

GENERAL ASSEMBLY IVR, 2 JUNE 2017 WÜRZBURG

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL

### **Institutional framework**

In March we celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Romain Treaties, on which the actual European Union is based. The Treaties of Rome established a common market where people, goods, services and capital can move freely - the so called 4 freedoms - and created the conditions for prosperity and stability for European citizens. It established amongst others responsibilities for the European institutions in the field of transport and inland waterway carriage of goods and passengers.

The **Central Commission** was formally constituted in 1815, based on the Treaty of Paris of 30 May 1814 which laid down the principle of the freedom of navigation on the major international rivers of Europe. In 1868 this lead to the adoption of the Mannheim Act, which will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. The Mannheim Act of 17 October 1868 introduced the principle of the free navigation on the Rhine and the possibility for those member States of the Central Commission to adopt common regulations, such as in the field of technical regulations, the transport of dangerous goods, police regulations etc. It was the birth of an “EU avant la letter” in the field of inland navigation!

In parallel as a counterpart on the river Danube the Danube Commission was established as an international intergovernmental organization by the Convention regarding the regime of navigation on the Danube signed in Belgrade on 18 August 1948. Similar to the Rhine it introduced the principle of free navigation on the Danube for the commercial vessels flying the flag of all states in accordance with interests and sovereign rights of the Member States of the Belgrade Convention.

Inland Navigation thus is governed by 3 different public regimes, the Rhine regime, the Danube regime and the European regime. Where the Rhine regime lays down mandatory rules to be applied in all member states, the rules of the Danube Commission only are recommendations not necessarily implemented in all its Member States. Since the accession to the European Union of many of the Danubian countries the *acquis communautaire*, which means all rules laid down in EU treaties and subsequent legislation such as directives and regulations, needs to be applied in these countries.

The entering into force of the Mannheim Act in 1868 introduced the free navigation on the Rhine and lead to the industrial development along the Rhine and the prosperity of the Rhine Riparian States. It also constituted the basis for important regulations regarding the safety of navigation.

Since the 80ies of the last century the European Economic Community also started to work on a liberalised transport market. This lead to regulations in the field of inland navigation, which in areas such as the technical regulations were based upon the regime applying on the Rhine as elaborated by the CCNR. Lately, the European Union and CCNR started to cooperate by signing administrative agreements and recently the establishment of the European committee for drawing up common standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI). The establishment of the joint EU/CCNR committee in first instance is intended to strongly cooperate and provide one set of rules in certain areas, such as the technical regulations and professional qualifications, that shall apply both in the member states of the CCNR and the EU in order to avoid different regulations. In practice this will lead to one set of rules applying in all EU and CCNR states with navigable waterways and thus avoiding diverging rules in the very areas as is the case today.

From the sector a strong cooperation of these very institutions is considered as crucial in order to stimulate the further development of inland navigation. Inland navigation namely is supposed and able to take over much higher volumes of cargo and persons on the navigable rivers than today, provided the right institutional framework is created. CCNR as the oldest international body governing inland waterway transport is well equipped to take a stronger role, which - in the actual cooperation between the institutions - we believe could be further elaborated.

Having government representatives of the most important inland navigation countries, Germany and the Netherlands, present today, together with the Secretary General of CCNR, we express our wish and hope that the actual institutional framework will be further strengthened to the benefit of inland waterway transport. We will support you in that respect.

### **IVR's role**

Shortly after the entering into force of the Mannheim Act IVR was founded in 1874 in Frankfurt am Main by insurance companies from Germany and Switzerland under the name "Rheinschiffsregisterverband". Its objective was to inspect – in addition to the statutory inspection based on the Mannheim Act – all insurable inland navigation vessels in respect of their fitness and to enter the vessels that were found fit into a register – the first IVR-Register published in 1879.

For the industries represented in IVR, being since its re-establishment in 1947 in Rotterdam under the name "International Association the Rhine Ships Register" (IVR), in which – apart from the original founders, the insurance companies – also the inland shipping organizations from all Rhine riparian States and Belgium were united, it is crucial to rely on a strong and unified legal regime.

Inland navigation is characterized by its international cross border carriage of goods and persons. Harmonised rules and regulations applying in all countries involved in which the vessels can sail is crucial for the legal certainty that leads to the better insurability and protection of all parties involved in the transport chain. Reason why IVR is highly interested in the institutional developments that create the framework conditions for inland waterway transport.

### **IVR'S main tasks**

Today, 143 later it is still one of the major goals of IVR to rely on a strong technical regulatory framework to allow insurers to insure the vessels based on the latest standards. In addition to these regulatory standards IVR has elaborated damage prevention tools that aim to look not only at the strictly technical aspects of the inspections but also at aspects of maintenance, supervising harmonized inspections and issuing certificates based upon which insurers can rely on the state of the vessel. Examples are the damage prevention and steering gear inspections. On the initiative of insurers IVR developed the Engine Registration System, gathering the information of as many as possible damages in one centralized database to analyse them and to elaborate recommendations to avoid such damages but also to discover manufacturing failures.

