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## Working Party on Inland Water Transport

Sixty-first session

Geneva, 4-6 October 2017

Item 7 of the agenda

Second meeting of the ad hoc group for the preparation of the Global Conference on Inland Water Transport

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# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT CONNECTING BY INLAND NAVIGATION

Wroclaw, Poland, 18-19 April 2018

Draft final act

## PREAMBLE

We the Ministers of all countries having a vested interest in inland waterway transport and representatives of international organizations and observers, meeting at the International Conference on Inland Waterway Transport in Wroclaw, Poland, on 18 April 2018,

(a) *Reaffirming* the commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to inland water transport to ensure its safety, accessibility, affordability and links with energy and the environment;

(b) *Recognizing* the importance of international high-level events for the promotion of inland water transport at the international level, such as: the Pan-European Ministerial Conference held on 11 September 1991 in Budapest), the Pan-European Conference on inland waterway transport held on 5 and 6 September 2001 in Rotterdam (Netherlands), the pan-European Conference on inland waterway transport (Bucharest, 13-14 September 2006) “Inland navigation: a key element of the future pan-European transport system” and the International High-Level Conference on inland water transport held on 22 February 2017 in Geneva,

(c) *Recognizing* the advantages of inland water transport as ~~an alternative~~ **a useful complementary** to road and rail transport including its intrinsic economies of scale, safety, efficiency in terms of energy and costs, low emissions and congestion, contribution to reducing transport and logistics costs,

(d) *Emphasizing* the role of inland water transport for the sustainable functioning of national transport systems and its contribution to social and economic development, in particular, for landlocked regions;

(e) *Appreciating* the ongoing work on the development of the trans-European transport network by the European Commission, international projects on eliminating administrative barriers, the rehabilitation of the fairway of international rivers, national transport strategies and projects aimed at the development of inland water transport infrastructure supported by international financial institutions,

(f) *Conscious that* common challenges in the sector, such as the integration of inland water transport in multimodal transport chains, efficient financial and economic measures, strengthening the administrative capacity, ~~possible~~ unification of technical standards and combatting climate change, should be addressed at the International level via a policy dialogue, the exchange of technologies, views and best practices,

(g) *Keeping in mind* the links between inland water transport and multimodal terminals, deep-sea shipping and other modes of transport,

(h) *Acknowledging* the role of modern technologies, innovations and digitalization in ensuring navigation safety;

(i) *Recognizing* the need for joining forces to extract the significant, still untapped, potential of the sector and, therefore, significant political support at the highest level;

(j) *Convinced* that the outcome of this Conference should bring practical value for all key players of the sector in terms of safety, environmental aspect and benefits for the economy,

Hereby **endorse** the following objectives and actions and invite governments and international organizations to develop action plans for their implementation:

- To increase the focus of policy on fostering the role of inland water transport as safe, high-quality and accessible to all, ecologically sound, economically ~~viable~~ **efficient** and a significant contributor to local, national and international development by ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes streamlining cargo flows and promoting the intermodality.
- To encourage countries with navigable inland waterways to maximise the potential of inland waterways through the setting up of appropriate regulatory framework, within the aegis of the UN Inland Water Transport Conventions, aimed at increasing the efficiency of the sector recognising that international conventions are effective tools for establishing a regulatory framework for inland navigation, developing modern and resilient infrastructure and a solid basis for eliminating administrative bottlenecks and creating a common market.
- To address the challenges of sustainable development of mobility with reference to inland water transport, particularly within the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, by supporting intergovernmental transport and transport related multi-disciplinary cooperation and by placing due emphasis on the importance of mobilizing resources and aligning financing flows with sustainable development objectives.
- To encourage investment in the sector aimed at modernizing the fleet and the infrastructure as well as fostering innovation to increase the appeal of inland water transport and ensuring that it is resilient to climate change.
- To take the necessary steps to promote the attractiveness of the sector to the market and increasing its competitiveness and to include these issues in national transport strategies and monitor the progress at the national level.

## **STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO PURSUE BASED ON THESE OBJECTIVES**

### **BUILDING UP A SOLID REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AIMED AT INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF INLAND WATER TRANSPORT**

1. Ministers recognize that international conventions are effective tools for establishing a regulatory framework for inland navigation, developing modern and resilient infrastructure and a solid basis for eliminating administrative bottlenecks and creating a common market.

2. Ministers recognize the importance of bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements for the development of navigation on transboundary rivers and lakes of international importance, in particular, for landlocked countries.
3. Ministers encourage efforts to develop and/or update the existing regulatory basis with the aim to ensure adequate safety, environmental safety and security on IWT.
4. Ministers support building up a solid and harmonized regulatory framework for the development of navigation on transboundary waterways and integration of IWT in transport chains. Ministers welcome the exchange of best practices and maintaining a policy dialogue on this issue aimed at increasing the efficiency of inland water transport.

