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Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Current situation and trends in inland water transport

Current situation and trends in inland water transport in the ECE region

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

Recent developments in the river commissions

I. Mandate

1. As decided by the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) at its fifty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/191, para. 11), the secretariat presents below its report on activities carried out by the river commissions during the period June 2011–July 2012. The report is based on information provided by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), the Danube Commission, the Mosel Commission and the International Sava River Basin Commission.

2. The Working Group may wish to take note of this information and to take it into account in considering its current or future cooperation with the river commissions.

II. Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine

3. CCNR held its autumn plenary session on 30 November 2011 under the chairmanship of the Belgian delegation and its spring plenary session on 30 May 2012 under the chairmanship of the French delegation.

4. At its autumn session, CCNR adopted programmes of work for its committees for 2012–2013 and established a list of committee and working group chairs. In line with the

rotation rule, a representative of France will chair the Commission during this period. CCNR also took the following decisions:

- Serbia was granted observer status, which brings to 11 the number of States with observer status at CCNR.
- The proposal to recognize the Bulgarian boatmasters' certificate, subject to compliance with certain additional provisions, was adopted. CCNR now recognizes the boatmasters' certificates of most Danube basin countries.
- A working group on the mutual recognition and modernization of professional qualifications in inland navigation was established. It will be composed of experts from member and non-member States whose boatmasters' certificates or service records have been recognized as valid on the Rhine. The group is tasked with resolving issues related to the shortage of navigation staff on the Rhine.
- The report on climate change and Rhine navigation prepared by the CCNR committees was approved. This analyses the probable effects of climate change on waterways and predicts an increase in periods of extremely high and low water levels – an increase that would, however, remain modest until mid-century. It recommends the development of measures covering infrastructure, vessel characteristics and logistics to mitigate the effects of high and low water levels.

5. At its spring session CCNR adopted a strategy for the development and operation of river information services (RIS), the priority being to guarantee that navigation is efficient and adheres to strict safety and environmental standards. CCNR has published and updated several documents dealing with RIS, namely leaflets on ECDIS (Electronic Chart Display and Information System), electronic ship reporting, notices to skippers and inland AIS (Automatic Identification System).

6. In order to integrate sustainable development issues into its work and organization, CCNR has established a new infrastructure and environment committee by merging the Standing Technical Committee and the Committee for the Elimination of Waste and Environment-Related Issues. It also instructed the secretariat to prepare a general report on sustainable development in inland navigation.

7. In connection with the sixth World Water Forum, held in Marseilles from 12 to 17 March 2012, CCNR organized a meeting of global stakeholders in inland navigation. Some 15 countries from many of the world's major river basins sent representatives. The meeting provided opportunities for the management authorities of major waterways to exchange information, experience and good practices. At the close of the meeting, participants drafted a joint statement and agreed to establish an Internet platform for information exchange.

8. Following a proposal by the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (PIANC), CCNR has designed an Internet platform providing definitions relating to river information services (www.risdefinitions.org/). The definitions were compiled by a working group established by PIANC. Site users can help keep the information up to date. CCNR has also established a database of terminology used in Rhine and inland navigation (Multilingual Inland Navigation Terminology), available at <http://mint.ccr-zkr.org/100-en.html>.

9. With regard to the economics of Rhine transportation, in 2011 volumes transported fell by 5.3%, representing a 4% decrease in dry cargo transport and a 9% decrease in liquid cargo transport. Given the recession in Europe, overall demand for transport is not expected to improve in 2012.

III. Mosel Commission

10. The Mosel Commission held plenary sessions on 1 December 2011 under the chairmanship of the German delegation and on 19 June 2012 under the chairmanship of the French delegation.

11. The plenary adopted proposals by the Waterway Police and Waterway Marking Committee to amend the Police Regulations for the Navigation of the Mosel (PRNM) and on the prevention of drowning. The amendments, due to come into force on 1 September 2012, will improve inland navigation safety.

12. Other amendments to PRNM will come into force on 1 January 2014. They consist of updated references to standards, adjustments in wording, changes to translated versions making for greater consistency, and provision for new practices in the use of pile berthing by skippers.

