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Working Party on Inland Water Transport

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Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland
Navigation: Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical
Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (Resolution No. 61)

Implementation and Pilot Operation of the European Hull Database

Submitted by the Platform for implementation for the EU NAIADES programme (PLATINA)

Note by the secretariat

At the thirty-sixth session the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) took note of the ongoing work on the creation of the European Hull Database to facilitate hull data exchange under the framework of the European Union (EU) Directive 2006/87/EC. SC.3/WP.3 emphasized that the future database should be open to all interested UNECE member countries whether EU member State or not. (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/72, para.28)

At its thirty-seventh session, SC.3/WP.3 discussed the pilot project on European Hull Database carried out by the Platform for implementation for the EU NAIADES programme (PLATINA) and asked the secretariat to consult with the EU delegation on the subject of their intentions with respect to the possible operator of the database. Furthermore, SC.3/WP.3 asked the secretariat to determine the capacity of the UNECE to provide technical support for maintenance of such a database. SC.3/WP.3 also invited the Governments to express their interest in offering their service in this area (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/74, pp.25-26).

Updated background information on the pilot operation of the European Hull Database, provided by PLATINA, is reproduced below. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport may wish to discuss this development and, in particular, the participation of the non-EU countries in the database, and issue further instructions to SC.3/WP.3 regarding the UNECE role in this area.

Implementation and PILOT Operation of the European Hull Database

A. Background Information

1. Past experience in the inland navigation sector has shown that the changing of identifiers of vessels creates a lot of problems for statistics, electronic databases and tracing the history of a vessel. Therefore, the introduction of a unique identifier for a vessel throughout the entire lifetime of a vessel is essential, especially considering the international character of inland navigation.

2. The unique European Vessel Identification Number (ENI) consists of eight Arabic characters and is a unique identifier of each craft. The ENI is issued only once and remains unchanged throughout the whole lifetime of the craft. The unique assignment of one ENI per vessel is a pre-requisite for the good functioning of inland navigation.

3. According to Directive 2006/87/EC on the technical requirements for inland waterway vessels, the Rhine Inspection Rules (RheinSchUO) and UNECE Resolution No. 61 on recommendations on harmonized Europe-wide technical requirements for inland navigation vessels, certain inland waterways vessels need a technical inspection before being allowed to sail on European inland waterways. Vessel certification authorities issue community certificates after technical inspections. A subset of the data of community certificates, the so-called minimum set of hull data, includes the Unique European Vessel Identification Number, the name, length, breadth of the vessel, whether it is single or double hull, etc.

4. According to Directive 2008/87/EC, the RheinSchUO and the Commission Regulation 164/2010 on the technical specifications for electronic ship reporting in inland navigation the minimum set of hull data has to be exchanged among vessel certification authorities and exchanged with RIS Authorities. Vessel certification authorities need this data for example in order to avoid assigning two European Vessel Identification Numbers for one vessel, whereas RIS Authorities need this data for several RIS applications such as keeping lock diaries and preparing lock statistics.

5. The European Hull Database will facilitate this data exchange. During the EU-funded project PLATINA (see Annex I for details), the system implementation and pilot operation (for 2 years) of the European Hull Database is ongoing by means of the followings steps:

   • Step 1: (Technical) system implementation of the European Hull Database;

   • Step 2: Pilot operation of the European Hull Database;

   • Step 3: Preparation of a legal agreement in order to ensure data privacy and data protection;

   • Step 4: Preparation of an operational concept for the future operation of the European Hull Database.

B. (Technical) system implementation of the European Hull Database

6. On the basis of the "Functional specification of the Minimum Hull Database and its services", which was approved by the Electronic Reporting Expert Group in June 2008, via donau, the responsible partner for the PLATINA task awarded the system implementation and pilot operation of the EU Hull Database after a public procurement procedure. The

system implementation of the European Hull Database was concluded on 19.3.2010. Public procurement and system implementation was guided by an international Steering Committee.

C.   Pilot operation of the European Hull Database

7.   The pilot operation started on 20.3.2010 and will end on 30.5.2012. The main objective of this phase is to provide the pilot service to "early" users and to gradually interconnect with additional vessel certification authorities and RIS authorities. At the time of the creation of this paper (September 2010), the following authorities have already confirmed their participation in the pilot operation:

      (a)   The Netherlands;

      (b)   Slovakia;

      (c)   Romania;

      (d)   Germany;[1]

      (e)   France;

      (f)   Czech Republic;

      (g)   Bulgaria;

      (h)   Belgium;

      (i)   Austria.

