

**HARMONIZED PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR
RECOGNITION OF SHIP'S CERTIFICATES AND BOATMASTERS' LICENSES:
MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF BOATMASTERS' LICENCES**

**Minutes of the 1st meeting of the UNECE Group of volunteers on the mutual
recognition of boatmasters' licenses**

Note by the secretariat

Background

1. Following the decision of the UNECE Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) at its fifty-first session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/178, para. 26) and the subsequent decision of the UNECE Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/66, para.24), the UNECE secretariat organized a meeting of group of volunteers on the mutual recognition of boatmasters' licenses on 18 September 2008.
2. The representative of the following countries attended the meeting: Austria, Russian Federation, Serbia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), Danube Commission (DC) and International Sava River Basin Commission (SC). The European Commission (EC) was also represented.
3. The aims of the meeting were:
 - (a) To identify the main regional and international instruments and the policy initiatives related to the issue of the boatmasters' licenses in the UNECE region;
 - (b) To review the UNECE Resolution No.31 with Recommendations on Minimum Requirements for the Issuance of Boat masters' Licenses in Inland Navigation with a view to their Reciprocal Recognition for International Traffic, and to issue a recommendation to the UNECE Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) as to the need for its revision and possible amendments;
 - (c) To agree on the follow up to the meeting, as well as to recommend Working Party SC.3 other measures which could facilitate the recognition of boatmasters' licenses (information gathering, input to revision of relevant international documents, awareness raising events etc.).
4. The paragraphs below summarize the discussions on these three topics.

(A) REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND THE POLICY INITIATIVES RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF THE BOAT MASTERS' LICENSES IN THE UNECE REGION

5. The participants exchanged information on the current situation with respect to the issuance and recognition of boatmasters' licenses in their respective countries and organizations.
6. **Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine** highlighted the following elements:
 - (a) Publication in 2005 of a comparison study of the CCNR and EC requirements for the issuance of boatmasters licenses (CCNR Resolution 2005-I-4, Protocol 4), listing the differences and identifying the problematic divergences;
 - (b) Revision of the structure and the content of the Rhine Patent Regulations to facilitate the recognition of the national licenses, including introduction of a distinction between general requirements and local knowledge;
 - (c) Progress in the recognition process: Romanian licenses are recognized by CCNR as of May 2008. Requests from Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia are under consideration. Each recognition is accompanied by an administrative arrangement on further cooperation.
7. **Danube Commission (DC):**
 - (a) The revision of the 1996 Recommendation on the Establishment of Boatmaster's Licenses on the Danube is under way;
 - (b) An information on the educational system in the DC countries had been collected by the secretariat and published as a working document for the DC working group on technical issues
 - (c) A meeting of a DC group of volunteers on the mutual recognition of boatmasters licenses will take place in November 2008
8. **The International Sava River Basin Commission:**
 - (a) The International Sava River Basin Commission adopted Rules on minimum requirements for the issuance of boatmaster's licenses on the Sava river basin (Decision – 32/07), which is compulsory for its member states (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia);
 - (b) The content of the rules is based on the CCNR and EC requirements;
 - (c) The next step is to consider elaborating a methodology on the local knowledge
9. **European Commission** informed that the Impact Assessment (IA) work regarding the harmonization of boatmasters' certificates in Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) at EU level is ongoing. Currently, as part of the IA process, within the framework of an IA study commissioned by DG TREN, extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders is taking place. The 1st experts' meeting held in Brussels on 4 July 2008 is also part of the consultation process. The 2nd one is to take place by the end of 2008 and all stakeholders will be invited and consulted with regard to any further development of the initiative on the harmonization of boatmasters' certificates.
10. The representative of **Serbia** reported that the issue of mutual recognition of boatmasters licenses was under consideration in his country and that Serbia had prepared its position with respect to the possible amendments to Resolution No.31. Republic of Serbia had successfully cooperated with International Sava River Basin Commission (as a member) in preparing the inland navigation rules. The country is now under the obligation to implement Decision-32/07 on Rules of Minimum Requirements for the Issuance of Boatmasters' licenses on the Sava River Basin. Decision-32/07 is in full compliance with the Rules of CCNR and EC.

11. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** made the following points:
- (a) UK is currently implementing EC Directive 87/2006/EC;
 - (b) Even though the UK national inland waterways are not directly linked to the other EU inland waterways, there is an interest in facilitating the recognition of boatmasters licenses for small traders that cross the sea on sea-going vessels. There is also an interest in development inland navigation as it is an environmentally friendly mode of transport.
 - (c) Currently, there are three types of licenses (soon to become four) based on different navigation areas. The one that is of interest at the international level is License Tier 1 Level 2 and it currently requires:
 - (a) 240 days on board of the ship;
 - (b) Minimum two years in the industry;
 - (c) Training record book;
 - (d) Passing a practical test on navigational knowledge and navigational skillsAdditional requirements exist for licenses for large passenger vessels, dangerous goods transport, towage and navigation by radar.
In the whole, 700 days in the period of 5 years are required.
 - (d) An important progress was achieved in the area of local knowledge, where the number of areas requiring local knowledge was reduced from 300 to 14;
 - (e) To be able to work in the EU, there is an additional requirement, which consists in an additional examination on CEVNI, technical prescriptions for vessels and EU river systems.
12. The representative of the **Russian Federation** described the situation in his country, highlighting the following points:
- (a) The issuance of crewmen' licenses is regulated by a Federal Law of 31 May 2005 No. 349. The law covers vessels with the power of the main machinery of minimum 55 kW and non self propelled vessels with tonnage superior to 80 tones. Some rules and procedures correspond to the IMO requirements.
 - (b) Vessels are divided in five categories, not including recreational vessels, on the basis of the power of the main machinery.
 - (c) The boatmaster licenses are delivered subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) Minimum 18 years old;
 - (b) Medical certification every year between 18 and 21 years and once every two years after 21 years. The medical examination is carried out by licensed institutions and documented in a personal medical record.
 - (c) The test of navigational knowledge is compulsory and is carried out by professional commissions. The test is required for issuance, exchange and prolongation of the license and should be taken, at least, every five years. The programme is validated by the Ministry of Transport.
 - (d) The required duration of professional experience depends on the type of the vessel and the type of qualification; the maritime experience is taken into account and the professional experience is documented in a personal record.

- (e) To obtain the right to navigate on a particular sector, navigation experience in this sector and passing an additional examination its navigation conditions are required
 - (f) Training is compulsory; the minimum duration is one year. Each five years boatmasters undergo additional training. Training includes navigational practice and examination.
- (d) At the present time, no agreement exists as to the mutual recognition of boatmasters' licenses on the Russian internal waterways.

13. The representative of **Austria** reported that:

- (a) Austria implemented EC Directive 96/50/EC, which was based on Resolution No.31. Currently, Austria recognizes the licenses issued in accordance with the directive, as well as licenses issued by the DC member states;
- (b) The ongoing work, carried by the informal SC.3 working group on CEVNI, will further harmonize the traffic regulations in Europe, facilitating the examination of boatmasters' navigation knowledge;
- (c) The issue of local knowledge had been addressed by a CCNR/DC ad hoc group and Austria presented there an example of a multiple choice test for the Austrian section of Danube;
- (d) Austria applied for the recognition of its national licenses by the CCNR.

(B) REVIEW OF THE UNECE RESOLUTION NO.31 WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOAT MASTERS' LICENSES IN INLAND NAVIGATION WITH A VIEW TO THEIR RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC

14. The participants reviewed the comparison of the minimum CCNR, DC, UNECE and EC requirements, provided by the secretariat in documents GVBL (2008)1, and came to the following conclusions:

- (a) The basic requirements in the CCNR, DC, UNECE and EC regulations and recommendations are largely harmonized;
- (b) Resolution No.31 remains a useful reference document, listing the minimum requirements accepted at the pan-European level, and facilitating the bilateral or multilateral agreements on mutual recognition of licenses;
- (c) The 1992 text of the resolution should be revised, given the evolution of the CCNR, DC, Sava Commission's and EC requirements;
- (d) Additional provisions on the administrative procedures that the countries, who had accepted the basic requirements set out in Chapter 2, needed to address in their bilateral agreements on the mutual recognition, could be included in Chapter 3. The IMO and CCNR experience in this area could be useful.

