

AUTUMN 2021 PLENARY SESSION OF THE CCNR

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The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) held its plenary autumn session on 09 December 2021, by videoconference. Mr Michel-Étienne Tilemans, the head of the Belgian delegation, chaired the meeting. The plenary session began in mini-session format, with the Member States of the CCNR and representatives of the European Commission, Danube Commission, the Moselle Commission, the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR), the Commission for the Hydrology of the Rhine basin (CHR) as well as Luxembourg and the Czech Republic in their capacity as observers. It continued in public format, with the additional participation of the approved non-governmental organisations (EBU, EDINNA, ERSTU, ESO, IVR). Mrs Lucia Luijten attended the plenary session for the first time as Secretary General of the CCNR, having succeeded Mr Bruno Georges in November 2021.

Prominent among the main topics of the plenary session was the evaluation of the Belgian Presidency for the period 2020-2021, the adoption of the roadmap to reduce emissions, the extension of the scope of the blood alcohol limit, and the approval of new berth areas. The CCNR's work in the market observation field and the beneficial collaborative relationships with its traditional partners were also broached during the meeting.

EVALUATION OF THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY FOR THE PERIOD 2020-2021

The change in the rotating presidency at the end of this year was an ideal opportunity to emphasise the highlights of the period 2020-2021, notwithstanding a difficult health situation.

Mr Michel-Étienne Tilemans stressed the importance of the collaboration between the CCNR, the European Union (EU), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the other river commissions and traditional partners, especially the navigation profession. The CCNR has continued its intense dialogue with the EU, the objective being a balanced and efficient collaborative relationship.

As for the European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation (CESNI), it is a major area of cooperation between the CCNR and the EU for the development of European standards for inland navigation. For example, the CESNI will play a major role in [revising crew-related requirements](#) in the context of the CCNR and EU, and in [standardising examinations for inland navigation personnel](#). Discussions are also in progress to create a partnership after 2021.

As sustainable development and the financing of greening initiatives in inland navigation are core Belgian priorities, the Presidency also fully supported the CCNR's objective of achieving a zero emissions inland navigation sector by 2050. The publication of a [study on the financing of the energy transition](#) and the adoption of a roadmap for reducing emissions, and the organisation of a [workshop on alternative energy sources for electric propulsion systems](#), were major achievements in the period 2020-2021.

The integration of the inland navigation sector with digital and multimodal logistics chains, an ambition shared by the CCNR and Belgian Presidency, also continued. In its [resolution 2021-I-10](#), the CCNR decided to authorise the presence on board of certain certificates and shipboard documents in electronic form. This first step in developing the digitalisation of the navigation of the Rhine is an important stage in the administrative simplification process.

New technologies and innovation, especially automation, were at the forefront of the CCNR's work. The small navigation Committee (RN) was set up accordingly, a body dealing specifically with automated navigation, was set up. A summary of the [CCNR's vision for automated navigation](#) was also adopted and distributed.

Finally, we can point to the signing in October 2021 of a declaration of intent reiterating the cooperation with the Commission for the Hydrology of the Rhine basin (CHR). The objective here is to step up dialogue on essential issues such as the impact of climate change on the Rhine waterway.

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.

PRIORITIES OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE CCNR FOR THE PERIOD 2022-2023

The CCNR's French Presidency designate set out its objectives and priorities for the next two years. The stepping up of cooperation with the EU, the energy transition of the Inland navigation sector, and digitalisation will, according to the French delegation headed by Mr François Alabrune, remain key areas of the CCNR's work in 2022-2023. The question of berth areas on the Upper Rhine, and their upgrading, will also be a priority of the French Presidency.



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REDUCTION OF EMISSIONS IN THE INLAND NAVIGATION SECTOR: ADOPTION OF THE CCNR ROADMAP

In accordance with the mandate given by the [Ministerial Declaration of 17 October 2018](#) in Mannheim, the CCNR developed a roadmap aiming at largely eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants attributable to the inland navigation sector by 2050. This instrument was drawn up in close collaboration first and foremost with industry representatives, the river commissions, and the EU.

The CCNR is thus playing a full part in protecting the environment and climate, while at all times ensuring the prosperity and safe and orderly navigation of the Rhine. The Central Commission is aware that the energy transition needs to be considered a crucial challenge facing inland navigation on the Rhine and elsewhere in Europe and must remain a priority public policy area.

