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Current situation and trends in inland water transport: Follow-up of the International ministerial conference "Connecting by Inland Navigation"

Encouraging the Realization of a Modern Fleet, Enhancing Resilience of Inland Water Transport to Climate Change and Promoting Its Attractiveness to the Market

Transmitted by the Governments of Belarus, Belgium, Croatia and Slovakia*, **

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. At its sixty-fifth session, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) asked the secretariat to collect information from governments on the implementation of the Wroclaw ministerial declaration (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/215, paragraph 14). The present document contains information transmitted by the Governments of Belarus, Belgium, Croatia and Slovakia on progress in encouraging the realization of a modern fleet, enhancing resilience of inland water transport to climate change and promoting its attractiveness to the market.

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

II. Strategic Actions 12 to 23 of the Wroclaw Ministerial Declaration

A. Encouraging the Realization of a Modern Fleet and Fostering Innovations

(i) Regulatory framework for fostering innovation, automation and greening of the inland fleet

Belarus

3. The State programme "Transport Complex" for 2021–2025 involves measures for the fleet modernization, which cover, in particular, increasing the level of automation and greening. The programme also provides for the implementation of results of research and scientific projects in the field of automation and greening of the inland fleet.

Belgium

4. In the Flemish Region, greening of the inland fleet is embedded in the Flemish Energy and Climate Plan for 2021–2030 and the Flemish Air Quality Plan until 2030. These plans state that the fleet greening is crucial in terms of realizing an ecologically and socially responsible modal shift to inland navigation. The use of clean fuels and alternative propulsion systems, cold ironing and other best practices in this field will facilitate the transition of inland water transport towards a greener transport mode.

5. In the field of automated navigation and innovation in a wider scope, the Flemish Government has developed a legal framework that offers more room for innovation and ensures a smooth and safe way for developing and testing the accompanying techniques in Flanders. As a first result, a new Flemish Decree was introduced in June 2019. This decree opens the possibility for the Flemish waterway authorities to give temporary exemptions on certain rules and regulations to enable tests of innovative concepts, including on-board and onshore automated navigation systems. The temporary exemptions relate to the crew and navigation regulations, the on-board equipment, traffic regulations and activities on board and ashore, however, they cannot apply to supervision and enforcement and to provisions related to the criminal law. The exemptions have a maximum validity period of one year and can be renewed depending on the needs, however the total validity period shall not exceed five years.

Croatia

6. Among the measures for increasing competitiveness and encouraging sustainable development of the inland waterway sector set out in the Strategy of Development of River Transport for the period from 2022 to 2032 is raising the level of the energy efficiency by using low-carbon energy sources and propulsion systems in shipping in order to facilitate the transition to a more energy efficient mode of transport. In order to achieve this goal, funding is provided to invest in the replacement of vessel propulsion and auxiliary engines to ensure low emissions, and other on-board systems to increase navigation safety, energy efficiency and sustainability of the fleet.

(ii) Navigation rules and technical standards for inland vessels

Belarus

7. The European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) does not apply in the Republic of Belarus. The Rules for Navigation on Inland Waterways applied on Belarusian waterways are approved by Decision No. 60 of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Belarus of 25 October 2005 and are updated with due regard of the CEVNI provisions where applicable.

8. A set of technical standards are applied in the Republic of Belarus for the design, construction, operation, supervision and tests of inland waterway and river-sea vessels and

their elements, measurement of vessels, labour safety and prevention of environmental pollution from vessels.[1]

Belgium

9. The fourth revision of CEVNI is implemented in the Flemish Region by the Royal Decree of 24 September 2006 “Algemeen Politiereglement voor de Scheepvaart op de Binnenwateren” (General Police Regulations for the Navigation on Inland Waterways) (APSB). The CEVNI provisions are taken into account when updating the navigation rules. Besides APSB, there are the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and the police and navigation regulations of the Belgian territorial sea, coastal ports and zones, Ghent-Terneuzen Canal, Beneden-Zeeschelde, Brussels-Scheldt Canal, Maas and special regulations for particular waterways.[2]

10. Technical standards for inland vessels are adopted by the Decree of the Flemish Government establishing the technical regulations for inland vessels of 5 October 2018. The annex of this regulation is the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation vessels (ES-TRIN).

