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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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

Fortieth session

Geneva, 15–17 February 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Modernization of the existing international instruments on the mutual recognition of boatmasters' certificates and on the professional requirements in inland navigation

Establishment of a joint working group on the mutual recognition and modernization of professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation

Submitted by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine

I. Mandate

1. At its thirty-ninth session, the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) took note of the conclusions of an informal meeting held on 14 June 2011 between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the river commissions and the delegation of the European Union on boatmasters' certificates in inland navigation, during which the river commissions emphasized the need for joint work on modernizing the existing regional and international instruments on boatmasters' certificates and on professional qualifications in general. The Working Party asked the secretariat to prepare a note on this issue for consideration by the fifty-fifth session of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3). It also decided to dedicate part of its next session in February 2012 to an in-depth discussion of boatmasters' certificates and other closely linked issues (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/78, paras. 14–17).

2. At the recommendation of SC.3/WP.3, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3), during its fifty-fifth session held from 12 to 14 October 2011, engaged in an exchange of views on the mutual recognition of boatmasters' certificates and other issues related to professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation. Referring to the note by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2011/5), SC.3 recognized the need to address

the issue of the modernization of professional requirements in the area of inland navigation. It also took note of the proposal of the Danube Commission and the International Sava River Basin Commission to organize an inclusive pan-European dialogue on such a modernization process. In this connection, and given the recommendation formulated by SC.3/WP.3, SC.3 invited the delegations, in particular those of the European Union and the river commissions, to consider practical modalities for cooperating on the modernization of the requirements for professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation. It also approved the decision of SC.3/WP.3 to examine the issue in depth at its fortieth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/191, para. 25).

3. This document contains the resolution adopted by the most recent plenary meeting of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), held on 30 November 2011, which follows on from discussions held, inter alia, at the informal meeting of 14 June 2011 and those held in SC.3. The resolution provides for the establishment of a joint working group composed of CCNR and third-party States that have concluded administrative arrangements with CCNR for the mutual recognition of boatmasters' licences and service records. The working group will address questions concerning the mutual recognition and modernization of professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation. Practical questions relating to the composition, functioning and financing of the working group are to be addressed in the course of 2012 so as to enable it to become operational in 2013.

4. The Working Party may wish to take into account the position of CCNR in its discussion of possible pan-European cooperation in the modernization of existing international instruments on the mutual recognition of boatmasters' certificates and professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation. In particular, it may wish to consider the role that such a CCNR working group might play in this cooperation.

II. CCNR resolution on the establishment of a joint working group on the mutual recognition and modernization of professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation

The Central Commission,

Reaffirming its desire to promote the integration and development of the European inland waterway transport market,

Recalling the importance which it attaches to "the continued operation of Rhine navigation within a legal framework which is as simple, clear and harmonized as possible", as reaffirmed in the Basel Declaration of 16 May 2006,

Convinced that the mutual recognition and modernization of professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation is a measure that can significantly boost the economic dynamism of the sector, by making the profession more attractive, thus helping to relieve the shortage of manpower,

Noting with satisfaction the conclusion of administrative arrangements for the mutual recognition of boatmasters' certificates and service records between CCNR and the national administrations of the European States not members of CCNR for which inland navigation represents an important economic sector,

Considering that the arrangements in question are a first step towards the mutual recognition and modernization of all professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation and that this objective merits consideration in an appropriate forum, in which all the national administrations concerned can be represented,

Considering that the arrangements in question provide the legal basis for the establishment of a structure common to CCNR and the administrations that have signed administrative arrangements,

Acting on the proposal of its Committee on Social Issues, Employment and Professional Training, and in full accordance with the objectives set out by the French presidency of CCNR,

Approves the principle of the establishment of a joint working group for the mutual recognition and modernization of professional qualifications in the area of inland navigation,

Instructs the Committee on Social Issues, Employment and Professional Training and the secretariat to engage in the consultations needed — including the organization of a joint preparatory meeting in 2012 — to ensure that the joint working group can begin functioning as from 2013.
