



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

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Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Current situation and trends in inland water transport:
Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation
and actions to be undertaken under the framework
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe****Overview of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the
European inland water transport sector and measures
undertaken at the national and international level**

Note by the secretariat*. **

I. 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. Following the proposal of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) at its virtual informal meeting held on 29 and 30 June 2020 to collect information on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation and exceptional measures applied in the sector, Governments were invited to provide the updated information to the secretariat.
3. Following the proposal of SC.3/WP.3 at its virtual informal meeting, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) may wish to continue exchanging information on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation, exceptional measures undertaken by member States and lessons learned.

**II. Information on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on
inland navigation in Europe and lessons learned**

4. An overview of the information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on inland navigation and measures undertaken at the international and national level, transmitted to the

* The present document was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.
** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

secretariat by Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine, the European Commission and river commissions, is reproduced in annexes I and II to this document.

5. At its virtual informal meeting, SC.3/WP.3 mentioned that the pandemic had a severe economic impact on the inland water transport sector as a whole and a smooth operation of transport chains, passenger traffic and the work of vessel crews, including the replacement of crew members, and stressed the need for further collecting information and improving the coordination and cooperation at the international level (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2020/1, paras. 12 and 13).

6. A detailed evaluation of the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on European inland water transport was published by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) on 27 March 2020.¹ It provided an estimation of a significant reduction of transport activity and turnover losses for the whole inland navigation sector and emphasized the main factors that had an impact on the inland water transport chain:

- a reduction in freight volumes at all levels resulted from a reduced or stopped industrial production and a major drop in demand;
- the disruption of the logistics flow;
- a dramatic decrease in the number of passengers transported by inland waterways.

7. According to the evaluation by CCNR, passenger transport (river cruises, day trips and ferry services) and transport of goods related to the sectors directly impacted by lockdown regulations (e.g. construction, automotive, mobility sectors, etc.) have been immediately affected by the crisis and other transport segments followed, such as liquid cargo (mineral oil products and chemicals) and container transport. As of May 2020, the inland water transport volumes were stabilized, but were remaining at a low level. Furthermore, the impact was aggravated by seasonable affects and structural changes in the energy sector. However, since the beginning of the pandemic, the sector has been very proactive in finding the appropriate solutions to cope with the impact of the crisis.

8. According to the information from the Danube Commission (DC), the crisis has brought to a reduction in freight transport volumes on the Danube in the second quarter of 2020, with the exception of grain transport from the Middle Danube ports to the delta ports (Constanta), and the complete interruption of passenger cruises, passenger lines and daily trips on the Danube and its tributaries. Furthermore, extremely low water levels on the Danube in the beginning of 2020 and the absence of a traditional second high water period in May 2020 have resulted in periodical decreases of the operational draught of the barge fleet.

III. Actions that might be undertaken by the Working Party on Inland Water Transport

9. At its virtual informal meeting, SC.3/WP.3 mentioned that SC.3 might wish to make an assessment of the conventions and agreements under the UNECE purview in the sphere of inland water transport and UNECE resolutions in terms of preparedness for similar situations and propose modifications where necessary (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2020/1, para. 14). Following this recommendation, SC.3 may wish to consider the list of documents which could be subject to such assessment, in the table below. SC.3 may also wish to complement the list with other documents.

¹ Available at www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/covid19/20200327_CCNR_Economic_impacts.pdf.

<i>Document</i>	<i>Subject of the assessment</i>
European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN) Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network (Blue Book)	A critical network of waterways and ports to ensure the continuity of navigation, safety of vessels, crews and passengers in case of exceptional measures due to pandemic
Resolution No. 21, Prevention of Pollution of Inland Waterways by Vessels	The continuity of the reception of waste generated on board vessels in case of exceptional measures applied to the operation of waste reception facilities
Resolution No. 24, European Code for Inland Waterways	The continuity of navigation, safety of vessels, crews and passengers
Resolution No. 31, Recommendations on Minimum Requirements for the Issuance of Boatmaster's certificates in Inland Navigation with a view to their Reciprocal Recognition for International Traffic	Safety of crews, ensuring the necessary mobility of crew members of vessels engaged in international traffic
Resolution No. 61, Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels	Safety of vessels, crews, onboard personnel and passengers (design, supply with individual protection kits etc.)

