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**Economic Commission for Europe****Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Inland Water Transport****Working Party on the Standardization of Technical  
and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation****Fifty-seventh session**

Geneva, 24–26 June 2020

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Standardization of technical and safety requirements in inland navigation:  
European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) (Resolution No. 24, revision 5)****Application of the three-tone signal for vessels navigating  
by radar in reduced visibility conditions****Note by the secretariat****I. Mandate**

1. This document is submitted in line with the programme of work of the Transport subprogramme for 2020 (ECE/TRANS/2020/21, chapter IV, table, section A, para. 11) adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its eighty-second session (ECE/TRANS/294, para. 136).
2. At its fifty-sixth session, the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) discussed the application of the three-tone signal by vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility with a view to consider possibly deleting this provision from the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) as an outdated provision, and asked the secretariat to prepare a working document in consultation with the Danube Commission and the International Sava River Basin Commission for its next session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, para. 48).
3. The information on the application of the three-tone signal, transmitted by Governments and River Commissions, is given in the annex to this document.

**II. Application of the three-tone signal by member States and  
River Commissions****A. Bulgaria**

4. Three-tone signal is applied on Bulgarian inland waterways, and vessels must be fitted with this equipment.

**B. Belarus**

5. The Inland Navigation Rules of the Republic of Belarus do not require three-tone signal for vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility.

The following signals are used for navigation in reduced visibility:

<i>Sound signal</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
1 long blast	“Single vessel under way”
1 long blast followed by 2 short blasts with an interval of at least 2 minutes	“Convoys and rafts under way”
1 short blast, 1 long blast, 1 short blast	“Single vessels or convoys anchored or grounded within the fairway limits”
Recurrent sounding of a bell or a metallic object	“Non-motorized vessel with the crew on board anchored or grounded within the fairway limits”

**C. Belgium**

6. The three-tone signal is no longer applied on national waterways of Belgium.

**D. Croatia**

7. In general, the three-tone signal is not often used on Croatian inland waterways during the past ten years:

- Harbour Master's Office in Sisak reported that the three-tone signal has not been used in their territory.
- Harbour Master's Office in Vukovar reported that the three-tone signal was rarely applied in their territory, however, according to their estimation, it could be kept in the navigation rules due to an increasing number of river cruise vessels, unless an appropriate solution in terms of safety could be found.
- Harbour Master's Office in Osijek reported that the three-tone signal was been widely used due to modern technologies applied on vessels.
- Harbour Master's Office in Slavonski Brod reported that the three-tone signal was used not more that about 100 times, mainly by small craft.

8. In the future, this provision could be locally applied for the sections where sound and/or other signals are critical for navigation safety and could be introduced by specific regulations and signs. In doing so, an adequate safety level could be ensured, in case the three tone-signal is withdrawn from the navigation rules. Furthermore, this provision could be applied in cases when the modern technology cannot ensure navigation safety.

**E. Czechia**

9. The three-tone signal is no longer applied in Czechia.

**F. Netherlands**

10. The three-tone signal is no longer required by the Dutch legislation. In our opinion, this signal can be deleted from CEVNI.

## G. Poland

11. According to the information from Polish Register of Shipping, the three-tone signal is applied on Polish inland waterways for vessels navigating in reduced visibility. This requirement is imposed by the Polish administration and included in the national regulations. The characteristics of the signal are identical to those provided in CEVNI, Chapter I, section III.

## H. Romania

12. At the fifty-sixth session of SC.3/WP.3, Romania mentioned that this signal was applied on Romanian inland waterways and was essential for navigation safety of vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility.

## I. Russian Federation

13. The Inland Navigation Rules of the Russian Federation<sup>1</sup> do not prescribe any special sound signals for vessels navigating by radar, other than the sound signals for navigation in reduced visibility which are given in the table below. Vessels are allowed to navigate in reduced visibility conditions, if they use during the voyage the following equipment: (a) radar, (b) rate-of-turn indicator or compass, (c) VHF radio station for ship-to-ship communication and ship-to-shore communication and (d) the device for emitting sound signals, provided that all equipment is in a good working order.