13. At the request of its Technical Committee, the Commission announced that two new bridge construction and renovation projects met the requirements of the Mosel Convention.

14. At the proposal of the Shipping Dues Committee, and given the prevailing economic situation, it was decided not to change Mosel River toll rates. Traffic figures for 2010 are encouraging but have not yet returned to the level preceding the 2008 crisis.

15. In September 2011 the Commission attended the inauguration of a new fish passage system and the Mosellum information centre at the Koblenz lock. The fish passes were installed in conjunction with the restoration of fish passage in waterways under the Water Framework Directive of the European Union, to offset the construction of second lock chambers on the Mosel.

16. The “Modern Information Exchange Services and Systems/MIB-MOVES” working group continued its comparison of data transmission standards. An additional meeting was held with members of the Shipping Dues Committee and the Waterway Police and Waterway Marking Committee to ascertain what information and electronic toll collection systems were used on the Mosel in order to envision how a common system could be implemented.

17. In 2011, unlike previous years, the Commission secretariat prepared a report on Mosel traffic separately from its annual report. This was made possible by the fact that the secretariat received more traffic data and statistics than before.

18. During the June 2012 session, the Commission secretariat unveiled a new information booklet on the Commission and the River Mosel. This booklet follows the publication of a shorter brochure presenting key facts about the Commission.

IV. Danube Commission

19. The Commission held its seventy-seventh session on 15 December 2011 and its seventy-eighth session on 6 June 2012 under the chairmanship of Bulgaria.

20. At its December 2011 session, the Commission adopted amendments to the recommendations on boatmasters' certificates and on the minimum requirements for standard fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other improvements on the Danube. These amendments will enter into force on 1 January 2013.

21. Two other documents, namely the master plan for the achievement of recommended fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube and a statement by

the Commission regarding the impact of climate change on inland navigation, were also approved.

22. The chairman of the Commission provided an update on the critical shallow water situation currently affecting the Danube. He noted that navigation was hampered by the prolonged absence of precipitation in the basin.

23. At its June 2012 session, the Commission examined in detail the economic situation with regard to Danube navigation. It also approved the workplan and implementation schedule for the period June 2012–June 2013.

V. International Sava River Basin Commission

24. The Commission met on 12 and 13 October 2011, on 10 and 11 April 2012 and on 10 July 2012 under the chairmanship of Serbia and Slovenia.

25. The past year has seen significant progress in implementing the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin. At the third meeting of the Parties to the Framework Agreement, held on 31 May and 1 June 2011, high-level representatives of the four countries adopted the Commission's report on the implementation of the Framework Agreement and the statement of the third meeting of the Parties. They expressed their support for the goals and priorities presented in the new strategy for the implementation of the Framework Agreement and the related action plan for the period 2011–2015.

26. At the third meeting of the Parties, the Commission's priority projects were presented to representatives of financial institutions, funds and international programmes, and opportunities for putting them into effect under the European Union strategy for the Danube region were discussed.

27. At its autumn 2011 session, the Commission decided on future moves to give effect to the Framework Agreement. Given the interest of Montenegro and the Commission in improving their collaboration, the Commission requested its secretariat to establish contacts and initiate the process for Montenegro to become the fifth party to the Agreement.

28. In recent months, various activities have been carried out in accordance with the strategy and action plan:

- After public consultation, the first Sava River Basin Management Plan, developed under the European Union Water Framework Directive, is nearly final
- Preparation of the Sava Basin flood risk management plan has begun
- Two applications have been developed and will soon be available on the Commission website: one for the development and updating of the marking plan for the Sava and its navigable tributaries, the other for the automatic acquisition of meteorological and hydrological data

29. In October 2011 the secretariats of the Sava and Danube commissions held their first joint meeting. Participants had the opportunity to describe their respective commissions' key activities, including those falling under the joint initiative to modernize the rules for the issuance of boatmasters' certificates.

30. Participants noted that the rules of navigation on the Sava and Danube Rivers had been fully harmonized and agreed on steps for monitoring the implementation of the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin. Similar meetings between the two secretariats will be organized in the future.