Annex I

Response to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in inland navigation at the international level

A. European Union

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Commission has been proactive in coordinating a common response at the European Union level to reinforce public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. The measures undertaken in the transport sector included, in particular:

(a) The Communication on the implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services adopted by the European Commission on 23 March 2020.² The European Union member States were requested to designate all relevant internal border-crossing points of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) and additional ones, if necessary, as the “green lane” border crossings for road, 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, licences and authorizations and the postponement of certain periodic checks and periodic training in certain areas of transport legislation (the so-called Omnibus). The purpose of the Regulation is providing temporary measures on road, rail and inland water transport and for maritime security. In relation to inland water transport, the Regulation has extended the validity of certificates issued according to Directive (EU) 2016/1629, which expired between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, by six months.

The Interim advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at points of entry in the European Union/European Economic Area (EEA) Member States is aimed to assist public health authorities in the air, maritime and inland transport modes in developing their short-term and long-term national and local preparedness plans.³

B. The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine and the European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation

Among the measures undertaken by CCNR in response to the COVID-19 pandemic were mentioned:⁴

(a) Resolution CCNR 2020-I-2 adopted on 23 March 2020,⁵ which invited CCNR member States to take exceptional measures in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure a good performance of the Rhine navigation and the continued operation of the supply chain, in particular:

- Maintain as far as possible the optimal functioning of the infrastructure.
- Not penalize exceeding the periods of validity of certificates, attestations and other documents issued in accordance with the Rhine legislation, when safety and operational continuity of inland navigation were not affected and the certificates, attestations and other documents concerned were still valid on 15 March 2020.

² https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/legislation/2020-03-23-communication-green-lanes_en.pdf.

³ For more details, see www.healthygateways.eu/Novel-coronavirus.

⁴ As of 20 June 2020.

⁵ www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/covid19/pre20_18fr_final.pdf.

- Facilitate the mobility of crew members to enable them to make the direct journey from their place of residence to the port of embarkation and from the port of disembarkation to their place of residence.
- Sign the UNECE multilateral agreements under ADN;

(b) The inventory of national and international measures for inland navigation, maintained and regularly updated on a dedicated web page,⁶ and a weekly newsletter on the CCNR website;

(c) The evaluation of the economic impact from the COVID-19 crisis on European inland waterway transport, issued on 27 March 2020.⁷ The impacts of the COVID crisis on European inland navigation were also addressed in the CCNR Market Insight “Inland navigation in Europe” published in April 2020 and in the 2020 Annual report on inland navigation in Europe;

(d) Resolution 2020-I-4 adopted at the CCNR plenary session on 4 June 2020⁸ aimed to raise the preparedness for other possible crises by collecting the relevant lessons learned from the management of the COVID crisis, mitigate its adverse effects and coordinate the cooperation among the key players on this issue. The discussion on the effects of the pandemic on inland navigation on the Rhine and other European waterways held at the session focused on the impact of the health crisis on inland navigation and the responses to be developed in terms of managing and exiting from the crisis.

The European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) at its meeting held on 30 April 2020, expressed the urgent need for a coordinated approach to measures for supporting the European inland navigation sector during the COVID-19 crisis. In the open letter of 20 May 2020,⁹ the Chair and the Executive Secretary of CESNI recommended not to impose penalties for the duration of the crisis, should the validity periods of certificates, attestations and other documents be exceeded, subject to specific conditions. Furthermore, CESNI called upon the sector and inspection bodies, as best they were able, to continue with or resume inspection and certification processes to avoid an administrative backlog and the interruption of vital business for ship repair enterprises to the greatest possible extent. The exchange of information on this issue was continued at the CESNI meeting held on 22 and 23 September 2020.

