

9th IVR Colloquium, Belgrade (5 September 2019)

Katrin MOOSBRUGGER, Deputy Secretary General, Central Commission for the navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), Strasbourg

Opening words

Mr Deputy Minister,
Mr President of the IVR,
Mr Deputy Director General of the Danube Commission,

Dear Speakers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to take the floor on behalf of the Central Commission for the navigation of the Rhine.

The IVR and the Central Commission are long-time privileged partners. Our affinities and the reasons for our collaboration are manifold.

The search for ever-increasing legal security and harmonisation, the strengthening and extension of the “inland navigation family” beyond the borders of river basins, particularly through the elaboration, conclusion and application of international conventions and unified rules – as well as reliable ship register and data - are powerful examples of our strong common interests.

As you can imagine, the Central Commission is particularly pleased that the new Convention of limitation of liability in inland navigation 2012, signed after intense working sessions, entered into force on 1st July this year - just in time for your colloquium. As we already heard from the president, it is from now on effective in Serbia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Germany and the Netherlands who are waiting impatiently for other ratification instruments to be deposited in our headquarters in France, the Palais du Rhin.

In this same location, we were particularly proud to welcome the IVR Congress in 2018 – giving the starting signal of the celebration for the 150th anniversary of the signing of the revised Rhine Navigation Act (“Mannheim Act”), just a few months before the Central Commission itself celebrated its congress in Mannheim. Another solid proof of our privileged partnership.

One could ask ourselves if and how such an ancient international convention could be of any interest for the present - and even for the future - of inland navigation?

And you are right, it is only a paper, but still a very vivid and relevant one! And that is not only because of the travel it has undertaken since last October on the Rhine downstream. It is for the time being in Rotterdam’s Maritime Museum with the utmost thanks to fully

committed people – like IVR-members - caring for inland navigation, contributing with their expertise, their steady endeavour and hard work to guarantee the prosperity and sustainability of the sector. And that is, as we all know, a great challenge.

Taking up these challenges, at its congress in October 2018 the CCNR adopted a common declaration signed by the transport ministers of all Member States. On this occasion, they renewed their full commitment to the principles of the Mannheim Act, such as liberty and equal treatment of navigation. They underlined their determination to promote the Rhine and European inland navigation, in close partnership with the European Union, the River Commissions, UNECE and all major players in the transport sector.

This makes it very clear that strong alliances are the key for keeping up with present and future challenges, such as the establishment of harmonised and modern rules, the strengthening of inter-modality in the logistic chain, the development of automation and digitalisation, the improvement of infrastructure and continuous innovation. Indeed, some conventions are “just” waiting for new attendance, CLNI, CMNI, CDNI. To this “regulation wallet” I would like to add a regulation on professional qualifications (a completely new set of rules is adopted) and technical prescriptions as well as their CESNI-standards.

There is a lot of work ahead of great relevance for the economic development. I am convinced, that the fruitful interaction with IVR will continue to contribute to the further development of safe, sustainable and prosperous inland navigation. There is no doubt that we will have the opportunity to discuss all this today and tonight.

I know from experience that we are always rich in ideas and encounters, and that is certainly largely due to the one I could not fail to mention explicitly today, after events organised by IVR.

[Dear Resi, even before we begin, I would like to thank you on my own behalf, but also on behalf of the Central Commission for the navigation of the Rhine and its entire secretariat for this close and very special partnership between our organisations and the many years of fruitful cooperation.

We are probably going to need a little time to adjust, insomuch as IVR and you are making one in our minds. Nevertheless, I am looking forward to getting to know better your successor Frouwke Klootwijk-de Vries to continue our cooperation.]^{1*}

But now it is time to wish you all a very successful and interesting conference.

^{1*} to be withdrawn for publication