the need to further collect information and improve coordination and cooperation at the international level.
13. The meeting recognized the importance, efficiency and timeliness of the measures undertaken by UNECE member countries, the European Commission, river commissions and other key actors in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.
14. The meeting mentioned that SC.3 and SC.3/WP.3 might undertake the following actions:
 - Make an assessment of the conventions and agreements under the ECE purview relevant to inland water transport and UNECE resolutions in terms of preparedness for similar situations and propose modifications where necessary
 - Prepare information for the Inland Transport Committee on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation and the measures undertaken in the sector
 - Continue collecting information on this issue and include this in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3).
15. Belarus informed the meeting about the establishment of the state agency “State Administration of Water Transport” in May 2020 with the aim to ensure the accessibility, high quality of services and safety of water transport as well as the compliance with the State’s international obligations in the sphere of merchant shipping.

III. Inland waterways infrastructure (agenda item 3)

A. Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network (Blue Book)

16. The secretariat and Croatia informed the participants on the prepared draft amendments to the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network (Blue Book), prepared jointly by Croatia, the International Sava River Basin Commission (the Sava Commission) and the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/14, annex I).

B. Inventory of most important bottlenecks and missing links in the E Waterway Network (resolution No. 49, revision 2)

17. The secretariat informed the participants on the prepared draft amendments to the Inventory of most important bottlenecks and missing links in the E Waterway Network (resolution No. 49, revision 2), prepared jointly by Croatia, the Sava Commission and the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/14, annex II).

IV. Standardization of technical and safety requirements in inland navigation (agenda item 4)

A. European Code for Inland Waterways (resolution No. 24, revision 5)

18. The secretariat informed the meeting about the finalization of the comparison of the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI), fifth revision, with the Basic Rules for Navigation on the Danube and the Navigation Rules on the Sava River Basin. The results were available in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/15 and ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/16.

19. The secretariat further informed the meeting about the report of the thirty-second meeting of the CEVNI Expert Group held on 11 February 2020, back-to-back with the fifty-sixth session of SC.3/WP.3, issued as ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/19. The meeting considered the draft amendments to CEVNI proposed by the CEVNI Expert Group at its thirty-second meeting.

20. The secretariat informed the meeting about the outcome of the thirty-third meeting of the CEVNI Expert Group held virtually on 23 June 2020. The Group had discussed the amendment proposals to articles 1.10 and 9.02, article 4.07, chapter 10 of CEVNI, in particular, the proposal to modify article 10.06 and add a new annex 12 “Model Waste Water Log” aimed to prevent an illegal discharge of domestic waste water and sludge from on-board sewage plants and other issues. The Group had decided to bring the Russian text of article 1.07 of CEVNI, paragraph 2, in line with the English and French texts. The Group had continued the discussion of the results of the comparison of CEVNI with the Police Regulations for the Navigation of the Rhine (RPNR), DFND and the Navigation Rules on the Sava River Basin and had agreed on a number of amendment proposals to CEVNI. The next meeting of the Group was planned for the beginning of October 2020. This information was complemented by a detailed information by the Russian Federation on the revised draft of article 4.07 agreed at the meeting. The secretariat was asked to issue a detailed report for the sixty-fourth session of SC.3.

21. DC mentioned that the Waste Water Log might be included in the existing Used Oil Log required by article 10.06 of CEVNI. The meeting noted that this issue could be addressed at the upcoming session of SC.3.

B. Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (resolution No. 61, revision 2)

22. The secretariat informed the meeting on the draft modifications to the annex to resolution No. 61 related to additional provisions for electronic equipment and the automatic device for the reduction of the engine speed based on the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (ES-TRIN), prepared by Romania in accordance with the decision of SC.3/WP.3 at its fifty-sixth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, paras. 54–55) as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/25. Romania provided additional comments on the draft. The participants thanked Romania for the excellent work done.

23. DC informed the meeting about new amendment proposals to draft chapter XX, “Special provisions applicable to electric vessel propulsion” to the annex to resolution No. 61 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/3) based on chapter 11 of ES-TRIN which were contained in Informal document SC.3/WP.3 No. 24 (2020). DC invited member States to share the experience on the practical application of the ES-TRIN provisions for this vessel type, in case such vessels were already in operation. Romania mentioned that, due to a significant amount of changes proposed by DC, this issue could be discussed at the next session of the Working Party; Belgium supported the proposal by Romania. The secretariat was asked to prepare a working document for the upcoming session of SC.3.