C. Danube Commission

Throughout the crisis period, DC has made every effort to support the fleet operation and ensure the continuity of transport of goods in the Danube region during the COVID-19 crisis. The coordinated actions of the competent authorities and national administrations of the DC member States have allowed to prevent a complete stop of the Danube navigation and ensured safety of navigation and cargo operations. The systematic analysis of exceptional measures by the DC secretariat has allowed the coordination of activities of national authorities and developing a common position of the DC countries on the following issues:

(a) Extension of the validity period of boatmasters’ certificates, certificates of competency of crew members, medical certificates, service books and special certificates for inland navigation personnel, which expired before 1 July 2020, by not more than three months, but not later than till 1 October 2020;

(b) Replacement of crew members who were not able to be present on board due to the reasons related to COVID-19, based on the prescribed minimum crew provisions while ensuring the appropriate qualifications, and measures that allowed crew members to access their workplaces when passing the border control (a medical certificate, a crew member

⁶ www.ccr-zkr.org/13070000-en.html.

⁷ www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/covid19/20200327_CCNR_Economic_impacts.pdf.

⁸ www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/resolutions/ccr2020-Ifr.pdf.

⁹ www.cesni.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Open-Letter-CESNI_EN.pdf.

certificate for vessels engaged in international voyages on the Danube, developed under the DC framework, or a Green Lanes Certificate);

(c) Renewal of ship's certificates which had been expired in March 2020 for up to one year, subject to agreement with the competent authorities (classification societies);

(d) Renewal of certificates of special knowledge of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN), Certificates of approval and provisional certificates of approval based on UNECE multilateral agreements under ADN;

(e) Special measures during cargo loading and unloading operations, the replenishment of fuel, water and food supplies and vessel repairs.

The operation of locks, River Information Services (RIS) and the river surveillance on the Danube have been ensured in a full scope. The Notices to Skippers have been transmitted systematically and contained the information on special measures due to the crisis for the attention of crews and administrations.

D. Mosel Commission

In order to protect people in the sector and ensure the continuity of navigation, the member States of the Mosel Commission (MC) have implemented a set of exceptional measures due to the pandemic outbreak:¹⁰

(a) Reducing the opening time of locks; since May 2020, the 24-hour operation of locks has been restored, except the French section of the Mosel (2 x 8-hour service per day);

(b) The interruption of recreational navigation from March to May/June 2020, subject to sanitary prescriptions (20 May 2020 in France, 10 June 2020 in Germany and 11 May 2020 in Luxembourg);

(c) In Luxembourg, locks for pleasure craft were closed from 24 March to 20 May 2020.

MC has adopted the following decisions during the COVID crisis:¹¹

- Postponement of the closure of locks from May to September 2020 (decision of 3 April 2020).
- Postponement of the introduction of electronic ship reporting on the Mosel from 1 July 2020 to 1 July 2021 (decision of 6 April 2020).
- Suspension of the obligation to pay the fee and to stamp the fee declaration at locks to avoid personal contacts between the lock staff and skippers (decision of 23 March 2020).
- Extension of the validity of certificates that were still valid on 15 March 2020; MC member States were encouraged to sign Multilateral Agreement ADN/MO25, if they had not already done so (decision of 6 April 2020).

The measures are subject to regular checks whether they should be still in force.

E. International Sava River Basin Commission

Member States of the International Sava River Basin Commission (SC) have implemented special measures in the field of water transport due to COVID-19 outbreak, and the respective information has been made available on the SC website, including the Notices to Skippers and the contact information of the competent authorities of member States.¹²

¹⁰ As of 23 June 2020.

¹¹ Detailed information on exceptional measures on the Mosel due to COVID-19 is available at <http://commission-de-la-moselle.org/index.php?id=872&L=2>.

¹² www.savacommission.org/news.

F. IG River Cruise and European Barge Union

In May 2020, IG River Cruise¹³ and European Barge Union (EBU) issued the Guideline for a Minimum Standard for the Resumption of River Cruises in Europe under COVID-19,¹⁴ in order to ensure the protection of passengers and crew members in specific circumstances caused by the pandemic. The guideline is intended for the COVID-19 exit strategy with the aim to ensure a continuous passenger ship traffic on European inland waterways during the COVID restrictions and facilitate a harmonized and coordinated recovery from the pandemic for the river cruise business in Europe.

¹³ The European River Cruise Association, at www.igrivercruise.com.

¹⁴ www.ebu-uenf.org/wp-content/uploads/River-Cruise-Minimum-Standard-Covid-19_FINAL-VERSION_1.0_EN.pdf.

