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Item 7 (u) of the provisional agenda

Strategic Questions of a Horizontal and Cross-Sectoral

Policy or Regulatory Nature:

Inland Water Transport

Implementation of Resolution No. 265 “Facilitating the Development of Inland Water Transport” of the Inland Transport Committee

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. At its eighty-first session, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) adopted resolution No. 265 “Facilitating the Development of Inland Water Transport”, aimed to facilitate the implementation of the Ministerial declaration “Inland Navigation in a Global Setting”, adopted by the international ministerial conference on inland water transport (18 and 19 April 2018, Wrocław (Poland)).¹ In this resolution, ITC invited member States, in particular: (a) to develop national action plans for the implementation of the objectives and strategic actions set out by the Wrocław declaration and inform the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) about progress and (b) requested SC.3 to amend its programme of work accordingly and to regularly report on the progress in the implementation of this resolution.

2. This item is permanently included in the agenda of sessions of SC.3 since 2019. Information on the implementation of the ITC resolution by SC.3 and member States is given below.

II. Terms of Reference and Programme of Work of SC.3

3. At its sixty-fifth session, SC.3 approved its revised Terms of Reference in order to bring them in line with the ITC Strategy until 2030, new activities and tasks arising from the Ministerial declaration “Inland Navigation in a Global Setting” (Wrocław ministerial declaration), the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport endorsed by ITC at its eighty-second session, and the programme of work for 2022–2023. The revised Terms of Reference were adopted by ITC at its eighty-

¹ Available at https://unece.org/DAM/trans/doc/2018/sc3/Ministerial-declaration_e.pdf.

fourth session on 25 February 2022 (ECE/TRANS/316, paragraph 27) and are available on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

4. At its sixty-fifth session, SC.3 adopted its programme of work for 2022–2023, prepared with due regard of the Ministerial declaration “Inland Navigation in a Global Setting” and ITC resolution No. 265, and the relevant parameters for its biennial evaluation as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2021/12. ITC took note of the programme of work and biennial evaluation adopted by SC.3, following its decision to maintain the practice of the adoption of biennial programmes of work and the four-year plans ((ECE/TRANS/316, paragraph 141).

III. Follow-up of the International Ministerial Conference “Connecting by Inland Navigation”

5. At its sixty-third session, SC.3 adopted the recommendations on monitoring the implementation of the Wroclaw ministerial declaration to assist member States in collecting information (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/210, paragraph 20). The recommendations contain a number of indicators based on the existing transport statistics collected by member States and used to directly monitor transport-related progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, such as tonne-kilometre statistics related to Goal 9. It was proposed to use national action plans as the basis for their implementation.

6. At its sixty-fifth session, SC.3 asked the secretariat to prepare a questionnaire based on the recommendations and invited countries to transmit the necessary information to the secretariat with a view of preparing a working document for its sixty-sixth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/215, paragraph 14). The secretariat made a detailed report about the implementation of the Wroclaw ministerial declaration (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/215, paragraph 13).

7. In the period from 2019 to 2022, SC.3 and its subsidiary body, the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation performed the following activities aimed to implementing the objectives and strategic actions set out by the Wroclaw ministerial declaration:

(a) *Building up a solid regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency of inland water transport (strategic actions 1 to 3)*

- This is included in the Policy Recommendation No. 2 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport
- The list of international agreements and conventions with the number of contracting parties is regularly updated; the most recent one is issued as ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2022/12
- Road map for the ratification, acceptance, approval and accession to the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), adopted by SC.3 at its sixty-third session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2019/7)
- Workshop “Building up a solid international regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency and safety of inland water transport”, held at the fifty-ninth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/118, paragraphs 8 to 25, and ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2021/10).

(b) *Ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes, streamlining cargo flows and promoting the multimodality (strategic actions 4 to 11)²*

- This is included in the Policy Recommendations Nos. 1 and 3 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport

² Here and below: strategic actions set out in the Wroclaw ministerial declaration.

- Amendments to the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network and the Inventory of most important bottlenecks and missing links in the E Waterway Network (resolution No. 49)
- Workshop “Integration of Inland Water Transport in Multimodal Transport and Logistics Chains”, held at the sixty-third session of SC.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/210, paragraphs 22–42)
- Round table discussion “River-sea transport in Europe”, held at the fifty-sixth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, paragraphs 63–77)
- Continued joint work with the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) on aligning AGN and the Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations
- Workshop “Development of Container Transport on Inland Waterways”, held at the sixty-sixth session of SC.3, organized jointly by the secretariats of SC.3 and WP.24 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/217, paragraphs 16–23).

