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Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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Item 12 (a) of the provisional agenda

Harmonization of the Pan-European Legal Framework for Inland Navigation: Status of International Conventions and Agreements Affecting Inland Navigation

Convention on the Measurement of Inland Navigation Vessels

Note by the secretariat

I. Mandate

1. The present document is submitted in accordance with the proposed programme budget for 2024, part V (Regional cooperation for development), section 20 (Economic development in Europe), programme 17 (Economic development in Europe) (A/78/6 (Sect. 20), table 20.5).
2. At its sixty-seventh session, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) took note of the information by Belgium about the conclusions of the Working Group on draught marks and scales of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine that may result in some provisions of the Convention on the Measurement of Inland Navigation Vessels of 15 February 1966 (Convention) requiring updating (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/220, paragraph 77).
3. This document contains the information from the European Committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) on definitions related to the term “lightship displacement” used in the Convention.

II. Definitions Related to the Term “Lightship Displacement”

4. CESNI regularly updates and publishes the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (ES-TRIN). This standard aims to ensure the safety of inland navigation vessels on the Rhine and the waterways of the European Union.
5. The draft ES-TRIN 2025/1 is on the agenda for the CESNI meeting in October 2024 with a view to its adoption. It contains new definitions for the terms “fixed height” and “lightship waterline”. However, CESNI has decided at this stage not to add a definition for the term “lightship displacement” to the draft, as the proposal developed by the experts

deviates from the provisions of the Convention on the Measurement of Inland Navigation Vessels.¹

6. The annex to the Convention provides guidance on the measurement procedure, calculations, measurement markings, checking, measurement certificate and other relevant issues. Article 7, paragraph 1 of the annex gives the following definition of the lightship waterline for the measurement purposes:²

“Article 7

1. The light water-line referred to in article 4, paragraph 1, at the beginning of article 5, and in article 6, paragraph 7, of this annex shall be the plane level with the surface of the water when:

- (a) the vessel is carrying no fuel or movable ballast, and is carrying only
 - the gear, stores and crew normally aboard during navigation; however, fresh water supplies should not be appreciably in excess of 0.5 per cent of the vessel's maximum displacement;
 - water which cannot be removed from the hold by the ordinary methods;
- (b) the engines, boilers, piping systems and installations used for propelling the vessel or for auxiliary purposes, and for heating or refrigeration, contain the water, oil or other liquids with which they are normally provided for their operation;
- (c) the vessel is afloat in fresh water, that is to say, in water with a specific gravity of 1.”

7. This definition may need reviewing to be consistent with good shipbuilding practice where the crew, stores and supplies are not taken into account for determining the lightship displacement of a vessel. The application of different approaches for the lightship displacement may result in a difference in the calculation of the fixed height in the inland navigation vessel certificate and the measurement certificate that would be not desirable for the inspection bodies and shipowners.

8. SC.3 may wish to consider the current definition of the term “lightship waterline” in Article 7 of the annex to the Convention.

¹ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2013/sc3wp3/Measurement-INV-final.pdf>.

² *Note by the secretariat*: the English text corresponds to the translation deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with Article 21 of the Convention.