<i>Sound signal</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
1 long blast repeated at intervals of not more than 2 minutes	“Single vessels under way”
1 long blast followed by 2 short blasts with intervals of not more than 2 minutes	“Convoys and rafts under way”
2 long blasts with an interval of not more than 2 minutes	“Vessels and convoys moving on a long stretch of the waterway (applied also to “blind” stretches)”
1 short blast, 1 long blast, 1 short blast with intervals of not more than 2 minutes	“Single vessels or convoys anchored or grounded within the fairway limits”
Recurrent sounding of a bell or a metallic object repeated at intervals of not more than 1 minute	“Non-motorized vessel with the crew on board anchored or grounded within the fairway limits”

## J. Serbia

14. The three-tone signal for vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility is still applied in Serbia and is quite often used.

## K. Slovakia

15. The three-tone signal on inland waterways is still applied in the Slovak Republic by vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility and is still required for cases as defined by CEVNI in Chapter 6, Section VI, Article 6.32, paragraph 4.

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by Order of the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation No. 19 of 19 January 2018.

## L. Ukraine

16. This requirement is applied for inland navigation vessels, as the Ukrainian Rules and regulations are harmonized with UNECE resolutions. According to the Inland Navigation Rules of Ukraine, vessels are allowed to navigate in reduced visibility conditions (less than 1 km) only if they are using radar, rate-of-turn indicator, VHF radio station for ship-to-ship communication and ship-to-shore communication which are in good working order, as well as the device for emitting sound signals.

17. A vessel is considered as navigating by radar in reduced visibility, if it is equipped with radar, rate-of-turn indicator, VHF radio station for ship-to-ship communication and ship-to-shore communication, which are in good working order and correspond to technical standards, as well as with a device for emitting three-tone signal.

18. As soon as a vessel proceeding downstream with the use of radar, observes on the radar screen vessels whose position or course may cause a dangerous situation, or approaches a stretch where other vessels can be not observed on the radar screen, it shall:

(a) Give the three-tone signal and repeat it as often as necessary. This provision does not apply to small craft;

(b) Reduce speed and, if necessary, stop.

19. The Rules for the Classification and Construction of Inland Navigation Vessels of the Shipping Register of Ukraine contain the above requirements in a full scope, and vessels are fitted with mechanical devices for emitting sound signals, including typhoons, steam whistles and devices for emitting three-tone signals.

## M. Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine

20. The Police Regulations for the Navigation of the Rhine no longer contain the requirement for the application of three-tone signal for vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility. Article 6.32, paragraph 2(d) of RPNR prescribes the following:

When radiotelephone contact cannot be established with the vessels coming in the opposite direction, the vessel navigating by radar shall:

- Give one long blast and repeat this signal as often as necessary;
- Reduce speed and, if necessary, stop.

This provision also applies to all vessels navigating by radar in relation to stationary vessels near the fairway, with which radiotelephone contact cannot be established.

## N. Danube Commission

21. The Basic Rules for the Navigation on the Danube are harmonized with CEVNI and contain the provisions for the application of three-tone signal for vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility. In order to navigate on the Danube, vessels must have this equipment on board.

22. This signal has been introduced in CEVNI, when navigation by radar was not widely used, and a special sound signal was essential to identify vessels moving in restricted visibility. Nowadays, vessels are fitted with radar installations, radio installations and, additionally, AIS and Inland ECDIS<sup>2</sup> equipment and they are able to emit other sound signals. Furthermore, the three-tone signal is no longer required on some European inland waterways. Manufacturers of whistles sometimes face difficulties when producing and installing this equipment on board vessels. Therefore, this requirement may be considered as outdated for several reasons: on some waterways, it is no longer used by boatmasters; this signal may

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<sup>2</sup> Automatic Identification System; Electronic Chart Display and Information System for inland navigation.

affect the work of the crew; there are no detailed prescriptions on particular situations when it is required. In addition, this signal, particularly at night, may affect the settlements located nearby.

#### **O. Mosel Commission**

23. The Police Regulations for the Navigation of the Mosel no longer contain the requirement for the application of three-tone signal for vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility.

#### **P. International River Sava Basin Commission**

24. The Navigation Rules on the Sava River Basin are harmonized with CEVNI and contain the provisions for the application of three-tone signal for vessels navigating by radar in reduced visibility.

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