(c) *Encouraging the realization of a modern fleet and fostering innovations (strategic actions 12 to 14)*

- This is included in the Policy Recommendations Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 8 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport
- Adoption of the sixth revision of the European Code for Inland Waterways (2022)
- Adoption of amendments to the annex to resolution No. 61: (a) amendment No.1 (2020) containing Chapter 8C “Special provisions applicable to craft equipped with propulsion or auxiliary systems operating on fuels with a flashpoint equal to or lower than 55°C” and appendix 10, “Supplementary provisions applicable to craft operating on fuels with a flashpoint equal to or lower than 55° C”, and amendment No. 4 (2022) containing provisions for electric vessel propulsion
- Adoption of resolution No. 95 “Enhancing international cooperation to support the development of automation in inland navigation” at the sixty-third session of SC.3 and contribution to the Road map to strengthen harmonization of Intelligent Transport Systems endorsed by ITC at its eighty-third session
- Revision of resolutions of relevance to River Information Services in 2019–2021 and the preparation of the booklet “River Information Services in the ECE region” (2021)
- Workshops and round table discussions:
 - Workshop “Encouraging the realization of a modern fleet, enhancing navigation safety and fostering innovations” at the fifty-fifth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/110, paragraphs 8–39)
 - Workshop “Circular economy in inland water transport”, held at its sixty-fourth session of SC.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/213, paragraphs 21–32)
 - Workshop “Towards a Modern, Sustainable and Resilient E Waterway Network”, held at the sixty-first session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/122, paragraphs 10–35).

(d) *Building the inland waterway infrastructure resilient to climate changes (strategic actions 15 to 16)*

- This is included in the Policy Recommendation No. 1 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport
- Workshop “Climate change and the extreme water situation on European waterways and its impact on inland water transport”, held at the fifty-eighth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/116, paragraphs 9–34)

- Workshop “Prevention of Pollution from Inland Waterway Vessels and Greening of the Inland Water Transport Sector” (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/120, paragraphs 12–35).

(e) *Promoting the attractiveness of the sector to the market and increasing its competitiveness (strategic actions 17 to 23)*

- This is included in the Policy Recommendation No. 7 of the White Paper on the Progress, Accomplishments and Future of Sustainable Inland Water Transport
- Workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals and how they can be achieved in inland waterways, held at the fifty-sixth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/112, paragraphs 11–39)
- Workshop “Education standards and professional requirements in inland navigation”, held at the fifty-fourth session of SC.3/WP.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/108, paragraphs 9–36).
- Proposal for revision of resolution No. 31 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/2021/10).

IV. Implementation of the Wroclaw Ministerial Declaration by member States

8. At its sixty-fifth session, SC.3 asked the secretariat to collect information from governments on the implementation of the Wroclaw ministerial declaration (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/215, paragraph 14). The detailed information was transmitted by the Governments of Belarus, Belgium, Croatia and Slovakia and issued for the sixty-sixth session of SC.3 as ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2022/4 and ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2022/5.

9. The information transmitted by countries includes the following topics:

(a) *Participation in international treaties and conventions relevant to inland water transport other than those within ITC, bilateral and multilateral agreements*

(b) *Work on acceding to or ratifying international conventions and agreements relevant to inland water transport under the purview of ITC*

- Belgium is currently working on acceding to AGN.

(c) *National measures and action plans aimed at increasing the modal share of inland water transport, developing infrastructure and logistics*

- In Belarus, the State programme “Transport Complex” for 2021–2025, approved by Decision No. 165 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 23 March 2021, is under implementation, in particular, Subprogramme 3 “Inland water and maritime transport”.
- Belgium informed about (a) the activities of De Vlaamse Waterweg nv in the Flemish Region aimed at a further modal shift to waterways, stimulation of use of inland navigation for transport of goods, investments into modern inland waterway infrastructure, stimulating companies to use inland waterway transport and a new incentives programme for estuary shipping, and (b) the work of the Port of Brussels on a network of multimodal consolidation hubs and transshipment points for unitised goods (building materials and fast-moving consumer goods).
- In Croatia, the main directions of the national policy for the development of waterways are set out in the Strategy of Development of River Transport for the period from 2022 to 2032 and the Medium-term plan for development of inland waterways and inland ports for the period from 2022 to 2031.
- Slovakia is developing a conceptual and strategic document for the development of inland navigation under the title “Concept of the Water Transport Development in the Slovak Republic until 2030 with a view to 2050”.