Annex II

Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on inland navigation and exceptional measures implemented by member States

A. Austria

Among the implications of the COVID outbreak for inland water transport in Austria were mentioned:

- The impact on river cruise shipping which has been stopped and is still hindered;
- Cross-border restrictions for crew members when they travelled to their workplaces.

The decisions taken within the European Union and the UNECE multilateral agreements under ADN which enabled the renewal of certificates of special knowledge of ADN, certificates of approval and provisional certificates of approval according to ADN have significantly contributed in ensuring continuous operation of freight transport in Austria during the crisis.

B. Belarus

As of the end of June 2020, all passenger traffic has been stopped on waterways of the Republic of Belarus due to the COVID-19 pandemic: city trips for organized groups of people, tourist passenger cruises, river excursions and public events on board passenger vessels; freight traffic has also been affected. The crisis had an impact not only on shipowners, but on the national economy as a whole. In order to prevent the spread of the pandemic, general plans have been developed for all sectors of the economy. They prescribed, in particular, individual protective measures, the use of antiseptics and other preventive measures to ensure safety of people.

C. Belgium

Flemish Region

(a) Operational impact

In order to guarantee the continuity of inland navigation services during the COVID-19 crisis, a series of sector-specific measures have been taken by the Flemish waterway authority in relation to: (a) the certification of the staff and inland waterway vessels and (b) examinations, service record books and logbooks. The Flemish waterway authority has created a dedicated COVID-19 web page to provide a regularly updated overview of all COVID-19 measures related to inland navigation.

Transitional provisions related to the certification of inland water transport staff and vessels, examinations, the service record book and the logbook

(i) Certificates of competence

Regulation (EU) 2020/698 of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 May 2020 stipulates that for cases in which the time limit for undergoing medical examinations would expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, this will be extended by six months in each of the cases concerned. The boatmasters' certificates concerned should remain valid accordingly.

(ii) Certificates of competence in accordance with ADN

Certificates of ADN experts and ADN safety advisors that expire in the period from 1 March to 1 December 2020, will remain valid until 31 December 2020. The start date of a new certificate will correspond to the expiry date of the previous one.

(iii) Examinations:

- Examination for ADN initial training: persons who followed an ADN initial training between 20 October 2019 and 20 March 2020, will have a period of one year to take the examination (and to re-sit the examination, if necessary).
- Resit of examination for the certificates of competence “Rhine and Inland Navigation”: persons who took the examination between 1 July and 31 December 2019, can re-sit the examination up to and including 31 December 2020.
- Theoretical and practical examination “Radar”: persons who took the theoretical examination between 1 July and 31 December 2019, can take the practical examination “Radar” (and re-sit the examination, if necessary) until 31 December 2020.

(iv) Certification of vessels:

According to Regulation (EU) 2020/698 of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 May 2020, the validity of documents falling within the scope of Directive 2016/1629 which were expired between 1 March and 31 August 2020, is extended for a period of six months.

(v) Certification of vessels carrying dangerous goods:

Temporary inspection, certificates of approval and provisional certificates of approval: certificates that expire in the period from 1 March to 1 September 2020, will remain valid till 30 September 2020. The start date of a new certificate will correspond to the expiry date of the previous one.

Operation of movable bridges and locks

In Flanders, there was no interruption in the working timetable of movable bridges and locks during the COVID-19 period.

Recreational boating

Recreational boating was prohibited from the beginning of the crisis until the beginning of May 2020 and, since then, it has been authorized under specified conditions which are regularly updated.

(b) Economic impact

In support of the Flemish companies, the Flemish government provides a number of general and sector-specific financial support measures. The latter do not cover inland water transport, but the companies engaged in the sector activities can benefit from several general financial support measures.

In the second quarter of 2020, almost 17.5 million tons of goods were transported on the Flemish waterway network, representing a decrease by 3.45 per cent compared to the second quarter of 2019, and the transport performance in ton-kilometres decreased by 3.06 per cent. It can be concluded that a minor decrease has been observed over the last three months, compared to the second quarter of 2019 and given the unprecedented crisis since March 2020.

On the contrary, a significant increase of no less than 10.02 per cent has been observed in container traffic, compared to the second quarter of 2019, due to the large increase of container traffic on the Albert Canal.