24. The participants were informed by CEMT about the current situation with daily trip vessels not exceeding 24 metres in length and authorized to carry up to a maximum of 150 passengers and the ongoing work on CESNI. Romania, Russian Federation, Ukraine and DC provided comments on the draft provisions for the vessel type as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2019/18:

- (a) the draft required a detailed analysis;
- (b) the maximum number of people on board, life-saving appliances and other issues mentioned during the discussion required additional clarifications;
- (c) these provisions could be drafted as a separate document and not a part on the annex to resolution No. 61; for this purpose, one of the UNECE resolutions applicable to this type of vessel could be used;
- (d) this issue was addressed by the dedicated CESNI Working Group CESNI/PT/Pax with the aim to develop technical prescriptions for vessels; it was a challenging task, as these vessels were covered by several regulations in the European Union level and by the regulations of classification societies.

25. The Russian Federation informed the meeting on the finalization of work on provisions of small craft to be included in the rules of the Russian River Register. CEMT was invited to provide additional clarifications on the issues mentioned during the discussion. The meeting supported the proposal by CEMT to collect statistical data from member States on the fleet of smaller passenger vessels used for commercial purpose.

26. The secretariat was asked to summarize the comments made at the meeting, send them to member States and classification societies and prepare a working document for the upcoming session of SC.3.

27. The secretariat informed the participants about the finalization of the Russian translation of ES-TRIN edition 2019/1, which was available on the web page of SC.3. The meeting thanked the secretariat for the work done.

C. Prevention of pollution of inland waterways by vessels (resolution No. 21, revised)

28. The secretariat informed the meeting about the progress made in updating the list of reception facilities for transfer of waste generated on board vessels on the basis of the data provided by member States in collaboration with the national competent authorities responsible for the collection of waste from ships, the DC secretariat, the secretariat of the Convention on Collection, Deposit and Reception of Waste Produced during Navigation on the Rhine and Inland Waterways (CDNI), port authorities and other relevant organizations (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/27 and ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/28).

29. The secretariat was asked to finalise the revision of the list of reception facilities for the sixty-fourth session of SC.3. The meeting proposed to keep in the draft the existing term "reception facilities".

30. DC informed the meeting that the revised list of reception facilities for waste generated on board vessels was adopted by DC in March 2020 and was available on the DC website.

31. The secretariat gave a presentation on the proposed categorization of waste generated on board inland navigation vessels, prepared jointly by the secretariats of UNECE, DC and CDNI and via donau (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/29). The participants had no principal objections to the proposal. DC informed the meeting that this proposal would be considered in March 2021.

V. Promotion of River Information Services and other Information and Communication Technologies in inland navigation (agenda item 5)

A. International Standard for Tracking and Tracing on Inland Waterways (annex to resolution No. 63, revised)

32. The Chair recalled the outcome of the discussion on the revised draft of the International Standard for Tracking and Tracing (VTT) on Inland Waterways at the fifty-sixth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, paras. 79–82). The Russian Federation provided clarifications on the modifications to the revised draft prepared jointly with the Chair of the CESNI Temporary Working Group for Vessel Tracking and Tracing (CESNI/TI/VTT) and the secretariat, as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/21/Rev.1. The proposed modifications aimed to extend its application scope to maritime AIS⁴ and AIS classes A and B and harmonize the standard with article 4.07 of CEVNI and Recommendation ITU-R M.1371-5.

33. Mr. S. Bober, the Chair of CESNI/TI/VTT, provided additional comments on the agreed approach used in this work and stressed that the revised standard was in line with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/838 of 20 February 2019 on technical specifications for vessel tracking and tracing systems and repealing Regulation (EC) No 415/2007. Ukraine supported the modified proposal. The secretariat was asked to update the revised version of ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/21 on the SC.3/WP.3 web page.

34. The meeting took note of the updated appendices to the annex to resolution No. 63 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/22). The Russian Federation expressed the opinion that no modifications were needed for the adoption of the draft.

B. International Standard for Electronic Ship Reporting in Inland Navigation (annex to resolution No. 79)

35. The secretariat informed the meeting about the draft of the revised the International Standard for Electronic Ship Reporting (ERI) in Inland Navigation (annex to resolution No. 79) and the proposed modifications (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2020/23) based on the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1744 of 17 September 2019 on technical specifications for electronic ship reporting in inland navigation, prepared in accordance with the decision of SC.3/WP.3 at its fifty-sixth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, para. 83).

36. Belgium, Germany and the Russian Federation commented about (a) the need for additional time for a detailed consideration of the draft and (b) the desirability to keep chapter I “Purpose and scope” of the existing annex to resolution No. 79 in the revised document, subject to possible modifications. Ukraine mentioned the discussion on the revised ERI standard held at the CESNI RIS⁵ Week held online from 23 to 26 June 2020.

37. Belgium proposed to invite the Chair of the CESNI Temporary Working Group for Electronic Reporting International (CESNI/TI/ERI) to take part in the finalization of the draft and attend the upcoming session of SC.3. Other participants supported the proposal.