(d) *Ensuring and maintaining the required minimum parameters of inland waterways, eliminating bottlenecks and missing links, ensuring adequate capacities of ports and terminals, enhancing multimodality and other measures aimed at developing the infrastructure and logistics*

- Countries provided information about their recent and ongoing projects and programmes in the field of the development of inland waterways, infrastructure and ports; detailed information is given in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2022/4.

(e) *Regulatory framework for fostering innovation, automation and greening of the inland fleet*

- Belarus: The State programme “Transport Complex” for 2021–2025 has set out measures for the fleet modernization, which cover, in particular, increasing the level of automation and greening. The programme also provides for the implementation of results of research and scientific projects in the field of automation and greening of the inland fleet.
- Belgium: In the Flemish Region, greening of the inland fleet is embedded in the Flemish Energy and Climate Plan for 2021–2030 and the Flemish Air Quality Plan until 2030. In the field of automated navigation and innovation in a wider scope, the Flemish Government has developed a legal framework that offers more room for innovation and ensures a smooth and safe way for developing and testing the accompanying techniques in Flanders. As a first result, a new Flemish Decree was introduced in June 2019. This decree opens the possibility for the Flemish waterway authorities to give temporary exemptions on certain rules and regulations to enable tests of innovative concepts.
- Croatia: Measures for increasing competitiveness and encouraging sustainable development of the sector set out in the Strategy of Development of River Transport for the period from 2022 to 2032 include improving the energy efficiency by using low-carbon energy sources and propulsion systems in shipping in order to facilitate the transition to a more energy efficient mode of transport.

(f) *Navigation rules and technical standards for inland vessels*

- Countries provided the lists of navigation rules and technical standards for inland vessels applied on their territory; detailed information is given in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2022/5.

(g) *Improving the quality of inland water transport operations, ensuring navigation safety, reducing the risk of accidents and minimizing the impact of the human factor*

- Countries provided details about international and national projects and programmes in this field; information is given in ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2022/4.

(h) *Promotion of the fleet renovation and modernization; construction of new vessels, innovations, new technologies and digitalization of transport documents; deployment of RIS*

- Belarus: The relevant activities are foreseen by the State Programme “Transport Complex” for 2021–2025 and are in progress: developing of design documentation for the fleet modernization, upgrading and greening of vessels. In the field of digitalization of documents, the State Administration of Water Transport carries out administrative procedures for the issuance (replacement) of national seafarers’ identity documents in accordance with Decree No. 107 of the President of the Republic of Belarus of 16 March 2021 “On Biometric Documents”.
- Belgium: in the Flemish Region, (a) the programme DigiWave will require research in Artificial Intelligence, Digital Twins, Omniverse, Big Data, Internet of Things, Data Spaces, cyber resilience and other advanced technologies, and (b) several steps are already taken towards digitalization of transport documents in the sector. De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is involved in several programmes and projects dealing with the implementation of RIS: VisuRIS platform, RIS COMEX, Digitalization of the

inland waterways (DIWA), DigiWave and preparations for the 2022 edition of the RIS Guidelines by the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure.

- Croatia: Among the goals set out in the Strategy of Development of River Transport for the period from 2022 to 2032 is strengthening of inland navigation shipping and the encouragement of ecological sustainability, aimed at stimulating shipowners to modernize their fleet and introducing of low-carbon energy sources and drive systems. The establishment of instruments and incentives and raising the level of energy efficiency is planned as a priority area of the public policy. The ongoing project “Development of the marking and buoyage system on waterways of the Republic of Croatia” provides for investments for improving the marking and monitoring of waterways with due regard of the current situation and the available up-to-date solutions.
- Slovakia: Efforts are being made to focus activities on supporting vessel operators in modernizing their fleet, mainly in terms of financial support. It is planned to prepare a state aid scheme for modernization of vessels and replacement of engines to ensure low levels of emissions. As a project partner of RIS COMEX, Slovakia will be implementing the outcome of the project: the European RIS system (EuRIS) – the central European RIS platform, and the Central and Eastern European Reporting Information System (CEERIS). The Slovak Transport Authority is working on launching a national crew database. Furthermore, the new Danube Navigation Standard Forms (DAVID) are being implemented with the aim to harmonizing the reporting forms used by the Danube countries. After the finalization of the project RIS COMEX, Slovakia is considering participation in the project RIS COMEX II.

(i) Programmes and pilot projects aimed at developing automated, autonomous and smart shipping and digitalization

- Belgium provided a detailed information about the Smart Shipping programme and other activities in the field of automated navigation.

(j) Decreasing the average age of the fleet, preventing pollution from vessels, reducing greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions and improving the energy efficiency of inland water transport

- Belarus provided information about efforts aimed at decreasing the average age of the fleet by means of modernization and new vessel projects and research work in the field of prevention of pollution from vessels, alternative fuels and innovative on-board power installations.
- In terms of environmental protection, Belgium as a Contracting Party to the Convention on Collection, Deposit and Reception of Waste Produced during Navigation on the Rhine and Inland Waterways (CDNI) is working on ratification and implementation of recent amendments to the Convention. Work is ongoing in Flanders on developing a Flemish Inland Navigation Green Deal, a public-private partnership between the various stakeholders involved in waterborne transport, to ensure greening of the inland navigation sector in Flanders and continuous improving of the energy efficiency of vessels. The greening of transport is a part of the Shifting Economy policy plan for the Brussels Capital Region.
- In Slovakia, plans are being developed to build in the port of Bratislava: (a) a waste collection facility for small craft in the area of the port of Bratislava, (b) an onshore power supply infrastructure for vessels, and (c) a terminal for alternative fuel.

(k) Measures and action plans for adaptation of the sector to climate change and maintaining the operability of inland water transport

- Belarus: The State Administration of Water Transport issues an information bulletin, which is a summary document of operational information on the state of inland waterways of the Republic of Belarus, transmitted daily by the republican unitary waterway enterprises. Annual data on the regime and resources of surface waters of the Republic of Belarus are given in the State Water Cadastre of the State Institution “Republican Centre for Hydrometeorology, Radioactive Pollution Control and

Environmental Monitoring” (Belgydromet). In order to adapt the inland water transport industry of the Republic of Belarus to climate change and ensure the operability of vessels, the relevant scientific studies are under way.

- Belgium: A recent study has investigated the economic impact of low water periods in Flanders on the water transport sector and the logistic chain. In 2020, Flanders launched the Blue Deal, a multi-year plan to tackle drought and water scarcity. Specific investments are made in the construction of a pumping station to maintain the adequate water levels in Flemish waterways in drought periods and during the repairs of the lock infrastructure to avoid leaking. The Port of Brussels is taking part in a brainstorming campaign with a purpose of elaborating a new tool to facilitate interaction between all parties in the Brussels Capital Region for monitoring and follow-up actions in case of extreme weather conditions affecting navigation.
- Slovakia: In August 2021, the Ministry of the Environment developed the Action Plan for the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy of the Slovak Republic. Among the specific objectives of the plan is protection, management and use of water resources. The activity aims to improve the adaptive capacity of the country in the field of water protection, management and use through improved water management as a key challenge under climate change, while enhancing safety of the population, protection of critical infrastructure and the landscape, relying, inter alia, on the reform of landscape planning and the amendment of the Water Act.

(l) State financing programmes for the development of inland water transport

(m) Education and training programmes aimed at modernizing and greening the fleet, use of simulators, measures aimed at attracting personnel in the sector, improving the working and social conditions of the staff and increasing mobility of crews

- Countries provided information about the current situation in the field of education and training programmes. Belgium, Croatia and Slovakia mentioned the relevance of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation for increasing mobility of crews, recognition of vessel certificates and certificates of crew members.

10. Information about international and national projects in the field of inland waterways, infrastructure and ports, modernization and greening of vessels and combatting climate change was also presented by member States at the workshops of SC.3 and SC.3/WP.3 and is available in the session reports.

V. Conclusions and further steps

11. The information provided by countries has shown the progress made in the implementation of the strategic actions set out by the Wroclaw ministerial declaration in the various river basins. SC.3 encouraged other countries to transmit the answers to the questionnaire on the implementation of the Wroclaw Ministerial declaration to the secretariat.