

## **PRESSRELEASE**

### **IVR CONGRESS 2019 IN PRAAG OPENS WITH COMMEMORATION OF VICTIMS IN BUDAPEST**

**The president of the IVR, Dr. Philippe Grulois, welcomed more than 235 participants from 12 different countries at the IVR congress that took place in Prague from 5 to 7 June.**

**He opened the congress by expressing respect and sympathy to the victims of the tragic accident on the Danube in Budapest a few days earlier.**

#### **Workshop “Accidents in Inland Navigation”**

The Workshop at the congress coped with the increasing number of accidents in inland navigation. The chair of the Loss Prevention Committee, Ronald Koops, pointed to the latest statistics of insurance companies proving that 75 % of the accidents are caused by human failure. This calls for further investigations on the causes of such failure, reason why IVR pleads for harmonised accident databases to be able to carry out further analyses and investigations.

The moderator of the Workshop, Stéphanie PEIGNEY-COUDERC, head of the Inland Navigation Department at the French Ministry of Transport in Paris and Commissioner at the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine, drew the conclusion that such harmonised databases would enable the necessary analyses followed up by joint recommendation of preventive measures by the public authorities and the private sector.

Apart from the serious accident on the Danube such incidents can lead to enormous economic damages and even blockades of waterways as occurred only recently on the Main-Danube channel having negative consequences on the image of the sector.

#### **General Assembly**

In the General Assembly Secretary General Theresia Hacksteiner, having announced to step down at the end of 2019, reviewed the activities of IVR in the past year. Within the context of the overall inland navigation policy and recent developments in the field of innovation and sustainability she drew the attention to the challenges for both the inland navigation and insurance sector. New legislation regarding f.e. emissions of vessels and related problems such as lack of existing engines that fulfil these criteria and high costs of investment will challenge the sector. In combination with the problems towards low tides and possible effects of climate change on European waterways the sector will be confronted with many questions which need to be clarified and has to deal with new situations.

Traditionally the chair of the Loss Prevention Committee, Ronald Koops, and the Legal Committee, Dr. Martin Fischer, informed the members about the activities in their very fields.

The General Assembly was closed by a presentation regarding the role of inland navigation in the Czech Republic. In absence of the Minister of Transport, the presentations were delivered by Vojtech

Dabrovski from the Ministry of Transport and Lubomir Fojtu, Director of the Czech Waterway Authority.

The congress, offers also numerous networking possibilities, was closed by a boat trip on the beautiful river Moldau.

**The congress 2020 will take place on 28 and 29 May in Ghent (Belgium).**

All speeches and presentations will be published shortly on [www.ivr-eu.com](http://www.ivr-eu.com).

Rotterdam, 13 June 2019