**ENSURING THE APPROPRIATE BALANCE AMONG ALL TRANSPORT MODES STREAMLINING CARGO FLOWS AND PROMOTING THE INTERMODALITY**

5. Ministers recognize that IWT due to its advantages such as safety, efficiency in terms of energy and costs, low emissions and congestion, constitute a competitive alternative to other inland transport modes.
6. Ministers recognize a strong need for ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes and therefore encourage elaborating recommendations on streamlining cargo flows at the international level.
7. Ministers agree to set out the development targets aimed at ensuring that full capacities of the inland waterway system are used and the modal share of IWT is increasing.
8. Ministers invite governments and international organizations to facilitate free movement of cargo and passenger flows on inland waterways, in particular:

Ministers recognize the need for overcoming a fragmented structure of IWW and invite to put efforts to eliminate this at the governmental and international level;

Ministers welcome efforts aiming to ensure that the rivers of international importance are fully integrated into international transport corridors.
9. Ministers emphasize the role of international agreements and legislation in the field of infrastructure for the coordinated development of all transport modes.
10. Ministers agree to undertake and coordinate measures to facilitate integration of IWT in intermodal transport and logistics chains.
11. Ministers acknowledge the role of IWT as an urban transport mode as contributing to balance urban air pollution and connecting cities with suburban areas.

**ENCOURAGING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW VESSELS AND FOSTERING INNOVATIONS**

12. Ministers acknowledge that modernization of inland fleet is of major importance for the navigation safety, efficiency and environmental safety. Ministers call upon to put efforts on creating new types of vessels, the harmonization of standards, introducing innovations and modern technologies for ensuring safety, minimizing the risk of accidents, environmental impact and combatting climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions from inland vessels, new fuels.
13. Ministers recognize the need for ~~financial support and adequate funding for~~ modernization of inland navigation fleet. Ministers encourage efforts aimed at creating favourable financial and economic regimes to encourage the construction of new vessels and support the exchange of best practices on this issue.

14. Ministers recognize that the development of digital technologies and data exchange, RIS, Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and the traffic management on inland waterways, the digitalisation and other opportunities given by new technologies is a significant step forward to a sustainable and efficient transport mode and invite governments and international organizations to promote its development.

#### **BUILDING THE INLAND WATERWAY INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGES**

15. Ministers agree that immediate actions should be undertaken to ensure the resilience of the sector to climate changes. To this end, Ministers support the work on determining the climate trends affecting navigation to allow the planning of business activities for longer periods.

16. Ministers welcome the initiatives by EU and River Commissions on the fairway maintenance and rehabilitation plans of international rivers and invite other river basins to apply this experience, where appropriate.

17. Ministers encourage activities aimed at minimizing impact from navigation to the environment. Ministers invite governments, international organizations and the private sector to contribute to this issue.

#### **PROMOTING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE SECTOR TO THE MARKET AND INCREASING ITS COMPETITIVENESS**

18. Ministers call upon to ensure high quality of transport services in terms of availability, safety, reliability and other needs of transport users.

19. Ministers recognize the need for stronger political support and representation of the interests of the sector at the public and private levels. Ministers call upon to join efforts to achieve this.

20. Ministers welcome efforts to more actively engage the private sector in ongoing projects aimed at the development of inland waterways.

21. Ministers recognize the need to improve the quality of education and training and to join efforts to make the profession more attractive through improving working and social conditions. Ministers strongly encourage social dialogue between administrations, the shipping industry and employees at both regional and International level to ensure equal treatment of crew members.

22. Ministers acknowledge the contribution of the recognition of crew certificates and vessel documents for eliminating barriers and improving mobility of vessels and crews and welcome efforts to promote this.

23. Ministers welcome setting up a Global knowledge centre on inland water transport as a facility allowing to exchange the information on issues of common interest, relevant to most of the countries possessing navigable waterways, capturing best practices and lessons learned.

24. Ministers encourage measures raising the availability and transparency of IWT using modern technologies, GIS applications etc.

25. Ministers welcome the initiative of the e-platform for the World Wide Inland Navigation Network (WWINN) launched by the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Ministers invite regional integration organizations, UN Regional Commissions, River Commissions, international and public organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and academia to maintain policy dialogue on best practices and measures relevant to the implementation of the objectives under the aegis of the Inland Transport Committee with the aim of ensuring that the development of Inland Water Transport is pursued in an internationally harmonized manner.
  2. Ministers invite governments and international organizations to develop action plans for their implementation of these objectives and strategic actions.
  3. Ministers invite countries to support the development of transport statistics on inland water transport relevant to qualitative and quantitative indicators of the implementation of SDGs in order to support effective decision making at national and international level.
  4. The Ministers invite the UNECE secretariat to prepare a report on progress achieved in relation to these objectives to be presented at a subsequent International Conference on Inland Water Transport to be held in 2023.
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