15. The participants reviewed the list of possible amendments to the Resolution No.31, provided by the secretariat in document GVBL (2008)2 and agreed on the following preliminary proposals

1. Amendments to the existing requirements UNECE Resolution No.31	
1.1 Minimal age (Article 2.2. a))	Maintain the current text, as in some member states the minimum age is 18.
1.2 Physical fitness (Article 2.2 b))	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specify in the text that the medical examination must be carried out by a doctor appointed by the competent authority 2. Specify that the Administration may require an additional regular medical test after reaching a certain age.
1.3 Professional experience (Article 2.2 c) and 2.3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the minimum duration to 4 years 2. Add the provision on calculating the time of navigation 3. Specify the maximum reduction based on the special training, diploma or maritime experience. 4. Indicate that to be the training mentioned in 2.3.2 a) must cover the subjects listed in the annex. 4. Refer to the personal service record in Resolution No.61 as means for validating the professional experience
1.4 Examination of the professional knowledge (Article 2.4)	Consider further harmonizing the content of the annex on the content of the examination. It was agreed that the secretariat would contact the members with a separate request to review the content of the annex to the resolution. A preliminary analysis of the existing EC, CCNR and DC requirements was provided by the secretariat in Document GVBL(2008)2.
2. New requirements or additional provisions	
2.1 General Provisions (Article 2.2)	To include a new requirement to have a license to use a radiotelephone installation delivered by the competent authorities.
2.2 A new annex listing the information which has to be present in the license itself	Instead of creating a model of the certificate, which already exists in CCNR, EC, DC, SC regulations and recommendation, the resolution could specify and harmonize their content
2.3 Recognition of the licenses (Chapter 3)	<p>To divide Chapter 3 into two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) acceptance by countries of basic requirements set out in Chapter 2 and b) provisions on the mechanism for establishing bilateral agreement on the mutual recognition

16. The participants decided not to include in the proposal the following elements:

- (a) Specification of the content of the medical examination and the model medical certificate; given that in some countries this is of competence of health authorities;
- (b) Absence of past infractions to safety of navigation; given that other sets of rules regulate the punishment for this kind and other kinds of infractions;
- (c) Model certificate, considering the proposal under point 2.2 to be sufficient.

(C) OTHER MEASURES WHICH COULD FACILITATE THE RECOGNITION OF BOATMASTERS' LICENSES AND THE FOLLOW UP TO THE MEETING

1. Additional measures to facilitate the recognition of boatmasters' licenses

17. The participants discussed other measures that could facilitate the recognition of boatmasters' licenses and agreed that, given the importance of the local knowledge, it could be useful to collect the information on the local knowledge requirements in the UNECE countries. The following information was shared:

- (a) The CCNR receives and stores information on the local knowledge requirements received from the countries, which had applied for the recognition of their certificates;
- (b) The Danube Commission has information on some of its member states;
- (c) The Russian Federation reported that there are sixteen inland navigation districts in the country, each divided in several sections. Usually, one month of navigation and an exam on the local navigation conditions are required to receive the right to navigate as a boatmaster in these areas;
- (d) In the United Kingdom, there are fourteen local knowledge areas and it is usually required to have 6 month of navigation in the area and passing an oral examination on local knowledge. The content of the examination differs from one area to another. Information on local knowledge requirements is available on a special boatmasters licenses one-stop shop: <http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga07-home/workingatsea/mcga-trainingandcert/ds-ss-bml1stop.htm>

2. The follow up to the meeting

18. The participants agreed on the following action plan for the follow up to the meeting:

- I. October 2008: a report on the meeting to the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) at its fifty-second session;
- II. October-December 2008: preparation by the secretariat of a proposal of amendments to Resolution No.31 in consultation with the members of the group;
- III. October-February 2008: review of the annex to Resolution No.31 regarding the examination of professional knowledge by the members of the group;
- IV. February 2008: Consideration of the proposal by the thirty-fourth session of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) and, possibly, a meeting of the group of volunteers back to back with the session.

19. The UNECE secretariat will compile the information available on the local knowledge requirements and present the results to the group.

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