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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-ninth session

Geneva, 23–25 June 2021

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

###### Workshop “Building up a solid international regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency and safety of inland water transport”

## Background information and proposals for discussion at the workshop

### Note by the secretariat\*,\*\*

## I. Mandate

1. This document is submitted in line with the Proposed Programme Budget for 2021, part V, Regional cooperation for development, section 20, Economic Development in Europe. Programme 17, Economic Development in Europe (A/75/6 (Sect.20), para. 20.51).
2. At its fifty-eight session, the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) decided that the theme topic for its fifty-ninth session would be the regulatory framework to increase the efficiency and safety of inland water transport (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/116, para. 81).

## II. Background

### A. Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030

3. The 2017 Ministerial Resolution on “Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility” (ECE/TRANS/2017/2) has defined the policy directions for the future work of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). The mission, role and objectives of ITC have been set out in the ITC strategy until 2030 (Strategy), adopted at its eighty-first session (Geneva, 19–22 February 2019).

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\* The present document was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.  
\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

4. The mission for ITC is that it contributes to sustainable inland transport and mobility for achieving the sustainable development goals in member States of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and Member States of the United Nations (UN) through policy dialogue, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, as appropriate, promoting new technologies, assisting in enhancing connectivity and supporting the implementation of legal instruments.

5. To achieve this, the action plan as a part of the Strategy, provides enhancing the role of ITC as the UN platform for:

- (a) Inland transport conventions;
- (b) Supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport;
- (c) Regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogue;
- (d) Promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility.

6. To achieve this, ITC as the UN platform for inland transport should perform the following key functions:

- Leading change in inland transport
- Developing and administering transport legal instruments
- Increasing accessions and equitable participation, including by non-ECE Member States.

7. ITC at its eighty-second session (Geneva, 25–28 February 2020) welcomed ongoing alignment activities by its Working Parties with the Strategy. ITC also requested the secretariat in close cooperation with the Working Parties and in consultation with the Bureau to prepare a report on alignment activities of Working Parties and possible future activities (ECE/TRANS/294, para 19). In response to this request, the secretariat has prepared the document on the implementation of the Strategy for the eighty-third session of ITC (ECE/TRANS/2021/3). It presents the status of work in implementing the Strategy and it formulates next steps to further advance the implementation. The status and the next steps are detailed as per tasks arising from the Strategy and the ITC decisions related to the adoption of the Strategy. This document also allocates responsibilities for the implementation of the next steps.

## **B. Working Party on Inland Water Transport**

8. The Wrocław Ministerial Declaration “Inland Navigation in a Global Setting”, adopted on 18 April 2018, has established the objectives and actions for the inland water transport sector for the upcoming period and invited all countries having a vested interest in inland water transport as well as all parties concerned to develop action plans for their implementation. In the declaration, the Ministers emphasized the role of international agreements and legislation in the field of infrastructure for the coordinated development of all transport modes. The ministerial declaration was supported by ITC resolution No. 265 which invited member States, River Commissions, international and public organizations and other stakeholders to maintain policy dialogue on good practices and measures relevant to the implementation of the objectives taking advantage of the framework provided by ECE and to proceed with the implementation of the objectives and strategic actions set out in the declaration.

9. The White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport, endorsed by ITC at its eighty-second session, contains Policy Recommendation No. 2 “Renewed focus in building up a solid regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency and safety of inland water transport”. It is emphasized that “efforts should be made to increase the efficiency of mandatory instruments and the number of contracting parties to them, as well as updating them in accordance with the ITC strategy till 2030. Furthermore, efforts should also be made to ensure that mandatory instruments do not impede the development of innovation, digitalization and automation.”

10. Under this policy recommendation, seven ECE actions have been proposed, in particular:

- Continue promoting the international conventions under the purview of ITC which are relevant to inland navigation and invite countries lacking a sufficient regulatory framework for inland water transport to use these conventions
- Continue monitoring and support the process of implementation of international conventions under the ITC purview which are relevant to inland navigation and continue efforts how to make them more efficient and attractive to other ECE member States as well as UN Member States
- In close cooperation with River Commissions, continue promoting the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) and promote the European Code for Signs and Signals on Inland Waterways (SIGNI) as the basis for transparent and standard rules for inland water navigation at the pan-European level and develop appropriate mechanisms that ensure streamlined and effective maintenance and monitoring of its provisions
- Support all efforts to establish a pan-European legal framework for private law aspects of inland navigation, such as the implementation of the international conventions existing in this area
- Assess potential new legal instruments to further facilitate the growth and use of inland waterways, pleasure navigation and tourism and increase the sustainability of transport.

11. Actions proposed for inland waterways for enhancing the role of ITC as the UN platform for inland transport conventions, include:

- Continued updating of the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN) and supporting documents to increase its attractiveness and encourage ratification and further accession
- Continuing efforts to make the conventions under the ITC purview which are relevant to inland navigation more efficient and attractive to other ECE member States as well as UN Member States
- Continued cooperation with the Working Party on Intermodal Transport (WP.24) on updating the Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), with a view to facilitate integration of inland water transport in multimodal transport and logistics chains
- Assessment of potential new legal instruments to further facilitate the growth and use of inland waterways, pleasure navigation and tourism and increase the sustainability of transport.

12. Out of fifty-nine international conventions and agreements under the ITC purview, eight are relevant to the activities of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3):

- Convention relating to the Unification of Certain Rules concerning Collisions in Inland Navigation, of 15 March 1960 (13 Contracting Parties)
- Convention on the Registration of Inland Navigation Vessels, of 25 January 1965 (9 Contracting Parties)
- Convention on the Measurement of Inland Navigation Vessels, of 15 February 1966 (17 Contracting Parties)
- Convention relating to the Limitation of the Liability of Owners of Inland Navigation Vessels (CLN), of 1 March 1973 (not in force)
- Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Inland Waterway (CVN), of 6 February 1976 (not in force)
- Protocol to the Convention relating to the Limitation of the Liability of Owners of Inland Navigation Vessels (CLN), of 5 July 1978 (not in force)

- Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Inland Waterways (CVN), of 5 July 1978 (not in force)
- European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), of 19 January 1996 (19 Contracting Parties).

### **III. Topics for discussion at the workshop**

13. The proposed topics for discussion at the workshop are:

(a) The efficiency of international conventions relevant to inland navigation and UNECE resolutions and possibilities how to improve the promotion and monitoring of the implementation of mandatory instruments;

(b) The need for updating the existing legal instruments as foreseen in the Strategy;

(c) Potential new legal instruments to further facilitate the growth and use of inland waterways, pleasure navigation and tourism and increase the sustainability of transport.

14. SC.3/WP.3 may wish to consider possible ways for assessing and increasing the efficiency of the existing legal instruments, in particular:

- The relevance and need for improvements or updating
- Identified gaps
- The extension of the application scope and the geographical coverage
- Issues related to the scope that potentially should be covered by separate conventions
- Best practices and tendencies in the legal framework for other modes of transport
- Provisions that may impede the development of innovation, digitalization and automation
- Implementation issues at the national level.

15. Participants may wish to consider the need for assessing the mandatory instruments and ECE resolutions in terms of the resilience to pandemics and international emergency situations and elaborating a possible approach.

16. SC.3/WP.3 may wish to discuss the need for new legal instruments and consider possibilities for improving the legal status of resolutions relevant to inland water transport, in particular, CEVNI, SIGNI, resolution No. 40, and improving the monitoring of the implementation.

17. SC.3/WP.3 may wish to provide other recommendations to SC.3 on the implementation of the Strategy and actions under Policy Recommendation No. 2 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport.