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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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

Sixtieth session

Geneva, 16–18 February 2022

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Workshop “Prevention of Pollution from Inland Waterway Vessels and Greening of the Inland Water Transport Sector”

Background and Main Objectives of the Workshop

Note by the secretariat*

I. Mandate

1. This document is submitted in line with the Proposed Programme Budget for 2022, part V, Regional cooperation for development, section 20, Economic Development in Europe, Programme 17, Economic Development in Europe (A/76/6 (Sect.20), paragraph 20.76).
2. Following the decision of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) at its fifty-ninth session, delegations are invited to take part in the workshop dedicated to the various aspects of prevention of pollution from inland waterway vessels and reducing the environmental impact from inland navigation (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/118, paragraph 89).

II. Background and Regulatory Framework

A. Activities of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport

3. Prevention of environmental pollution from inland waterway vessels has been an important agenda item of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) since its establishment in 1956. Main principles for the prevention of water pollution were introduced first in 1958 in resolution No. 3. Recommendations for the control of pollution of inland waterways, reduction of emissions and noise from inland waterway vessels are addressed in a number of SC.3 resolutions, in particular:

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

- Resolution No. 21 Prevention of Water Pollution by Inland Navigation Vessels
- Resolution No. 24, European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI)
- Resolution No. 61, Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels.

B. Prevention of Air Pollution and Greening of the Inland Fleet

4. The overall objective of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transport has brought to the forefront the modernization and greening of the inland fleet with a view to reducing emissions, conventional fuel consumption and increasing energy efficiency in order to ensure transition to a zero emission transport mode. Recent initiatives and projects include new types of low emission and zero emission vessels, innovative propulsion systems and sustainable fuels, decarbonization measures at ports and other relevant activities.

5. The objective of reducing emissions from inland water transport has been set out in the basic regulatory documents:

- The Wroclaw ministerial declaration¹ called upon the sector to promote the role of water transport using alternative fuels, encourage the realization of a modern fleet and foster innovations.
- The Mannheim Declaration² put forward the task of reducing GHG by 35 per cent compared with 2015 by 2035, reducing pollutant emissions by at least 35 per cent compared with 2015 by 2035 and largely eliminating GHG and other pollutants by 2050.
- Policy Recommendation No. 4 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport highlighted the need to continue exchanging best practices, support programmes and pilot projects aimed at modernization and greening of the fleet, new and enhanced vessel types, low and zero emission propulsion systems, support and encourage the relevant research studies and activities and support the objectives set out in the Mannheim Declaration.
- The European Green Deal³ called for at least 55 per cent reduction of emissions from engines by 2030. Zero-emission mobility is also the major objective of the Zero Pollution Action Plan.⁴
- The NAIADES III Inland Waterway Transport Action Plan for 2021–2027⁵ put forward the transition to zero emission inland water transport by 2050 as one of the main objectives.

6. In recent years, a number of projects and studies have been dedicated to new technologies, alternative fuels and the feasibility and conditions for the commercial use of vessels using them; a significant number of them are supported by funding programmes of the European Union, such as Horizon Europe, Connecting Europe Facility and Interreg. In July 2021, the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine published the final study on financing the energy transition towards a zero emission European inland water transport sector. The conclusions of the study represent a major input to the discussions at the Rhine, European and international level on a European subsidy and financing mechanism for the energy transition.⁶

¹ See https://unece.org/DAM/trans/doc/2018/sc3/Ministerial-declaration_e.pdf.

² Declaration “150 years of the Mannheim Act – the driving force behind dynamic Rhine and inland navigation”; see ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2019/5, annex I.

³ Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0789>.

⁴ Communication from the Commission “Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil”, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0400&qid=1623311742827>.

⁵ See ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2021/1.

⁶ www.ccr-zkr.org/files/documents/cpresse/cp20210602en.pdf.

7. Some aspects related to modernization and greening of the inland fleet were highlighted at the workshop “Encouraging the realization of a modern fleet, enhancing navigation safety and fostering innovations” held at the fifty-fifth session of SC.3/WP.3 on 19 June 2019.⁷

C. Prevention of Water Pollution and Reduction of Noise

8. Inland waterway transport is one of the most environmentally sound modes of transport, however, even if the water pollution caused by inland water transport is of minor significance, the further improvement of its environmental performance would contribute to achieving the environmental and nature-protection objectives in using inland waterways. Principles of prevention of water pollution by waste during inland navigation are set out in resolution No. 21 and chapter 10 of CEVNI.

9. Other European regulations for the collection, deposit and reception of waste generated on board vessels include:

- Convention on Collection, Deposit and Reception of Waste Produced during Navigation on the Rhine and Inland Waterways (CDNI)
- Basic Rules of Navigation on the Danube (DFND)
- Recommendation on Waste Management from Vessels Navigating on the Danube
- Protocol on the Prevention of the Water Pollution Caused by Navigation to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin.

10. The permissible levels of discharge into inland waters of polluting substances are laid down in legal instruments which regulate the environment and ecology norms, relevant regional or subregional agreements or stipulated by individual central or local authorities. Recommended minimum limit and control values for onboard waste water treatment plants and provisions for the reduction of noise generated by vessels are given in the annex to resolution No. 61 and the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation vessels (ES-TRIN).

11. The need for joining efforts aimed at ensuring ecological safety of inland navigation has been stressed in the Wroclaw ministerial declaration and Policy Recommendation No. 4 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport, and the task of greening inland waterways infrastructure and ports is set out in the NAIADES III action plan.

IV. Purpose of the Workshop and Topics for Discussion

12. In accordance with Policy Recommendation No. 4 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport, the purpose of the workshop is to:

- Highlight priorities and the ongoing work in the field of modernization and greening of the fleet, inland waterway infrastructure and ports
- Exchange best practices and highlight programmes and pilot projects aimed at new and enhanced vessel types, low and zero emission propulsion systems
- Raise awareness of recent progress and opportunities for increasing the environmental performance of the sector among member States of the Economic Commission for Europe with navigable waterways and discuss how to further promote this
- Exchange best practices and progress reached in efficient waste management and prevention of pollution from vessels
- Identify next steps and provide recommendations for SC.3.

⁷ ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/110, paragraphs 8–39.

13. Proposed topics for discussion at the workshop are:
- (a) Approaches, solutions and technologies for decarbonizing the shipping sector;
 - (b) Feasibility and opportunities for the commercial use of low and zero emission vessels on inland waterways;
 - (c) Concepts, best practices and recommendations for greening inland waterway infrastructure and ports;
 - (d) A sound regulatory framework for decarbonizing and greening of the inland shipping sector;
 - (e) Modern technologies and solutions for efficient collection, processing and management of waste generated during the operation of vessels and accidents resulting in environmental pollution;
 - (f) Modern approaches and solutions aimed at reducing noise generated by vessels;
 - (g) Measures that could be undertaken and the international and national level and the development of cooperation in this field.
14. SC.3/WP.3 may wish to have a discussion on the realization of actions proposed under Policy Recommendation No. 4 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport.
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