Lessons learned: there a need for a well-organized cross-border consultation on introducing practical measures (e.g. transitional provisions related to the certification of the staff and vessels, operation hours of locks and movable bridges and other aspects), in order to ensure a good functioning of cross-border navigation.

Walloon Region

As compared to the average data for 2017–2019, freight traffic by inland waterways decreased in March–August 2020 as shown in the table below:

	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020
Freight volume, %	24	25	24	8	15	18
Number of loaded vessels, %	25	25	25	11	16	29

In order to ensure the continuity of navigation to the maximum possible extent, special measures have been implemented with due regard of the pandemic situation and the respective regulations.

Brussels Capital Region

Port of Brussels, the first half of 2020

The global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic has affected waterway traffic in the port of Brussels. The impact was aggravated by the quarantine measures introduced in Belgium in the first half of 2020 and had severe implications for all sectors of the economy.

In the first half of 2020, domestic traffic decreased by 13 per cent and reached 2.4 million tons, transit traffic increased by 31 per cent and container traffic decreased by 10 per cent. The total traffic volume had a smaller decrease of 4 per cent, due to good performance of transit transport. As it had been expected, all good segments have suffered, except agricultural products and foodstuffs, which were least affected by the quarantine measures.

However, notwithstanding the negative evolution of freight transport by waterways in the first six months of 2020, recent volumes of domestic transport allow to predict that the recovery is under way. Thus, after the period from March to May 2020 when traffic was particularly affected by sanitary measures, in June a significant increase of 11 per cent in the transport volume was reached compared to June 2019.

Due to the measures undertaken in relation to the COVID pandemic, the port of Brussels remained open during the whole period of crisis. The port companies were able to continue working as usual. The meeting of the Executive Board held in April adopted a set of measures to help clients cope with the crisis. In order to ensure safety of the personnel of hydraulic structures, specific safety measures were introduced.

Lessons learned have emphasized a crucial role of the port for the city of Brussels in terms of supply while reducing the environmental impact associated with logistics, as water transport is the most environmentally friendly mode of transport.

D. Croatia

In general, the state of danger in Croatia was announced in the middle of March 2020. The decisions aimed to ensure the continuity of operation of the sector and safety of the personnel were based on step-by-step approach, the situation is under constant review and the data is continuously updated. A set of requirements have been adopted in response to the crisis in order to ensure safe transport operations, sanitary and epidemiological protection of the infrastructure, staff and passengers.

COVID-19 pandemic had a particular impact on passenger traffic by inland waterways in Croatia; during the pandemic, nearly all arrivals at inland ports were cancelled. Operation of the passenger ports of Vukovar, Ilok, Batina and Aljmaš was suspended following the decision of the Vukovar Port Authority of 16 March 2020, and passenger vessels engaged in international cruises and carrying more than 40 passengers were not allowed to enter (as of 18 May 2020). All epidemiological measures related to the protection of passengers and crew

members on inland waterway vessels have been implemented and are still in force. The replacement of crew members was subject to a special procedure.

There was no interruption in freight traffic, crews were obliged to stay on board and the cross-border control was performed remotely. In the second quarter of 2020, cargo traffic in the port of Vukovar reached 27 thousand tons in March, 34 thousand tons in April, which exceeded the volume of cargo reloaded in April 2019, and 8 thousand tons in May 2020.

Croatia maintains an active dialogue with the neighbouring countries, the Danube Commission and other international organizations for coping with the implications of the crisis.

Lessons learned: the existing system needs to be adapted to effectively respond in case of natural disasters in order to prevent their spread, impact and consequences.

E. Germany

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, Germany has faced the problems that were common for the sector, as it was mentioned at the virtual informal meeting of SC.3/WP.3 in June 2020, in particular: (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. The above-mentioned issues needed to be addressed either by the Federal Government or by the federal states. In general, health protection measures in relation to the pandemic are regulated by the federal states.

The recent situation in the sector in Germany is as follows:

(a) Passenger traffic and river cruises are again permitted in accordance with the COVID-19-related regulations of each federal state; these measures prescribe, inter alia, social distancing rules, the maximum number of people allowed in enclosed spaces, the registration of visitors and the obligation to wear a face mask. Accordingly, the number of trips has decreased significantly.