Croatia

11. The following regulations apply on the territory of Croatia:

- CEVNI
- Basic Rules for the Navigation on the Danube (DFND)
- Navigation Rules on the Sava River Basin
- ES-TRIN.

Slovakia

12. The following regulations apply on the territory of Slovakia:

- CEVNI
- Basic Rules for the Navigation on the Danube (DFND)
- ES-TRIN.

(iii) Improving the quality of inland water transport operations, ensuring navigation safety, reducing the risk of accidents and minimizing the impact of the human factor

Belarus

13. In terms of improving the quality inland waterway transport in the Republic of Belarus, in 2021 three vessels were modernized: two non-motorized flush deck barges and a pusher tug, in order to ensure high-quality transportation of bulk and general cargoes.

14. Measures on ensuring navigation safety in the Republic of Belarus are carried out in accordance with the Inland Water Transport Code of the Republic of Belarus and the Rules for the Navigation on Inland Waterways of the Republic of Belarus. For this purpose, as well as for minimizing the impact of the human factor, vessels of the Republic of Belarus are fitted with up-to-date light signalling systems, navigation and radio equipment and automation equipment in the modernization process. Furthermore, the State Administration of Water Transport focuses its activities on ensuring safe navigation conditions on inland waterways and the safety of navigable engineering structures. In 2021, no transport accidents occurred on inland waterways.

[1] The list of standards is available in the secretariat.

[2] More information on the navigation rules in Flanders is available at www.visuris.be/Scheepvaartreglementering.

Belgium

15. In the Flemish Region, under the programme on digitalization in inland navigation (DigiWave), the Smart Administration Pillar focuses on digitizing the on-board operational and technical documents and the associated financial settlement. De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is planning to introduce remote control of all movable structures by 2032 from three remote control centres. The innovative aspect is that they will function as a fully interconnected meshed network and can be used as a back-up for each other. The strategy towards all-out meshed remote-control provides the ground for a digital evolution.

Croatia

16. A project is being implemented to develop a system for marking waterways, which will ensure a more accurate data about the state of the waterway and a better connection with the waterway users by means of the RIS[3] system.

Slovakia

17. Slovakia was a partner of the project RIS COMEX (Corridor RIS Management Execution, 2016–2021). The implementation of the project results contributes to better planning in inland navigation, reducing waiting and travel time, increasing the efficiency of inland navigation, optimal use of the infrastructure and reducing administrative barriers.

18. The key objectives of the European project "Upgrading of Gabčíkovo Locks" are modernizing the operation of the lock chambers, increasing safety, reliability and intensity of navigation. The right lock chamber of Gabčíkovo Lock was upgraded and modernized in November 2021, and work is in progress in the left lock chamber. The project also includes the establishment of the traffic management system which will prevent any risk vessels may be imposed to due to the limited parameters of the fairway or other factors.

(iv) Promotion of the fleet renovation and modernization, construction of new vessels, innovations, new technologies and digitalization of transport documents

Belarus

19. In the Republic of Belarus, the relevant activities foreseen by the State Programme "Transport Complex" for 2021–2025 are in progress: developing of design documentation for the fleet modernization, upgrading and greening of vessels. These activities are financed from the off-budget centralized investment fund of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Belarus and the republican budget of the Republic of Belarus.

20. In the field of digitalization of documents, the State Administration of Water Transport carries out administrative procedures for the issuance (replacement) of national seafarers' identity documents in accordance with Decree No. 107 of the President of the Republic of Belarus of 16 March 2021 "On Biometric Documents".

Belgium

21. In terms of new technologies, the programme DigiWave in the Flemish Region will require research in Artificial Intelligence, Digital Twins, Omniverse, Big Data, Internet of Things, Data Spaces, cyber resilience and other advanced technologies.

