

CCNR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER – N°7

Rhine navigation in the context of COVID-19

Given the exceptional situation in relation with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as its impacts on the Rhine and European navigation, the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) wishes to share relevant information via a “Weekly newsletter”. This newsletter will be published every week on the [CCNR dedicated webpage](#) “Information regarding Rhine navigation in the context of COVID-19”.

CESNI publishes an open letter in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

At the last [CESNI¹ meeting on 30 April 2020](#), the CESNI Members and Observer States, River Commissions and International Organisations, as well as approved non-governmental organisations expressed the urgent need to put in place a coordinated approach regarding measures to support the European inland navigation sector during the COVID-19 crisis.

In an open letter published on 20 May, the CESNI recommended that States do not impose penalties should the validity period of certificates, attestations and other inland waterway transport-related documents issued by national authorities be exceeded, provided that:

- the said certificates, attestations and other documents were still valid on 15 March 2020 and
- the safety and operational continuity of inland navigation and inland waterways are not endangered.

The Committee also invited the sector and inspection bodies to continue with and/or resume vessel inspections and certifications to the greatest extent possible.

The open letter builds on current deliberations on the effects of the crisis, while considering the measures already taken by national, EU and international authorities, as well as regulatory bodies ; and without prejudice to future adaptations of the relevant European and international legal frameworks, in particular by the European Union and the CCNR. The CESNI's recommendations can therefore be seen as complementary to the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down specific and temporary measures in view of the COVID-19 outbreak and concerning the validity of certain certificates, licences and authorisations as well as the postponement of certain periodic checks and training in certain areas of transport legislation. They are addressed to the CESNI Members, Observer and Third States, International Organisations and approved non-governmental organisations of the CESNI, as well as to the inland navigation sector and inspection bodies.

The letter can be found [here](#).

(Source: CESNI, [CESNI publishes an open letter in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 20/05/2020)

Guidance on how to safely and gradually resume travel and reboot Europe’s tourism in 2020 and beyond

On 13 May, the European Commission presented a package of guidelines and recommendations to help Member States gradually lift travel restrictions and allow tourism businesses to reopen, after months of lockdown, while respecting necessary health precautions. The guidelines present general principles as well as specific recommendations for the safe and gradual restoration of passenger transport by air, rail, road and waterways, covering, for instance, the need to limit contact between passengers and transport workers, and passengers themselves, reducing, where feasible, the density of passengers, as well as the use of personal protective equipment such as face masks.

¹ CESNI: European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation

The package also includes a recommendation on making travel vouchers an attractive alternative to cash reimbursement for consumers.

(Source: European Commission, [Tourism and transport: Commission's guidance on how to safely resume travel and reboot Europe's tourism in 2020 and beyond](#), 13/05/2020)

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on inland navigation and Naiades III as recovery strategy: joint letter to the European Commission

Initiated by INE (Inland Navigation Europe), a letter signed by Theresia Hacksteiner (European Barge Union), Turi Fiorito (European Federation of Inland Ports), Gerard Kester (European Skippers Organisation), Myriam Chaffart (European Transport Workers' Federation), Karin De Schepper (Inland Navigation Europe) and Nik Delmeire (European Inland Waterway Transport Platform) was sent to European Commissioner Adina Valean on 12 May 2020. Throughout Europe, the inland navigation sector has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The letter calls upon the Commission

- to make inland waterway transport and ports fully part of the post-COVID-19 recovery plan,
- to take demand-based measures in order to relaunch the economy on a Green Deal footing, so that trade and transport flows return, and
- to prepare a strong future-oriented Naiades action programme 2021-2027, building on the Green Deal as underlying growth strategy.

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on inland navigation and Naiades III as recovery strategy

The European Green Deal appears as an exit and growth strategy out of the COVID-19 crisis as the sector has been severely impacted by the pandemic and the effect is expected to be felt long after the sanitary crisis comes to an end. A solution must therefore be found with the Green Deal, and more particularly in the Green Deal follow-up policies. During this crisis, waterway authorities continued to operate as much as possible to provide businesses and citizens with essential supplies, and to keep the internal market moving despite a 40% reduction in staff. Thanks to hard work and the implementation of exceptional measures, the distribution of essential products, whether pharmaceuticals or the most indispensable food production for European citizens, has been ensured. Meanwhile, the impact of the crisis on the sector remains significant and continues to grow. The coronavirus also affected the passenger sector (day trip and cruising), which collapsed in a few days and was most heavily affected.