(b) The freight volume also depends on the economic trends. The economy is still affected by the pandemic; therefore, the volume of transported goods remains at a low level with a slightly positive trend for container freight. However, the lack of positive trends is also seasonal to some extent.

(c) All German inland ports are open and fully efficient. The COVID-19 protective measures are observed. Due to the impact of the pandemic, German ports are facing a decline in ship traffic. The pandemic had a little impact on the operation of locks has been affected to a small degree, and the lock services are available to a large extent. The operation of locks is now fully recovered.

(d) In accordance with the orders of the Federal Government of 17 and 31 March 2020, the competent authorities were obliged not to impose penalties against certain expired documents, certificates, attestations and other documents if they had been valid until 15 March 2020, which was in line with CCNR Resolution 2020-I-2. The orders were partially revoked after the adoption of Regulation (EU) 698/2020.

(e) Following the Order of 17 March mentioned above, the crew requirements were eased for cases when the replacement of crew members was not possible. In addition, the federal states who are responsible for establishing quarantine rules have exempted cross-border crew members from the quarantine obligation. As a member State of the European Union and CCNR, Germany also applies the "Green Lanes" provisions and CCNR Resolution 2020-I-2.

(f) Safety and health protection is regulated by the mandatory prescriptions of the federal states in relation to the COVID outbreak, which are regularly updated. In the beginning of the pandemic, river cruises were not allowed by the state regulations. As an

example, in addition to face masks and distancing rules, the registration of visitors may be required for river cruises in order to ensure the traceability of the infection.

So far, it has proven very effective to take coordinated action. Therefore, the establishment of communication platforms, where infrastructure services, users and the economy come together, appears to be desirable. In addition, CCNR and its committees are working to elaborate on lessons learned. Germany is also contributing to a pandemic emergency plan at the European Union level.

Russian Federation

Currently, shipping companies engaged in tourist passenger transport experience difficulties. The sale of passenger vouchers begins 1.5 year prior to the voyage. There is a significant reduction in passenger transport and sea cruise shipping.

Significant difficulties have been observed in freight traffic by rivers. Due to the closure of borders and the forecasted decline in the production and construction rate, a decrease is expected in the departure of main types of cargo by inland waterway.

To protect the life and health of passengers, the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation and the Federal Supervisory Service for Consumer Rights and Human Welfare have developed recommendations aimed at safe functioning of maritime and inland water transport during the period of the COVID infection spread and the recovery period after anti-epidemic restrictions. The recommendations aim to ensure sanitary safety of passengers on board vessels and prevent the spread of the COVID infection among crews and are intended also for shipowners.

In accordance with the above recommendations, tour operators engaged in tourist transportation by sea and inland waterways of the Russian Federation have introduced passenger ship operation plans aimed at safe operation in conditions of the COVID-19 spread for each of the vessels they own. In order to timely inform water transport enterprises about the adoption of the recommendations and ensure the proper organization of work under the pandemic situation, the document was uploaded on the official website of the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation on 26 May 2020.¹⁵

The Ministry of Transport is working on this issue together with the Federal Agency for Tourism, who has developed draft recommendations on the prevention of new coronavirus infection (COVID-19) in the entities engaged in cruise and yacht tourist transport in order to synchronize the measures with the Passenger Ship Plan.

The Russian Federation has made every effort to ensure continuous work of the transport sector as a key element for ensuring the necessary economic links and mobility under restrictions due to the COVID pandemic.

F. Slovakia

Since 13 March 2020, navigation on the territory of the Slovak Republic has been limited in accordance with the Navigation Measure issued by the Transport Authority of the Slovak Republic. Extraordinary measures covered cargo vessels, passenger vessels, ports and crews of inland waterway vessels:

(a) During the COVID outbreak, cargo vessels navigating in transit mode were allowed to use berths on the Danube and its navigable tributaries, when required by the regulations for the working hours of the crew. In such cases, crew members were not allowed to go on shore. Vessels were allowed to replenish fuel and water supplies, when necessary, provided that the safety measures were complied with. Cargo vessels were allowed to perform loading, unloading and transshipment operations in ports on the territory of the Slovak Republic;

¹⁵ www.mintrans.ru/press-center/news/955.