It also led to the initiative by IVR some 14 years ago to establish an inspection body together with the insurance sector and the IVR inspectors to take over the privatized inspection tasks in the Netherlands. This inspection body meanwhile received the mandate to inspect and certify inland vessels in the Netherlands and in Luxembourg.

IVR recently received the observer status at the European committee for drawing up common standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) allowing to participate at the meetings of this body. This enables the sectors represented in IVR to be involved in the further development of the technical

framework and to cope with the challenges of the sector when it comes to the implementation of new legislation. A recent example was discussed in yesterday's workshop coping with the new emission regulation (NRMM). The Loss Prevention Committee together with the Technical Secretary is closely following the developments within this body in order to keep our members updated.

25 years ago the Rhine-Main-Danube canal was officially opened, a historical momentum connecting the two major European rivers with each other and allowing navigation from the Black Sea to the Open Sea. Shortly after this event IVR took the initiative to start the dialogue with Danubian countries in order to promote harmonization and unification of the private law aspects governing the carriage of goods and passengers and its liabilities. It was the start of its series of colloquia in which it aims to stimulate the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments applying in inland navigation, such as the CMNI and CLNI convention.

The Legal Committee ever since has been closely involved in the process of negotiating the mentioned conventions and lately developed guidelines to support Danubian countries in the implementation of the new CLNI Convention that has enlarged its scope of application.

A major task of IVR, resulting from its very establishment in 1874 and carried out for **137 years**, remains the maintenance of the internationally well known IVR vessel database. Since 2014 it is accessible as online version - the IVR Ships Information System. Apart from the online access to this vessel database IVR is able to provide the most updated and customised statistical information concerning the European Inland Navigation Fleet. The statistics show the developments of the fleets which i.a. refer to the size and composition. As a result from this task IVR is able to support decision makers with updated information on the fleet in the various areas. From these statistics it appears f.e. that the Western European fleet since 2005 has significantly been updated. 1899 new vessels have been built and taken into service, of which 811 dry cargo vessels, 665 tanker vessels and 240 passenger vessels. This means a fleet renewal of 10% in the last 12 years.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

The European Union in its White Paper of Transport aims to increase the share of inland waterway transport, which is known for its sustainability record. In 2013 it released a new promotion program for inland waterway transport, called NAIADES that a.o. intends to back infrastructure developments. 40.000 km of navigable waterways connect major cities across the EU.

Inland Navigation in Europe carries 550 million tons of goods a year, which is an equivalent of 140 billion t/km. Its share in the container transport within the EU meanwhile is 10,3 %. The most important inland navigation corridor in Europe still is the river Rhine, on which 84 % of the goods are carried.

Infrastructure without doubt is crucial to the further development of inland waterway transport. With its concept of the Trans-European Transport Networks the European Union via co-financing of international corridors supports the Member states by removing bottlenecks and missing links. Due to national budget restraints this is an important tool to contribute to infrastructure developments in the Union.

Being today in the very middle of the two major inland navigation corridors, connecting the rivers Danube and Rhine, we are very pleased to have as guest speaker Mr. Reinhard Klingen, Head of the Directorate of Waterways and Shipping, Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI), Bonn. He will share with us the challenges of waterway policy and the details of the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan 2030 with us.

## **New Strategy**

Within the described context our board and committees, supported by the secretariat, in the past year worked in the various areas to implement the new strategy that has been adopted by you, our members in the last General Assembly.

The focus of this strategy is to strengthen the main tasks, to increase the forumrole and to modernize the image of our association.

More details about the development of the main tasks in the technical and legal field will be shared with you by the committee chairs.

As part of the forumrole we since the last General Assembly organized 3 workshops, two dedicated to the NRMM regulation and one to promote the implementation of the CLNI convention in the Danubian States, the later one together with the Danube Commission. The Board of Management also decided to participate at exhibitions, reason why we were represented at Eurowaterways in February in Paris and at the Maritime exhibition in May in Gorinchem (NL). It should allow to strengthen the dialogue with our members and interested parties.

Part of this new strategy is also the modernization of the image and a presentation of IVR. An old lady sometimes needs a face lift!

Last week we were able to launch our new image and internetsite, on which our PR assistant Ceyda Sahan in the past months intensively worked to have it realized just in time. I would like to invite all of you to have a close look on it and to share your impressions with us. In a next step we will work on a forum on which you can bring topics to our attention which might be further elaborated in the committees.

Let me finally express my sincere thanks to all members of the board and the committees that have contributed to the works of IVR in the past year, about which you will hear more from the chairs of the committees and read in the annual report. I also would like to thank all of you, our members, for your support and would like to encourage you to bring to us topics of importance to you that can be further discussed in the committees.

Thank you for your attention.

Theresia Hacksteiner

Secretary General

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