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Comment on provisions for small craft in article 6.30

1. EBA would like to comment on the provisions of article 6.30, which reads as follows¹:

“Article 6.30 – General rules for navigation in reduced visibility; ~~use of~~ navigation by radar

1. In reduced visibility, all vessels shall navigate by radar.
2. Vessels under way in reduced visibility shall proceed at a safe speed as required by the reduced visibility and the presence and movements of other vessels and local circumstances. They shall use the radiotelephone to give other vessels the necessary information for safety of navigation. Small ~~vessels~~ **craft** under way in reduced visibility ~~shall use ship-ship channel or the channel prescribed by the competent authorities.~~ **may navigate only if they are also on listening watch on the ship-ship channel or on any other channel prescribed by the competent authorities.**
3. When stopping because of reduced visibility, vessels shall, as far as possible, keep clear of the fairway.
4. Vessels proceeding on their course shall, when meeting another vessel, keep to the right as far as is necessary to allow passing port to port. The provisions of articles 6.04, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 and of article 6.05 shall generally not apply in reduced visibility. However, passing starboard to starboard can also be allowed by the competent authorities when navigational conditions of particular waterways so require.
5. Towed convoys shall immediately proceed to the nearest safe berthing or anchoring areas, if a communication with visual sign, between the towed vessel and the motorized vessel, is not possible. For towed convoys proceeding downstream, navigation by radar is prohibited except for reaching the nearest safe berthing or anchoring areas. For such towed convoys provisions of the Article 6.33 are applicable.”.

2. To the opinion of EBA, this article implies that small craft are only able to navigate in reduced visibility if they are carrying radar, but small craft are not compelled to be fitted with radar.
3. This article could usefully be explicit on the requirements for small craft, especially as the definition of reduced visibility is also unclear, as it does not indicated the extent to which visibility must be reduced for the conditions to be classified as reduced visibility.

¹ As adopted by SC.3/WP.3 at its forty-fourth session in February 2014 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/88, para. 36 (c)).