(b) From 13 March to 5 June, berthing and anchoring of all passenger cabin vessels was prohibited on the Danube and its navigable tributaries, and passenger traffic was allowed only in transit mode. On the territory of the Slovak Republic, commercial cruises and river excursions were prohibited, including small craft;

(c) From 13 March 2020, the replacement of crew members of vessels operating on waterways in the Slovak Republic was prohibited, as well as the exchange of crews of vessels in ports and harbours of the Slovak Republic; following a gradual release of navigation restrictions, from 16 April 2020 the replacement of all crew members was allowed in the ports of Bratislava and Komárno;

(d) Crew members of cargo vessels when crossing the borders of the Slovak Republic when travelling to their workplaces or returning home, were exempted from the quarantine obligation, if proved by a certificate from the employer in the state language of the Slovak Republic or certificate for the staff engaged in international transport.

All restrictions for inland waterway transport were cancelled on 5 June 2020, but the measures issued by the Public Health Office of the Slovak Republic are still in force.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a set of safety measures were introduced in the Slovak Republic, in particular, wearing protective masks in the interior and social distancing of 2 metres, as well as special procedures for cleaning and disinfection of vessels.

In order to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 on inland waterway transport, the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic has introduced financial support measures which are available to operators of passenger and freight ships.

Freight traffic in the ports of Bratislava and Komárno recorded a year-on-year decrease of 11.86%. In connection with crossing the Gabčíkovo dam, the number of passengers decreased by 98.47 per cent and freight traffic – by 17.67 per cent compared to 2019.

G. Ukraine¹⁶

Infrastructure

Since the introduction of extraordinary quarantine measures in Ukraine on 12 March, all strategically critical organizations of the sector, i.e. locks, ports, companies that ensure navigation and navigation safety, including the national classification society Shipping Register of Ukraine, had to introduce and observe the required safety restrictions and individual protection measures for the staff.

Restrictive measures on the Ukrainian section of the Danube and in the Danube ports

By Decree No. 288 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 1 March 2020, the checkpoints for river passenger traffic in the ports of Izmail, Vylkovo and Kiliya were temporarily closed. For cabin passenger ships, berthing and anchorage have been prohibited, and navigation has been allowed only for transit purpose. For replenishing fuel and water supplies, crew members had to use individual protection means and avoid direct contact with the port personnel. Since 26 February 2020, enhanced disinfection measures have been applied at cross-border checkpoints and at seaports to prevent infection from entering the Ukrainian territory.

In Ukraine, no special restrictions have been introduced in freight transport, in addition to general safety measures, such as individual protection means, restricted number of people in public places and social distancing of at least 1.5 metres.

Cargo vessels calling at the seaports of Reni, Izmail and Ust-Dunaysk, were allowed to perform loading, unloading or transshipment operations without restrictions, while crew members were obliged to use individual protection means and avoid direct contact with the port personnel. Freight ships engaged in transit operations were allowed to use anchorages

¹⁶ As of the end of June 2020.

on the Danube, where it was required for the crew operating mode. In such cases, crew members were not allowed to go ashore.

Validity of vessel documents and crew certificates

Surveys for the extension or renewal of ships' certificates were carried out within Ukraine and could be provided in Hungary with due regard of national restriction measures. Shipping Register of Ukraine may extend the validity of vessel's certificates where possible documents and looking for new possibilities to carry out statutory surveys according to the regulations of maritime administrations and IMO circulars.

The Maritime administration of Ukraine has notified the classification societies delegated with the right to provide statutory services for ships flying the Ukrainian flag that in cases when a classification society is unable to make surveys for the extension of the validity of ship's certificate, it should send a request to the maritime administration in each case accompanied with the necessary information.

Certificates of competence, medical and service books and special certificates for ship personnel, which expire before July 1, 2020, can be extended for three months, but not later than till 1 October 2020.

In the absence of crew members on board for reasons related to COVID-19 infection, in order to continue the operation of the vessel, crew members can be replaced within the limits specified in the Minimum Crew Certificate.

Ukraine has regularly informed DC on the exceptional measures taken in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.