22. In the Flemish Region, several steps are already taken towards digitalization of transport documents in the sector:

- Reporting of transport information will only be allowed in digital format by the waterway authorities by the end of 2022 – beginning of 2023 as estimated; however, the paper documents that accompany the freight as required by the legislation shall still be available.

[3] River Information Services.

- In terms of the preparation for the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2020/1056 on electronic freight transport information (eFTI-regulation) that will become effective by 2024, De Vlaamse Waterweg nv has initiated a feasibility study of transforming the electronic Reporting Inland Barges (eRIBa) platform into an eFTI-compliant platform. A proof of concept will be performed after the study.

Croatia

23. Among the goals set out in the Strategy of Development of River Transport for the period from 2022 to 2032 is strengthening of inland navigation shipping and the encouragement of ecological sustainability, aiming to create conditions that will encourage shipping companies to modernize their fleet, as well as the application of low-carbon energy sources and drive systems. The establishment of instruments and incentives and raising the level of energy efficiency is planned as a priority area of the public policy. Through the state budget, funds will be provided for grants in the field of modernization in inland navigation and progress towards ecological sustainability.

Slovakia

24. At present, efforts are being made to focus activities on supporting vessel operators in modernizing their fleet, mainly in terms of financial support. It is planned to prepare a state aid scheme for modernization of vessels and replacement of engines to ensure low levels of emissions.

25. As a project partner of RIS COMEX, Slovakia will be implementing the outcome of the project: the European RIS system (EuRIS) – the central European RIS platform, and the Central and Eastern European Reporting Information System (CEERIS) – the smart electronic reporting platform for inland water transport. The Slovak Transport Authority is working on launching a national crew database. Furthermore, the new Danube Navigation Standard Forms (DAVID) are being implemented with the aim to harmonizing the reporting forms used by the Danube countries.

(v) Deployment of River Information Services

Belarus

26. At present, RIS are not applied on inland waterways in the Republic of Belarus and this issue is under examination. The State Administration of Water Transport within its competence will be in charge of issues related to the deployment of RIS on Belarusian inland waterways.

Belgium

27. De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is involved in several programmes and projects dealing with the implementation of RIS:

- VisuRIS platform where all data related to inland navigation are collected and shared. VisuRIS is fully operable and covers all navigable waterways in Flanders. It is used by the Port of Brussel for facilitating the data exchange between actors. VisuRIS has been used as the basis for the development of EuRIS in the RIS COMEX project.
- International projects – RIS COMEX, DIWA (Digitalization of the inland waterways) and DigiWave. The DIWA project is ongoing and De Vlaamse Waterweg nv has taken the leading role in several sub-activities. The results are expected in 2023.
- New vision and preparations for the 2022 edition of the RIS Guidelines by the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure, where De Vlaamse Waterweg nv plays the leading role.

28. In the Brussels Capital Region, a draft law is ongoing through the Brussels administration, aimed to align Brussels to the Flemish regulations on the obligation to exchange the voyage data before departure.

Croatia

29. The project "Development of the marking and buoyage system on waterways of the Republic of Croatia" provides for investments for improving the marking and monitoring of waterways with due regard of the current situation and the available up-to-date solutions. Marking is done on the following waterways:

- Danube from 1295.5 river km to 1433.0 river km
- Drava from 0.00 river km to 198.6 river km
- Sava from 210.8 river km to 594.0 river km
- Kupa from 0.00 river km to 5.0 river km
- Una from 0.00 river km to 15.00 river km.

30. As a part of the above mentioned investment, the existing software and equipment will be upgraded and complemented with monitoring of the aids to navigation and the acquisition of new navigational markers (buoys) with a built-in navigation system, solar lamps and depth sensors. This will also concern the existing two buoy tenders, which are outdated and will be replaced.

Slovakia

31. After the finalization of the project RIS COMEX, Slovakia is considering participation in the project RIS COMEX II.

32. Implementation of RIS in Slovakia consists of the following aspects:

(a) On the Slovakian section of the Danube, 168.4 km of the waterway are equipped with RIS.

(b) The Transport Authority provides Notices to Skippers (NtS) according to the latest version of the NtS standard 4.0. The service provides a possibility to display and subscribe for receiving all types of standardized NtS messages.

(c) The usage of AIS[4] transponders is obligatory in Slovakia since 1 April 2014 according to the Inland Navigation Act. The infrastructure consists of four AIS base stations, which cover the whole Slovak section of the Danube, including common sections with Austria and Hungary. Information from on-board AIS transponders is transmitted to the RIS centre in Bratislava or to regional centres in Gabčíkovo, Komárno or Štúrovo. The RIS provider is the State Navigation Administration. The AIS data is also provided to the EuRIS portal.

(d) The national RIS system supports the electronic ship reporting (ERI) in line with the technical specifications (the ERI standard) defined in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1744 of 17 September 2019. After the implementation of the RIS corridor management and the upcoming start of operation of CeeRIS in September 2022, the national ERI application will be phased out and CeeRIS will be used as the main tool for electronic reporting.

(e) Currently, the electronic navigational charts produced in accordance with the Inland ECDIS[5] standard in version 2.3 are published. The charts are produced by the Slovak Waterway Management Enterprise (SVP) and are available at the SVP website,[6] the Danube Fairway Information Service Portal[7] and the EuRIS portal.[8]

(f) The Transport Authority manages the RIS Index in Slovakia and is responsible for the provision of the Minimum Data as prescribed in Annex I of Directive 2005/44/EC.

[4] Automatic Identification System.
[5] Electronic chart display and information system for inland navigation.
[6] www.svp.sk/sk/uvodna-stranka/odstepne-zavody/oz-bratislava/riecne-informacne-sluzby/.
[7] www.danubeportal.com.
[8] www.eurisportal.eu.

The latest version of the national RIS Index is from 14.06.2022. It is published on the SlovRIS portal.[9]

(vi) Programmes and pilot projects aimed at developing automated, autonomous and smart shipping and digitalization

Belgium

33. De Vlaamse Waterweg nv plays a pioneering role in automated navigation and intends to pave the way for companies that are engaged in automated navigation and thus contribute to the future of automated navigation for commercial purposes. Automated navigation will:

- Increase the efficiency of transport on inland waterways
- Cope with the shortage of employees and bring new profiles to the sector
- Enable new business cases and flow of goods
- Contribute to the greening of the sector and therefore to the realization of the European Green Deal.

34. The Smart Shipping programme builds on four pillars: (a) Smart vessels; (b) Smart infrastructure; (c) Smart data and (d) Smart regulation.

Slovakia

35. The Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic is a member of the advisory board of the project PLATINA 3 and provides feedback for deliverables of the project tasks.

(vii) Decreasing the average age of the fleet, preventing pollution from vessels, reducing greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions and improving the energy efficiency of inland water transport

Belarus

36. On the balance sheet of water transport organizations of the Republic of Belarus, as of the end of 2021, there are 547 vessels, of which:

- 403 transport and auxiliary vessels
- 144 auxiliary worksite craft for engineering works on the waterway.

Around 94% of the fleet being on the balance sheet of water transport organizations of the Republic of Belarus are over 30 years old.

37. Decreasing the average age of the fleet of the Republic of Belarus is ensured through modernization, which extends the service life of vessels by 20–25 years. At present, there are no new vessels under construction in the Republic of Belarus, however, projects for developing the vessel design documentation are ongoing. As an example, in late 2021, a concept design and a technical project of a non-motorized pilot vessel for transporting a wide range of cargoes with a tonnage of 2,300 t were developed.

38. Issues related to the prevention of pollution from vessels are under study. In 2020, the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Belarus transmitted to the secretariat the updated list of reception facilities for the collection of waste generated on board vessels on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, and this information has been included into the addendum to resolution No. 21.