The pilot operation of the European Hull Database will be guided by an international Steering Committee, which is planned to be set up in the 4th quarter of 2010.

D.   Preparation of a legal agreement in order to ensure data privacy and data protection

9.   Data protection legislation requires the definition of the use of data in case of transfer among the different authorities. Within the framework of the IRIS Europe II Legal Task Force a stepwise approach has been worked out:

- Phase 1: Exchange of letters;
- Phase 2: Conclusion of an administrative agreement;
- Phase 3: Possible additional legislation.

10.   Phase 1 deals with the exchange of letters among via donau (as operator of the EHDB) and the authorities issuing ENIs enabling the start of the data exchange. The data shall only be used for issuing ENIs, in particular avoiding assigning 2 ENIs for one vessel.

11.   Phase 2 deals with the conclusion of an administrative agreement for full scale data exchange (including use for River Information Services and enforcement). A draft legal agreement has been prepared and discussed. The involved administrations will bring forward their final comments until November 2010. Subsequently, the administrative agreement is expected be concluded.

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[1] Germany will have access to the database but will not upload data due to national data protection rules.

12.   Phase 3 deals with the discussion of the need of possible additional legislation.

E.   Preparation of an operational concept for the future operation

13.   In order to ensure a seamless transition between the pilot operation during PLATINA and the full scale operation after PLATINA, a decision on the future operator of the database needs to be taken. As technical input for the decision, PLATINA will prepare an operational concept for the future operation.

1.   Tasks of the future operator

14.   In order to systematically check the tasks and responsibilities of the future operator, an internationally accepted best practice framework for information technology governance and processes was used (Control Objectives for Information and related Technology, COBIT). Tasks of the future operator include the following:

- Determine the strategic directions (e.g. outline possible sequence of interconnection with additional (also non-EU) countries, measures to promote XML interfaces, outline of possible additional functionalities;

- Establish the organisational structure, including committees and linkages to the EHDB users and system supplier;

- Define, prioritise, specify, implement and test the change requests for amending functionality of the EHDB and/or its interfaces to national authorities;

- Manage contracts for subcontractors, in particular those with the system supplier;

- Develop a contingency plan for the EHDB and regularly test the contingency plan;

- Define and maintain the security plan of the EHDB and monitor potential and actual security incidents;

- Review of the data in order to define additional mechanisms for enhancing the data quality, back up data and testing restoration;

- Define and monitor performance parameters and related service levels;

- Develop the administrative agreement further, so that additional countries could join.

2.   Cost of the future operation

15.   The operation cost of the European Hull Database significantly varies, if synergies at the technical, operational and legal level can be exploited with similar systems. Significant synergies are expected if an authority or international organisation operates a system of similar complexity and legal setting in a 24/7 operation. Estimations based upon expert interviews indicate that up to approximately 50% of the operational cost could be saved due to shared use of resources, which shall ensure a 24/7 operation.

3.   Financing the future operation

16.   The agreement on the operational costs of the European Hull Database could be based upon several criteria, which could include a contribution on basis of the number of vessels. Possibly, the involvement of international organisations would simplify the negotiations.

Annex

PLATINA

On 2nd June 2008 the European Commission launched the Platform for the implementation of NAIADES (PLATINA). PLATINA marks an important step in the Commission's strategy to promote inland navigation in Europe, which was initiated by the publication of the NAIADES action programme in the year 2006. PLATINA is a Coordination Action funded by the European Union (DG TREN) under the 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities (RTD). The core consortium is formed by via donau (Austria) as coordinator, Voies navigables de France (France), Bundesverband der Deutschen Binnenschiffahrt (Germany), Promotie Binnenvaart Vlaanderen (Belgium) and the Rijkswaterstaat Centre for Transport and Navigation (The Netherlands). All in all, 22 institutions from nine European countries are involved as project partners in PLATINA. This unique set-up will allow PLATINA to create the momentum necessary for the realisation of selected NAIADES actions.

Further information on PLATINA is available at www.naiades.info.

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