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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

#### Forty-first session

Geneva, 20–22 June 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

#### Mutual recognition of boatmasters' certificates and professional requirements in inland navigation

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#### Establishment and mandate of the International Expert Group

#### Note by the secretariat

#### Introduction and mandate

1. At its fortieth session the Working Party decided to establish an International Expert Group open to all ECE member States, the European Commission, the River Commissions and other stakeholders, such as Education in Inland Navigation (EDINNA), with the aim of modernizing existing regional and international instruments relating to boatmaster certification, and also the professional requirements in inland navigation (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/80, paras. 9–16). The Working Party will be informed of the opinions of Governments, the European Union and the River Commissions on the possible mandate and organization of work of the future International Expert Group and also on their appointment of experts to it. On the basis of this information, the Working Party may wish to convene the first meeting of the International Expert Group and establish its mandate. Communications from Bulgaria, the Russian Federation, Romania and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) are presented below.

## **Bulgaria**

2. In December 2011 the Bulgarian Maritime Administration signed a bilateral agreement with CCNR on the mutual recognition of boatmasters' certificates. The agreement enters into force on 1 July 2012.

3. The Bulgarian Government supports the establishment of an International Expert Group to modernize existing regional and international instruments relating to boatmaster certification and professional requirements in inland navigation and supports drawing up a mandate for it. Unfortunately, it is not possible for the time being for a Bulgarian expert to take part in the work of the International Expert Group.

## **Russian Federation**

4. The main task of the International Expert Group must be to continue the work to harmonize requirements for the issuance of certificates for boatmasters and other crew members and for the composition of inland transport vessel crews on the basis of the corresponding resolutions of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3). It should also consider the possible establishment of a pan-European legal regime in these fields.

5. The tasks of the International Expert Group could include the following:

- (a) Development of a practical cooperation mechanism; and
- (b) Renewal of instruments relating to mutual recognition and professional requirements.

6. The following could be included in the programme of work of the International Expert Group:

(a) Harmonization of requirements for the issuance of certificates for boatmasters and other crew members of inland navigation vessels:

- (i) Analysing existing mechanisms for the recognition of certificates;
- (ii) Assessing the main difficulties in obtaining recognition;
- (iii) Assessing the interest of member States in recognizing certificates;
- (iv) Determining which instruments require harmonization at the international level;
- (v) Drafting recommendations for the form of certification.

(b) Modernization of professional requirements:

- (i) General provisions;
- (ii) Organization of training;
- (iii) Planning of training, refresher and advanced training courses;
- (iv) Approval of training;
- (v) Examinations;
- (vi) Documents issued.

(c) Drafting of an instrument in the ECE framework and review of Resolution No. 31.

7. The mandate of the International Expert Group could include the following:
  - (a) Through ECE, to request information and documentation on mutual recognition and professional requirements in inland navigation from ECE member States, the River Commissions and other interested parties;
  - (b) To consider proposals sent to it;
  - (c) To take part in events organized by the European Commission, the River Commissions and other interested parties on matters related to its activities;
  - (d) To invite to its meetings representatives of organizations not members of the group;
  - (e) To present SC.3/WP.3 with a report at its regular session.
8. The composition of the International Expert Group could consist of representatives of interested ECE member States, the ECE secretariat, the European Commission, the River Commissions and other interested parties. The chairperson should be elected from among its participants at its first meeting.
9. The Group should be serviced by the ECE secretariat and should hold two sessions a year.
10. The Russian Federation supports participation by Russian experts in the Group.

## **Romania**

11. The Romanian administration intends to take part in the work of the International Expert Group in order to modernize existing regional and international instruments on boatmaster certification and also professional requirements in inland navigation, with the aim of enhancing overall safety, lowering the risk of accidents, reducing pollution and protecting lives in inland navigation. The Romanian administration hereby names Mr. Liviu Grigore, the Director of the Department of Seafarers Examination and Certification, as an expert to take part in the work of the Group.

## **Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR)**

12. At a meeting of a preparatory committee held on 28 March 2012, the delegations of the CCNR member States discussed the mutual recognition of certificates and the modernization of qualification requirements in inland navigation.

13. The delegations decided that CCNR should continue to work actively in the working group set up with observer States based on the administrative agreements relating to boatmasters' certificates and service records.

14. Within this forum, experts will be able to discuss concrete questions, such as the recognition of the training provided by institutions in the participant States, the use of simulators, how to verify knowledge of stretches of waterways, categories of boatmasters' certificates and means of verifying physical and psychological fitness. ECE and the other River Commissions will be able to take part in such work in an appropriate manner if they so desire.

15. The delegations of the CCNR member States noted with interest the initiatives taken in this field within ECE. They believe that ECE can facilitate a pan-European discussion of a future qualification system in inland navigation, even if the expert work and legal implementation will, they believe, have to take place in another framework.

16. If ECE decides, as planned, to carry out a preliminary discussion on this question at its June session, CCNR will thus be represented by an official from its secretariat and one of the national expert members of the CCNR Committee on social issues, employment and vocational training (STF). The CCNR secretariat is willing to assist in the organization of such a meeting.

17. In addition, the delegations of the CCNR member States have taken note of the fact that the European Commission too intends to take certain steps in this field. In this connection, it was stated that the work carried out by the various organizations should be coordinated and complementary.

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