Europe needs first-class inland waterways for swift and sustainable strategy

The Green Deal, with its modal shift and decarbonisation goals, will be essential as demand and growth strategy to mainstream these new trends in all waterborne urban regions.

For this, both short-term and long-term measures need to be undertaken.

Short-term measures

1. Green lanes for safe, continuous transport and free movement of workers, as well as EU Regulation laying down specific and temporary measures in view of the COVID-19 outbreak and concerning the validity of certain certificates, licenses and authorisations and the postponement of certain periodic checks and training in certain areas of transport legislation.
2. Support measures: the letter signatories advocate a fast-track approval of notifications of national support schemes with regard to innovation. For infrastructure and fleet, it is important that inland waterway transport and ports are part of the recovery plan, which foresees public spending in sustainable infrastructure as well as support of the fleet in its energy transition and innovation in line with the Green Deal. In addition, they plead for an extension of the eligibility period for projects costs with two years for Cohesion and CEF projects. Measures should allow to support the continuity of shipping companies and the income security for crew members. In general, the signatories strongly support demand-based measures that relaunch the economy on a Green Deal footing, so that trade and transport flows return again.

Long-term measures and Green Deal as growth strategy

The answers to the crisis and future challenges are to be found in a concerted manner through a common European response. For inland waterway transport, this is without any doubt a follow-up to the Naiades action programme 2013-2020. The European Parliament and the Council called for a next Naiades action programme by 2020, which the Commission is preparing. The signatories call upon the Commission to prepare a strong future-oriented Naiades action programme 2021-2027, building on the Green Deal as underlying growth strategy to stimulate the economies and create jobs while accelerating green, smart inland shipping and ports in a cost-efficient way. Today, inland shipping carries important quantities of fossil fuels and iron ore. The Green deal will accelerate the green transition and a decline in these market segments. The sector is fully committed to the objectives of climate neutrality by 2050 and a growing demand for a new green economy which would provide opportunities for a durable modal shift. To succeed in both, a strong policy framework is required, providing legal certainty and a stable and forward-looking investment environment for Europe's industry. This should be paired with the inland shipping sector and ports to be tapping into the European Green Deal Investment Plan to boost a green recovery and a just transition.

(Source: INE, [Naiades programme for post-COVID growth](#), 12/05/2020)

IGRC and EBU released guidelines for a minimum standard for the resumption of river cruises in Europe after COVID-19

River cruising is a vital part of European tourism. After the full collapse of this industry immediately at the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe, the sector now is working on its exit strategy. For this purpose, it released guidelines for a minimum standard for the resumption of river cruises in Europe after COVID-19.

On 13 May, the European Commission presented a package of guidelines and recommendations to help Member States gradually lift travel restrictions and allow tourism businesses to reopen, after months of lockdown, while respecting necessary health precautions. The package also aims to help the EU tourism sector recover from the pandemic, by supporting businesses and ensuring that Europe continues to be the number one destination for visitors.

EBU and IGRC, together representing the major part of the European river cruise industry, - welcoming the package by the European Commission - have undertaken to follow up these recommendations. On 27 May, they released their own guidelines for a minimum standard for the resumption of river cruises, which should allow a harmonised and coordinated recovery from the pandemic and restarting river cruise business in Europe.

These guidelines address all major parts of the business, taking into account the various national restrictions. They include a.o. minimum standards regarding distances, disinfection, hygiene in all areas of the vessel (incl. kitchen and rooms of the crew) and address reporting in case of illness. The aim of these measures is the protection of passengers and crew members under all given circumstances. The measures are strongly related to the hotel business. The guidelines provide the relevant information to the services on shore to prepare for the taking up of the business. The river cruise sector aims to take up the business as soon as possible, taking into account these high security measures on board.

(Source: [IGRC and EBU](#), 27/05/2020)

Keep safe and healthy!

About the CCNR

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) is an international organisation that exercises an essential regulatory role in the navigation of the Rhine. It is active in the technical, legal, economic and environmental fields. In all its areas of action, its work is guided by the efficiency of transport on the Rhine, safety, social considerations, and respect for the environment. Many of the CCNR's activities now reach beyond the Rhine and are directly concerned with European navigable waterways more generally. The CCNR works closely with the European Commission as well as with the other river commissions and international organisations.