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Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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

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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Mutual Recognition of Boatmasters' Certificates and Harmonization of Professional Requirements in Inland Navigation

Smart and flexible crewing rules and digital tools for recording information on crew and vessels in inland waterway transport

Transmitted by the European Union

1. The objectives of the two initiatives as outlined in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

The Sustainable & Smart Mobility Strategy announced two new legislative initiatives in the area of jobs and skills for inland waterway transport (IWT):

- Digital tools for recording and exchanging information on inland crew and vessels, and
- EU crewing requirements for inland navigation.

With the “digital tools” initiative, the intention is to make obligatory for operators to record data on crew and vessels’ activities in real time and to make it accessible on a shared platform to authorised users. Currently this data is recorded in paper service record books and logbooks whose models are regulated at EU level. The objective is to set-up a sort of smart tachograph for inland waterway transport. This will help minimize administrative burden, increase the uptake and acceptance of electronic documents/solutions in the sector and improve the enforcement of legislation (on crewing requirements, on working time and on professional qualifications).

As for the “EU crewing requirements for inland navigation”, these safety requirements are today regulated only at national and Rhine level, and not at the EU level. Furthermore, these requirements were designed for older fleets; they do not take account new technologies and working practices that modify the workload aboard. The sector needs a forward-looking and flexible legal framework at EU level that establishes crewing requirements supported by a reliable, real-time, digital controlling capacity.

2. Decision to merge the two initiatives

In September 2022 DG MOVE has taken the decision to merge the two initiatives. The NAIADES III Communication already combines them under one Flagship measure “*Flagship 7 - Smart and flexible crewing rules*”.

Therefore, the general objective of the (merged) initiative is to contribute to a smooth and fairer functioning of the IWT market, through harmonisation and modernisation of crewing requirements in IWT at EU level. The digital tools will strengthen this initiative and enable the digital controlling capacity which is currently non-existing. In addition, with the digital tools for recording and exchanging information as a key component of flexible and smart crewing requirements, the IWT Sector will be modernized and put on a level playing field with other modes in terms of the technological development and digitalization, where it matters most.

3. Current state of play

Work on drafting the ToR for the impact assessment support study is ongoing and is planned to be launched in Q1 2023. Impact assessment support study is envisaged to start in Q3 2023 – Q3 2024. Background work is in progress on the crewing requirements. CESNI has already been working for one year on the preparation of future standards for the crewing requirements to be incorporated in a Commission proposal. Finalization of the CESNI standards for crewing requirements is expected in Q3 2023 (As per the CESNI WP 2022 -2024). Commission proposal is expected in Q1 2025.