39. In terms of reducing emissions from engines and improving the energy efficiency of inland water transport of the Republic of Belarus, work is ongoing on replacing propulsion engines and diesel generators with more energy-efficient ones as a part of the fleet

[9] www.slovris.sk/en/fairway-information/objects-reference-data-data-for-navigation/ris-index/.

modernization programme. Research is being carried out in the field of alternative fuels and innovative power plants for the inland fleet.

Belgium

40. Belgium is strongly committed to the further protecting the environment, and especially waters under the framework of the Convention on Collection, Deposit and Reception of Waste Produced during Navigation on the Rhine and Inland Waterways (CDNI):

- Part A (Oily and Greasy waste) of the Implementing regulation: in June 2022, the Conference of Contracting Parties adopted an amendment to Article 2.02 aiming to harmonize standards for collection of oily and greasy waste and to ensure better control of these waste flows.
- Part B (cargo-related waste) of the Implementing regulation: in June 2022, the Conference of Contracting Parties adopted an amendment to the introductory provisions of Appendix III (Unloading standards) of CDNI. With the updating of the standard and its immediate entry into force, rain water and ballast water can now be treated in the same way as wash water.
- The new provisions governing the treatment of gaseous residues produced by liquid cargoes is an important topic for CDNI. The entry into force of this major amendment of the Convention will be a real step forward for environmental protection. The ratification procedure is in progress in Belgium, France and Switzerland.

41. The Flemish stakeholders (waterway authorities, port authorities and other players) are currently joining forces to prepare a Flemish Inland Navigation Green Deal. This is a public-private partnership between the various stakeholders involved in waterborne transport. By means of the common objectives, realistic actions and concrete commitments, the partners want to achieve more greening in inland navigation by 2030. The general objective is to ensure greening of the inland navigation sector in Flanders, in particular, reduction of emissions from engines. The strategic objectives also include continuous improving of the energy efficiency in inland water transport.

42. Two aid measures were launched in 2018 to support greening of the fleet. The first one, finished at the end of 2020, supported the installation of new Stage V engines in smaller vessels. The second one, effective till the end of 2022, supports the installation of after-treatment systems.

43. The greening of transport is a part of the Shifting Economy policy plan for the Brussels Capital Region. The objective of the plan is to become carbon neutral by 2050 and to shift all state aid and economic incentives to ecologically exemplary companies by 2030. The Port of Brussels is also facilitating the achievement of a CO_2 neutral label for the logistics companies in the port area. In October 2019, the Port of Brussels hosted the GREEN Inland Shipping event, co-organized by the European Commission, to promote the use of electricity and hydrogen for fuelling vessels of the future.

Slovakia

44. JSC Public Ports is planning to build a waste collection facility for small craft in the area of the port of Bratislava in order to enable ecological and modern refuelling of small pleasure craft and prevent oil spills during self-bunkering. If the collection facility is combined with a bunkering station, incorporating the cost of waste disposal into the fuel price will incentivise vessel operators to use the capacity of the waste collection facility.

45. JSC Public Ports is planning to build an onshore power supply infrastructure for vessels. The purpose is to provide vessels with a connection to the onshore electrical network so that they are no longer needed to generate electricity on board while stationary. The construction of such infrastructure will contribute to reducing noise and eliminating harmful emissions.

46. JSC Public Ports is planning to build a terminal for alternative fuel. This proposal builds on the strategic document Master Plan - Bratislava, which proposed the construction

of a terminal for alternative fuel for vessels as an alternative to the heavy petroleum oil. At the time the idea was conceived, liquefied natural gas LNG was seen as the main alternative fuel for water transport. However, the Public Ports note the active emergence of hydrogen as another alternative for decarbonizing transport, and an expert discussion is currently under way to define a strategy for the introduction of alternative fuels in waterborne transport.

