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**Economic Commission for Europe****Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Inland Water Transport****Sixtieth session**

Geneva, 2–4 November 2016

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Follow-up to the UNECE White Paper on Efficient and Sustainable****Inland Water Transport in Europe:****A new strategy and the Terms of Reference of SC.3****Draft proposal for a new strategy of the Working Party  
on Inland Water Transport for 2016-2021****Note by the secretariat****I. Mandate**

1. This document is submitted in line with Cluster 5: Inland Waterway Transport, paragraph 5.1 of the programme of work 2016–2017 (ECE/TRANS/2016/28/Add.1) adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its seventy-eighth session on 26 February 2016.
2. The Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (hereafter SC.3/WP.3) at its forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions discussed a draft new strategy for the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (hereafter the Working Party, or SC.3) as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2016/10. Following the instructions given by SC.3, the secretariat updated the proposal based on the comments received at the session and in subsequent communications of member States and other stakeholders (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/98, paras. 14–20 and ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2016/2).
3. The updated proposal reproduced below was circulated to Governments and other stakeholders. Subsequent comments, if any, will be issued as informal documents for the session to be considered by the Working Party.
4. The secretariat recalls that the recommended strategy is limited to the period from now until 2021. A longer-term strategy “IWT Vision 2030” is expected to evolve from the strategic review of ITC in 2016–2017.

## II. Brief overview/outcome of activities of SC.3 and its subsidiary bodies

5. A sub-committee on inland water transport was set up by the Inland Transport Committee in 1956 at its sixteenth session having the task of considering questions primarily concerning inland water transport (hereafter IWT) (E/ECE/TRANS/497). Since then, activities of SC.3 have been based on four main pillars: regulatory, analytical, capacity building and policy dialogue. The main purposes of SC.3 are: providing a forum for exchange of experiences and best practices in IWT sector, promoting the coordinated development of inland waterway infrastructure, elaborating strategic recommendations for a common navigation regime on the pan-European level, reinforcing the IWT institutional and regulatory framework, administering international conventions relevant to inland water transport.

6. Since 1956, SC.3 and its subsidiary working bodies have been dealing with specific tasks:

- Studies of current situation and trends in inland water transport, the exchange of information on measures aimed at promoting transport by inland waterways, the preparation and follow-up of international and regional conferences, the harmonization of requirements concerning international inland waterway transport and facilitation of its operations, including the study of legal provisions;
- Standardization of technical requirements for inland navigation vessels and of ships' certificates (the Group of Experts on the Standardization of Technical Requirements for vessels and of Ship's Papers, later renamed as the Working Party, 1960 – 1991);
- Standardization of rules of the road and signs and signals in inland waterways (the Group of Experts on the Standardization of Rules of the Road and Signs and Signals in Inland Waterways, later renamed as the Working Party, 1960–1991) resulted in the adoption of the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) and Signs and Signal on Inland Waterways (SIGNI);
- Elaboration and administering international conventions and agreements in inland navigation, the development of inland waterways infrastructure (the Working Party on the River Law, later renamed as the Group of Experts, 1956-1981; the Working Party on the Development of Inland Waterways, 1960 – 1981; Ad hoc Group of Experts on Inland Waterways Infrastructure, the nineties);
- Prevention of pollution of inland waterways by vessels; this activity has been carried out on a par with work on Chapter 9 of CEVNI;
- Work on the promotion of River Information Services (RIS) since the nineties.

7. The main results can be summarised as follows:

- 84 resolutions were adopted by SC.3; they include main documents, revisions and amendments. Some of UNECE resolutions are applied by the majority of the member States, they are referred to in directives of the European Union (EU), River Commissions, RIS Expert Groups. UNECE resolutions and recommendations are applied at the pan-European level and are integrated into national legislation;
- 12 of 58 UN international transport conventions and agreements are administered by the SC.3 secretariat;

- SC.3 has prepared and maintains and updates the UNECE White Paper on Efficient and Sustainable Inland Water Transport in Europe, the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network (the Blue Book) and the Blue Book database, Inventory of Most Important Bottlenecks and Missing Links in the E Waterway Network, CEVNI and SIGNI;
- International Certificate for Operators of Pleasure Craft (ICC) issued according to Resolution No. 40 is recognized by 20 member States.

### III. Inland Water Transport strategy 2016–2021

8. The activities of the Working Party are focused on a pan-European network of inland waterways of international importance with a sustainable and resilient infrastructure and services as an integrated part of inland transport networks and markets. The goal is to support economic development, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all UNECE member States possessing navigable inland waterways. The activities encourage cost-efficient and safe services with a minimal impact on the environment, integrated with other transportation modes and focusing on the development of quality infrastructure that is resilient to climate change. It is important that national transport strategies support these aims and capitalise on the comparative advantages of inland water transport (IWT). These key building blocks are set out in the figure below.