During its autumn plenary session, the CCNR adopted this roadmap for reducing inland navigation emissions. By means of this essential document, the Organisation aspires to develop a shared, European vision of the energy transition, and specifically wishes to:

- set transition pathways for the existing and future fleet,
- suggest, plan, and implement measures directly adopted or not by the CCNR,
- monitor the intermediate and final objectives laid down by the Mannheim Declaration.

Despite current uncertainties concerning especially the development, cost, level of maturity and availability of the technologies contributing to the transition towards a zero-emission inland navigation sector, it is necessary to make an immediate start on designing an approach towards this ambitious objective that can be sustained in the medium and long-term. In this context, identifying and considering the measures enabling an accelerated transition towards zero-emissions (such as regulatory measures, monitoring of emissions, financial support for the energy transition, ...), together with the development of technology transition pathways for the fleet, are essential elements of the CCNR roadmap.

The Central Commission undertakes to report by 2025 on progress with implementation of the roadmap as well as on the need to update the roadmap and extend its scope. It also undertakes to re-examine the roadmap and action plan by 2030.

The CCNR roadmap will be published in January 2022 on the CCNR website.

EXTENSION OF THE BLOOD ALCOHOL LIMIT APPLICABLE TO THE ENTIRE MINIMUM DUTY CREW

In its resolution 2021-II-14, the CCNR decided to extend the blood alcohol limit applicable to the boatmaster and to other individuals aboard who are temporarily determining the craft's route and speed by themselves to the entire minimum duty crew (Article 1.03(4), of the [RPR](#)).

The adopted blood alcohol criteria are:

- the concentration of alcohol in the blood reaches 0,5‰ or more; or
- The quantity of alcohol absorbed equates to a concentration of alcohol in the blood or to an equivalent alcohol concentration in exhaled air such that the duty members of the minimum crew are incapable of carrying out their duties.

Conversely, the minimum crew members do not fall within the scope of this proposed amendment when they are resting.

Supported by the profession as well, the extension of the blood alcohol limit to the entire minimum duty crew helps improve yet further the safe navigation of the Rhine.

ADDITIONAL CABIN VESSEL BERTHS

The French delegation reported on a project to construct new passenger vessel berths on the Upper Rhine. The plenary session approved the construction of 2 berths at Vogelgrun (Rhine km 225.300) and Hüningen (Rhine km 170.300). Upon completion, there will be an additional 7 vessel berths on the Upper Rhine. The berths will be built and operated by a concessionaire and come with shore power, a water supply and parking for buses.

ECONOMIC SITUATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION IN EUROPE

In partnership with the European Commission, in September 2021 the CCNR published its [Market Observation 2021 annual report](#) on inland navigation in Europe and in November 2020 its [biannual Market Overview report](#).

The press release and executive summary concerning the biannual Market Overview report are available on the [CCNR website](#). The CCNR resolution adopted during the plenary session supplements the information in the November 2021 report, notably by providing additional information on 2021 first half trends and on forecasts for the second half. The resolution will be available on the CCNR website in January 2022.

A thematic report on new inland navigation markets will be published in the first half of 2022.

As a reminder, the CCNR's full annual and biannual reports and thematic reports can be downloaded as a PDF in German, French, Dutch or English at <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020800-en.html> or consulted directly online at: <https://www.inland-navigation-market.org>.

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CCNR AND THE MAJOR INLAND NAVIGATION PLAYERS

As part of their regular discussions, the CCNR and the EU constantly exchange information, with a focus on their respective regulatory activities, and on CESNI and market observation activities. The full results of the meeting of the CESNI on 28 October 2021, which were the subject of a detailed report at the plenary session, are available on the [Committee website](#). The CCNR recently took part in a European Parliament hearing on the NAIADES III programme. These discussions once again highlighted the numerous synergies that exist between the CCNR's activities and those of the EU in the inland navigation arena. These synergies are also explored within the PLATINA3 project. Finally, the market observation findings are addressed in the dedicated paragraph of this press release.

the CCNR once again welcomed the beneficial collaborative relationships with the other river commissions, of the Danube, the Moselle, and the Sava, and with the UNECE, the ICP, the CHR, the Observer States, the approved NGOs, and all the major Rhine and European inland navigation players. The public part of the autumn plenary session was therefore an ideal forum for discussion with its traditional partners, especially the CCNR's approved organisations.

PLENARY SESSION OF THE CCNR

If, as is hoped, the health situation so permits, the next plenary session of the CCNR will take place on a face-to-face basis in Strasbourg on 2 June 2021.



CCNR

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