B. Building the Inland Waterway Infrastructure Resilient to Climate Change

(viii) Measures and action plans for adaptation of the sector to climate change and maintaining the operability of inland water transport

Belarus

47. Climate has a direct influence on the water levels in inland waterways. The State Administration of Water Transport issues an information bulletin, which is a summary document of operational information on the state of inland waterways of the Republic of Belarus, transmitted daily by the republican unitary waterway enterprises. Annual data on the regime and resources of surface waters of the Republic of Belarus are given in the State Water Cadastre of the State Institution "Republican Centre for Hydrometeorology, Radioactive Pollution Control and Environmental Monitoring" (Belgydromet). In order to adapt the inland water transport industry of the Republic of Belarus to climate change and ensure the operability of vessels, the relevant scientific studies are under way.

Belgium

48. A recent study has investigated the economic impact of low water periods in Flanders on the water transport sector and the logistic chain. The study showed that, depending on the duration and severity of the low water period, the economic losses reached €10 million to € 200 million. In 2020, Flanders launched the Blue Deal, a multi-year plan to tackle drought and water scarcity. Specific investments are made in the construction of a pumping station to maintain the adequate water levels in Flemish waterways in drought periods and during the repairs of the lock infrastructure to avoid leaking. The Port of Brussels is taking part in a brainstorming campaign with a purpose of elaborating a new tool to facilitate interaction between all parties in the Brussels Capital Region for monitoring and follow-up actions in case of extreme weather conditions affecting navigation.

Slovakia

49. In August 2021, the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic developed the Action Plan for the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy of the Slovak Republic. Among the specific objectives of the plan is protection, management and use of water resources. The activity aims to improve the adaptive capacity of the country in the field of water protection, management and use through improved water management as a key challenge under climate change, while enhancing safety of the population, protection of critical infrastructure and the landscape, relying, inter alia, on the reform of landscape planning and the amendment of the Water Act. When developing the action plan, the Ministry of the Environment took into account the Action Plan to Address the Impacts of Drought and Water Scarcity (H2ODNOTA JE VODA), adopted in March 2018.

(ix) Progress in the waterway building, fairway rehabilitation and maintenance plans for international rivers and their navigable tributaries

Belarus

50. Inland waterways of the Republic of Belarus used for transportation of goods and passengers have a total length of 2135.2 km, including 1252.1 km of sections with the guaranteed depths. The E 40 waterway passes through the territory of the Republic of Belarus and includes the Dnieper-Bug Canal with a length of 205 km with 11 navigable locks. In accordance with the obligations of the Republic of Belarus under the European Agreement

on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance, work on eliminating bottlenecks on the E 40 waterway continued in 2016–2020 with the reconstruction of engineering structures on the eastern slope of the Dnieper-Bug Canal (the State Programme for the Development of the Transport Complex of the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020). In 2019, the reconstruction of lock No. 3 Ragodosch was completed and the lock was put into operation; for lock No. 2 Pererub, the design and estimate documentation has been developed, and the reconstruction is under way.

Slovakia

51. Danube is the only international river which flows through Slovakia. The Slovakian Danube is a transboundary river, comprising of 7.5 km border with Austria, 22.5 km of the national section and 142 km border with Hungary. The Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its navigable tributaries was developed under the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 1a, and is based on the Declaration on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries adopted by the Danube Ministers Meeting in Luxembourg on 7 June 2012. It highlights the national needs and sets out mid-term measures required to ensure harmonized and stable fairway conditions on the Danube and its tributaries, in line with the existing international legal framework and the related targets of the aforementioned Priority Area. The Master Plan is realized through a rich portfolio of transnational and national projects. Slovakia was a project partner of the most significant transnational project FAIRway Danube (July 2015–December 2021). The project "Upgrading of Gabčíkovo locks" is one of the activities that accompany the Master Plan.

C Promoting the Attractiveness of the Sector to the Market and Increasing Its Competitiveness

(x) State financing programmes for the development of inland water transport

Belarus

52. Activities related to the development of inland water transport are financed from the off-budget centralized investment fund of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Belarus and the republican budget of the Republic of Belarus, and are included into five-year state programmes of the Ministry:

- The State Programme for the Development of the Transport Complex of the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020;
- The State programme "Transport Complex" for 2021–2025.