#### A. Integrated pan-European IWT infrastructure and services



#### B. Overarching goals and objectives for 2016–2021

9. The overarching goal of the activities of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport is to support the development of resilient IWT infrastructure and services in a sustainable manner whilst fostering innovation. The period 2016–2021 would include the following objectives:

- consolidating efforts and involving all UNECE member States when addressing modern challenges and assisting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals where this is pertinent for the sector;
- support the development of IWT related statistics and analytical capacity aimed at providing much needed data for the sector;

- (c) coordinating measures for further integration of IWT in multimodal transport chains;
- (d) developing and maintaining efficient legal mechanisms aimed at ensuring equal and transparent conditions for all players;
- (e) cooperation with new players on the European market as well as players from other regions of the world where they can benefit from the technical harmonization being developed by the Working Party;
- (f) fostering innovations in the IWT sector;
- (g) facilitate the development of synergic capabilities with maritime and land transport, on the one side, and water-related activities, on the other side;
- (h) fostering RIS and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in inland navigation in all UNECE member States;
- (i) developing partnerships and increasing the visibility of IWT.

### **C. Necessary actions to reach the above goals**

10. The following actions are proposed to reach the above goals:

1. *Supporting the building of sustainable IWT infrastructure and services*

- Continue work on the pan-European policy dialogue on the IWT issues
- Coordination of measures, policies and continuing the activities aimed at the development of an international platform for the promotion of IWT
- Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of international, legally binding, instruments and conventions
- Further promotion of the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E-Waterway Network (Blue Book), in particular, infrastructure projects aimed at the implementation of AGN

2. *Development of IWT related statistics and analytical capacity*

- Cooperation with the Working Party on Transport Statistics on IWT statistics and data collection and collection of inland water transport statistics of member States
- Providing updated information and traffic development IWT related data also with the aim of supplementing the analysis undertaken by the ForFITS tool on assessing CO<sub>2</sub> emission scenarios

3. *Integration in multimodal transport chains*

- Detailed elaboration of coastal routes in AGN as well as hinterland connections of seaports
- Further work on aligning the Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (the AGTC Protocol) with AGN in cooperation with the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24)

- Contribution to the development of Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) in cooperation with the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) and the EATL Expert Group
  - Exchange of best practices across member States, international organizations and other stakeholders
4. *Ensuring a safe mode of transport*
- Continue work on the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) provisions, waterway signs and marking, technical prescriptions for vessels taking into account recent developments of other international organizations in this field
  - Addressing professional requirements and recognition of certificates, monitoring the progress in this field
5. *Prevention of environmental pollution and resilience of inland water transport*
- Continue discussion on the prevention of environmental pollution from vessels and waste management including revision of relevant SC.3 documents such as UNECE Resolutions Nos. 21, 61
  - Detection of environmental hot spots coupled with planning measures aimed at minimising their impact on inland navigation
  - Addressing inland waterways' resilience to climate change via the follow-up of the activities of the Group of Experts on Climate Change Adaptation and the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation as applied to the E waterway network
  - Minimize the vulnerability of inland water transport infrastructure and continue exchange of best practices in this area
6. *Fostering innovations*
- Promotion of RIS and other relevant information technology
  - Addressing new ship technologies, updating UNECE documents with due regard to new vessel types
7. *Promotion of recreational navigation and water tourism*
- Assessment of options relating to the development of an international legal framework for recreational navigation and water tourism
  - Maintaining the database on models of the International Certificate for Operator of Pleasure Craft (ICC)
  - Updating maps for recreational navigation
  - Ensure the availability of information on relevant UNECE documents
8. *Developing partnerships and increasing the visibility of IWT*
- Cooperation and regular exchange of information with River Commissions, the European Commission (EU) and other stakeholders to avoid duplication of activities
  - Enhancing cooperation in specific topics with EU, River Commissions and other stakeholders to arrive at synergies

- Increasing the visibility of IWT by means of international events, in particular, the international high-level conference to be held in 2017

#### **IV. Overview of proposals**

11. Following the overview of proposals for the draft new strategy of SC.3 set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2016/10/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2016/2, SC.3 may wish to take note of the following comments.

12. It was proposed by Belgium, France and Germany to remove the activity addressing the Sustainable Development Goals from the draft, as the decision on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level was not yet taken by EXCOM and therefore they could be considered at a later stage. The Working Party may wish to come back to this issue and consider a modified text as set out in para. 9 (a) above.

13. Belgium and Germany mentioned at the forty-ninth session of SC.3/WP.3 that the Group of Experts on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for transport networks and nodes (WP.5/GE.3) already was dealing with climatic impacts on international inland transport networks. The Terms of Reference of WP.5/GE.3 (ECE/EX/2011/L.11) do not cover the assessment of possible implications for the implementation of the coordinated plan of development of the E waterway network established by AGN.

14. The implications of climate changes on IWT and critical infrastructure elements could be used also for further development of the Blue Book and the list of bottlenecks and missing links, in particular, for their prioritization, and the map of European inland waterways could be completed accordingly. Here, conclusions made by the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation could be also used. SC.3 could further continue exchanging best practice on the implementation of recommendations to be proposed by WP.5/GE.3.

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