

THE CCNR LAUNCHES A QUESTIONNAIRE ON AIDS TO NAVIGATION EQUIPPED WITH INLAND AIS FOR BOATMASTERS AND AUTHORITIES

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The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) has decided to launch a questionnaire for operators, boatmasters and authorities. The aim is to examine the usage of Inland AIS reports derived from aids to navigation equipped with Inland AIS, and what is expected of this technology.

AIDS TO NAVIGATION (AtoN)

Aids to navigation are objects such as buoys, beacons or signal lights whose purpose is to provide assistance to boatmasters during navigation.

If these devices are equipped with Inland AIS, they are referred to as physical AIS AtoN. In this case they can transmit a signal which is received by vessels in the vicinity. This signal is displayed on the screen of an electronic chart display system, indicating the position of these vessels, both their actual position and their theoretical position, for example if buoys have been displaced.

It is also possible to transmit these same reports from a shore installation, without an object being physically present on the water. This is referred to as virtual AIS AtoN. In this way, aids to navigation can be displayed on the screen of an electronic chart display system such as Inland ECDIS, for example when temporary beacons are in operation.

Thanks to the ES-TRIN 2023, the AIS reports relating to these aids to navigation have been standardised, meaning that this technology can now be widely used.

This technology could be useful in the development of automated navigation. Indeed,

the AIS reports are more easily processed by track guidance assistants for inland navigation (TGAIN), as well as other devices, than physical objects on the fairway.

THE TARGET GROUP AND THE AIM OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The expected benefits of AIS AtoN are:

- on the one hand, improvements to navigation safety thanks to more accurate information being displayed on Inland ECDIS equipment and, depending on the technical possibilities, also on the screens of comparable electronic chart display devices; and
- on the other hand, more efficient monitoring of physical objects equipped with AtoN on the fairway, for example making it easier to detect whether they have drifted off position or become detached.

Thus, given the impact on navigation safety of these devices, the CCNR has decided to launch a questionnaire.

The aim of this questionnaire is to identify the most relevant needs and usage scenarios from the point of view of boatmasters and operators, as well as the intentions of the authorities and their plans in this area.

Analysis of the responses to this questionnaire will make it possible to check whether current initiatives are in line with needs. It will also enable equipment manufacturers to orientate the development of their equipment to best meet the different expectations.

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.

HOW TO TAKE PART IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is available online from **28 November to 31 January 2024**, in German, French and Dutch:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/UsageOfAISaidstoNavigation>

It consists of a maximum of ten questions and takes no more than ten minutes to complete.

The CCNR thanks the respondents to the questionnaire in advance for their time and their valuable contributions.



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