Slovakia

53. The Operational Programme "Integrated Infrastructure" (OPII) was approved by the European Commission on 28 October 2014. OPII is the programmatic document of the Slovak Republic's for drawing assistance from the European Union funds for 2014–2020 in the transport sector and in the area of improving access to information and communication technologies, their use and quality. Under OPII, the budget of € 34,662,353 was allocated from the European Union resources and the national co-financing for projects of the development, modernization and reconstruction of the Danube waterway infrastructure and the modernization and development of the infrastructure of the public port of Bratislava.

54. The Operational Programme Slovakia (P SK) was approved by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 1 July 2022. P SK is the programmatic document of the Slovak Republic for the use of European Union funds for 2021–2027 in connection with the realization of objectives in 5 priorities: science, research and innovations; energy efficiency and decarbonization; transport; an adaptable and accessible labour market and modern regions. Measures for improve the quality of services provided on the Danube and the Váh waterways are part of Priority 3 "Transport," Specific Objective 3.1 "Developing a climate-resilient, smart, safe, sustainable and intermodal TEN-T".

(xi) Education and training programmes aimed at modernizing and greening the fleet, use of simulators, measures aimed at attracting personnel in the sector, improving the working and social conditions of the staff and increasing mobility of crews

Belarus

55. The total number of employees of inland water transport organizations of the Republic of Belarus is 1606. In the Republic of Belarus, training of qualified personnel for the inland water transport industry is performed on a permanent basis by the following educational institutions:

- Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU);
- Belarusian State University of Transport (BelSUT);
- Svetlogorsk State Industrial College.

Belgium

56. In the Flemish Region, education and training programmes dedicated to the fleet modernization, greening and innovations are not yet developed, although the standards of the European Committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) for ecological sailing have been included in the general curriculum of training programmes. One simulator has been approved for education, training and examination purposes so far.[10] At the policy level, an interdepartmental working group is dedicated to increasing a more qualitative working force in the sector. In this respect, the admission requirements for people coming from another profession and who choose for a training programme in inland water transport have been set in a very flexible manner. Furthermore, the Kenniscentrum Binnenvaart Vlaanderen (KBV) is actively working on setting up a plan to attract more young people to the sector. This is a part of a subsidy programme between the Flemish Government and KBV in order to improve the professional knowledge and skills of the staff.

57. The Brussels Capital region and the Port of Brussels are participating, via the "Logisticity" training and employment centre, in the promotion of the waterway professions among young people in Brussels. The training of future boatmen is provided through a partnership with Le Forem, the public service for employment and vocational training in Wallonia.

58. Recognition of professional qualifications falls under the scope of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation.

Croatia

59. In order to get young people interested in obtaining professional knowledge in the field of inland navigation, scholarship award competitions are held for high school students of the relevant institutions. The implementation of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 will enhance the mobility of ship crew members and establishing of common standards for professional qualifications.

Slovakia

60. There are currently no training and education programmes in Slovakia focused on modernizing and greening the fleet. The Department of Water Transport of the University of Žilina has a simulator for the preparation of bachelors in the field of education course "Operation and Economics of Water Transport". However, this simulator is not standardized in accordance with Directive (EU) 2017/2397. The Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with interested secondary schools and universities, organizes an annual event called Study Transport. However, the education course on water transport over a long period of time has been chosen by a very low number of students. The

[10] https://transport.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/List%20of%20approved%20simulators%20Article%2021.pdf.

stakeholders have agreed to organize an event to promote education and jobs in the water transport sector in early 2023.

61. The Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic maintains an active social dialogue with representatives of the Water Transport Workers' Union and representatives of the Transport, Post and Telecommunications Union.

62. Transposition of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 and Directive (EU) 2016/1629 into the national legislation and their gradual implementation are among the most significant measures aimed at increasing mobility of crews, recognition of vessel certificates and certificates of crew members.