38. Ukraine informed the participants about the outcome of the assessment of the current status of RIS in Ukraine and, in particular, on the Dnieper by the expert team of the European Union, headed by Mr. C. Willems and highly appreciated the efficient cooperation, professionalism, and the excellent work done by the expert team.

VI. Terms and definitions related to inland water transport (agenda item 6)

39. The secretariat presented “zero” drafts of part I “General terms”, part III “Waterways infrastructure”, part IV “Transportation of goods and passengers, transport documents”, part V “Waterway signs and marking”, part VI “Navigation rules”, part VII “Vessel and equipment”, part VIII “Navigation by Radar; River Information Services”, part XI

⁴ Automatic Identification System.

⁵ River Information Services.

“Prevention of pollution from vessels”, part XII “Hydrography, meteorology and cartography” and part XIV “Inland waterways statistics” of the draft glossary of terms and definitions related to inland water transport (Informal documents SC.3/WP.3 Nos. 14 to 23 (2020)), prepared in accordance with the decision of SC.3 at its sixty-third session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/210, para. 98). The secretariat provided clarifications of the approach used in the “zero” drafts and the used sources of information. Germany mentioned that the terms and definitions from the Guidelines and Recommendations for River Information Services, Edition 4, adopted by Inland Navigation Committee of the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (PIANC) in 2019 could be also used in the draft.

40. The Russian Federation stressed the importance of the participation of experts from member States in this work and proposed to (a) follow the structure of the glossary agreed at the fifty-fourth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/108, para. 84), (b) complement the glossary with the index of terms in English, French and Russian, (c) check the compliance of terms and definitions with the internationally agreed regulatory framework and technical standards and national standards of member States, where internationally accepted terms were not available, and (d) complement the glossary with terms and definitions adopted in national standards of member States in case they were different from those accepted at the international level.

41. Experts from Belgium, Russian Federation and Ukraine, EBU and ERSTU confirmed their participation in the correspondence group for the finalization of the glossary, established in accordance with the decision of SC.3/WP.3 at its fifty-fourth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/108, para. 86). Croatia asked the secretariat to provide guidance on the future work and the timeframe of the correspondence group, as additional time could be needed to decide on the participation of experts from other countries in the correspondence group.

42. Following the proposals by Ukraine and the secretariat, the participants encouraged other countries to take part in the correspondence group and asked the secretariat to send invitations to the European Commission, river commissions, the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), PIANC, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Hydrographic Organization and other international organizations proposed at the meeting, as well as the Languages Service Division of Conference Management of the United Nations Office at Geneva to take part.

43. The secretariat was asked to include this item in the preliminary agenda of the sixty-fourth session of SC.3 and inform the Working Party about the progress in this work.

VII. Other business (agenda item 7)

A. Data collection on benchmarking of transport infrastructure construction costs of waterways and ports

44. The secretariat informed the meeting about the questionnaires on benchmarking the construction, upgrading and maintenance costs for the infrastructure of inland waterways and ports, modified according to the feedback from member States. Belgium provided comments on the introduced modifications and the deadline for submitting the requested information.

45. The secretariat further informed the participants about the ongoing work of the Group of Experts on Benchmarking of Transport Infrastructure Costs (GE.4) on the final report for other inland transport modes for the thirty-third session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) to be held from 7 to 9 September 2020.

B. Dates of the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party and modifications to the preliminary agenda

46. The participants discussed a possibility to hold the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party on 7 October in the morning, back-to-back with the sixty-fourth session of SC.3 that will be held on 7 to 9 October 2020, with the revised provisional agenda.

47. The meeting proposed to include the following issues in the preliminary agenda of the sixty-fourth session of SC.3: (a) Workshop “Circular economy in inland water transport”; (b) Automation in inland navigation, (c) Mutual recognition of boatmasters’ certificates and harmonization of professional requirements in inland navigation and (d) Recreational navigation.

48. The participants proposed to postpone the topic “Cybersecurity in inland water transport” agreed as the theme topic for the sixty-fourth session of SC.3, to 2021.

VIII. Preparation of the list of decisions (agenda item 8)

49. The meeting agreed on the preliminary list of decisions taken at the present meeting based on the draft prepared by the secretariat.

IX. Adoption of the list of decisions

50. Following the decision of EXCOM on Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period, the secretariat circulated the list of decisions agreed at the meeting in the three working languages to member States and Permanent Missions of member States in Geneva on 3 July 2020 for the final approval under a silence procedure of 10 working days. In the absence of any objections from countries, the decisions are considered adopted. The list of decisions adopted by the silence procedure is available in Informal document SC.3/WP.3 No. 25 (2020).
