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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Inland Water Transport
(Forty-ninth session, 18-20 October 2005,
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**STUDY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND TRENDS
IN INLAND WATER TRANSPORT IN MEMBER COUNTRIES**

Transmitted by the European Commission (EC)

RIVER INFORMATION SERVICES (RIS)

1. Information and telecommunication technologies play an increasing role also in inland navigation. They will not only improve safety and efficiency in traffic but also enhance the efficiency, reliability and security of inland navigation in general. They also contribute to the integration of inland waterway transport into the logistic chain. In order to support such innovative developments, the European Commission submitted in May 2004 a proposal for a Directive aiming at the harmonization of River Information Services.^{1/} Having been very much welcomed by the European Parliament and the Council, the Directive will probably enter into force in August 2005.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INLAND WATERWAY VESSELS
(DIRECTIVE 82/714/EEC)**

2. A real breakthrough has been achieved in the revision of the Directive 82/714/EEC laying down the technical requirements of inland waterway vessels. After years of intense and detailed technical discussions between experts of the CCNR, from interested Member States and from the Commission, the Council of Ministers reached a general political agreement on 10 December last. After the finalisation (translation) of the voluminous technical annexes, a

^{1/} Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on harmonized River Traffic Information Services on inland waterways in the Community ([COM\(2004\) 392 final](#) of 25.05.2004).

common position of the Council can be envisaged for autumn 2005, so that the revised Directive may enter into force by the end of 2005, after the 2nd reading in the European Parliament. By this, the Community rules will be updated after more than 20 years to present safety standards, equivalent to those in force on the Rhine so that the certificates can finally be mutually recognized.

COMMUNICATION ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT

3. Based on a comprehensive study on the prospects of inland navigation within the enlarged Europe (PINE), the Commission has launched a broad consultation process on the development and the possibilities of promoting inland waterway transport. The discussion refers to the integration of inland waterway transport into the transport logistic chain, the modernisation of the fleet, human resources (crew and operators), the promotion of its image and awareness, an adequate infrastructure, as well as to the institutional framework. The European Commission intends to present a Communication on the promotion of Inland Waterway Transport by the end of 2005. The Communication will set out an integrated action programme, focusing on concrete actions which are needed to fully exploit the market potential of inland navigation and to make its use more attractive.

4. The action programme which the Commission intends to propose focuses on strategic areas which are essential for the development of Inland Waterway Transport (IWT):

- (1) Create favourable conditions for services
- (2) Stimulate fleet modernisation and innovation
- (3) Promote jobs and skills
- (4) Improve image and co-operation
- (5) Provide adequate infrastructure
- (6) Improve the institutional framework

5. The programme includes recommendations for action between 2006-2013 by the European Community and other responsible parties. Its implementation shall be carried out in close co-operation with national and regional authorities, River Commissions, as well as European industry.

6. The action fields are inter-dependent. The various actions and measures are connected together and included in action clusters. The instruments recommended for their implementation can be classified in legislative, coordination, and support instruments. Instruments which cover more than one action (e.g. state aid guidelines) are mentioned in every action cluster concerned. The action clusters will be further elaborated in the annexes to the Communication.

REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK

7. The revised Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) were adopted by the Council and the European Parliament at the end of April 2004.^{2/} They include a list of 30 priority trans-European axes and priority projects on these axes. Motorways of the Sea are also included as a priority project in the Guidelines. The aim is to reduce congestion, improve accessibility and encourage intermodality. At the same time, the EU increased its financial support to 20% of the cost of the projects, for certain key sections such as cross-border sections of these projects. Two priority projects are important inland waterway links: No. 18 – [Rhein-Meuse-Main-Danube](#), and No. 30 – [Seine-Schelde](#).

8. On 20 July 2005, the European Commission proposed to set up an Executive Agency in order to manage the co-financing granted to the TEN-T, in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and possibly in coordination with other European funds^{3/}.

EXTENSION OF THE TEN-T BEYOND THE BORDERS OF THE EU

9. A High Level Group with the task of proposing the extension of the major trans-European axes of the TEN-Ts to the neighbouring countries including the new Motorways of the Sea, and on the identification of priority projects on these axes, was established in October 2004. The Group is chaired by Ms De Palacio, consists of the 24 neighbouring countries, as identified in the European Neighbourhood Policy, and Switzerland and Norway. The EU Member States together with Bulgaria and Romania are represented as well as the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank as observers. The Group is currently in the process of identifying a limited number (5-7) of major transport axes connecting the EU with its neighbours and priority infrastructure projects on these axes. The Group will also make proposals on so-called horizontal measures aiming at facilitating transport along such axes and particularly at border crossings.

10. Inland waterway transport is one of the horizontal priorities analysed by the Group. The Group is expected to submit its report to the Commission in autumn 2005. Based on the recommendations of the Group, the Commission may take action in relation to its policies with the neighbouring countries.

^{2/} Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision n° 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and Council Regulation amending Regulation n° 2236/95 laying down general rules for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of trans-European networks; 21/04/2004; [JO L 143 of 30/04/2004](#).

^{3/} Cf. press release [IP/05/977](#) of 20/07/2005.