



European Skippers' Organisation
Organisation Européenne de Bateliers
Europese Schippersorganisatie
Europäische Schifferorganisation
Europejska Organizacja Armatorów Śródlądowych

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Annual report 2018

This is the report of the 44th year of life of the European Skippers Organisation. From its founding in 1975, its main objective has always been to strengthen the position of inland navigation at European level. In that respect, an important milestone was reached in 2018 with the actual implementation of the IWT Platform. In addition, with the entry into force on 17 January 2018 of the Professional Qualifications Directive 2017/2397 / EC, an important next step has been taken towards the harmonization of inland navigation training. These are two important topics, but much more has happened. We will name them in random order below.

IWT Platform

It may not be a concept for you, but it will be: the Inland Waterway Transport Platform. Together with our colleagues of the EBU (www.ebu-uenf.org), after years of lobbying, pushing and pulling we succeeded in freeing a (modest) part of the reserve fund for strengthening the representation of our sector. That reserve fund is almost 34 million euros. We will use approximately 7 million of this over a ten-year period to deploy our foremen, men and experts for consultations in Brussels, Strasbourg and wherever necessary.

For more information about the Platform, we kindly refer you to: www.inlandwaterwaytransport.eu.

In 2018 we mainly focused on the Organisational set-up of the Platform: the working committees, the appointment of a coordinator, appointment of the secretaries, etc. Briefly about the reserve fund, also called demolition fund. That fund amounts to just under 34 million euros and was mainly raised until April 2003 by owners who brought a new ship into service and thus added tonnage. We then called the tax on that extra tonnage the "old for new" fine. The spending of that money is subject to strict rules and that therefore also applies to the IWT Platform. Five countries and the European Commission monitor this.

Professional Qualifications Directive 2017/2397 / EC

There are three important milestones in terms of patents, navigation licenses and training. In 1991 the "Mutual Recognition of Boat Licenses and Patents Directive" was issued. In 1996 the "Directive on the harmonization of the conditions under which licenses are issued" followed and now there is this directive on professional qualifications. The great importance of this "Professional Qualifications Directive" is that it contains agreements about what our people must know and can do on board. The training is therefore focused on what that means for a sailor, a skipper or a captain / skipper.

Spread across Europe there are 22 schools that provide inland navigation training and the intention is that all those schools will soon be teaching a certain (same) standard. In other words, if we get a sailor from France, the Czech Republic, Romania, etc. on board later, they can do what we need.

There is, of course, much more in the directive, and the regime for medical examinations is also being changed considerably.

By January 2022, all EU member states must have amended their legislation to act in accordance with this directive.

Transitional technical requirements

In 2018 we were able to find solutions at CESNI level (www.cesni.eu) for some of the bottlenecks in the transitional provisions. This applies to the venting of the fuel tank, the escape route for passenger ships, the dinghies and the noise requirements. A brief explanation of the latter two follows.

With regard to the dinghies, it initially looked that all dinghies, for which one could not present a CE mark, would have to be replaced. We managed to prevent that. Dinghy boats are now simply assessed for their condition, reliability and safety.

With regard to the noise requirements, we have managed to reach a compromise after a long process of research, discussion and consultation. Provided the owner makes a reasonable and realistic effort to reduce the noise level, he is eligible for relaxation of the requirements. In this area of technical requirements, ESO and EBU have been working together since 2002 in a joint nautical-technical committee, which work is now being continued under the IWT Platform.

Requirements for accommodations

There has been a draft document for some years now to review the requirements for crew quarters. To discuss this document and the current situation on board our ships, a special workshop was held in Strasbourg in November under the supervision of CESNI. Our people from the Nautical and Technical Committee have largely prepared this meeting. The dominant conclusion of the workshop participants was that there is already a high standard on our ships. Homes, kitchens and bedrooms are comfortable and modern. The need for drastic new measures was therefore not recognized. A special working group will conclude on this topic.

Greening

Reducing harmful emissions and greenhouse gases is an urgent task, both politically and socially. In the long term, the European objective - for all forms of transport - is zero emission at the source. In concrete terms, this means that the energy source on board the ship no longer emits CO₂, particles (particulate matter) and NO_x. The latter - the substances that are harmful to humans - can be achieved to a very large extent through after-treatment (soot filters and catalysts), but for the CO₂ we must get rid of the mineral fuels. That will be quite a challenge.

There is now a lot of discussion about how to tackle this. This year a start was made on a study of the best approach. In fact, the biggest problem is that the investments you make for this purpose on an individual basis cannot be earned back on the market. At least, you do not get a penny more freight than the colleague who did not make that investment.

Redefining of ESO

The working method of ESO will also change with the establishment of the joint IWT Platform. We will work together much more than before, because we start the discussion in the platform committees from scratch. The ESO and EBU boards will still have the final say on far-reaching policy issues, but their preparation takes place in the committees. It is also the firm intention to assemble the committees as much as possible from practitioners and those who enjoy support in the sector.

With the establishment of the IWT Platform, ESO, founded in 1975 as a Belgian de facto association, had to change its legal form. As from this year, ESO has been changed to a non-profit association (VZW), also under Belgian law.

With the departure of Mrs. Hester Duursema in March from Royal BLN-Schuttevaer (NL), she also said farewell as ESO's secretary general.

With her boundless energy, commitment and enthusiasm, Hester has cultivated a lot of goodwill. Not only for our organisation, but for the entire inland shipping sector. Thanks for that!

The board has appointed Mr Gerard Kester as successor.

Change manning regulation

Also in 2018 this again received a lot of attention. Firstly, the study into the workload on board ships has been completed. This study, which was started in January 2017, should provide the impetus for a major modernisation of existing crew regulations. A special working group has been set up within CESNI for this purpose, which will start in May 2019.

The core of the research were interviews with crew members on board more than 50 ships. From this an inventory was made of the heaviness (burden), scope and duration of the work. A first version of a tool has even been developed to put a crew together based on the current regulations. With the data found, we can now get started designing a new scheme at European level.

We have already been able to bring about a few "smaller" changes prior to really structural changes. Examples are resting during the voyage in the A1 and A2 and in a few more cases the junior boatman no longer needs to be replaced during his school visit.

150 years Act of Mannheim

A congress was held in Mannheim in October to mark the 150th anniversary of the Mannheim Act. The significance of this treaty for the development of inland navigation, industry and ports in the ARA area should not be underestimated. In all these years the treaty has not lost any importance. During the congress, this was emphasized once again, as were the goals for the coming decades: Further development of inland shipping, increasing safety and, of course, the greening objectives.

Mr Alain Devos spoke for ESO, and he advocated goal-oriented standards. In essence, he meant you should set the goal and not arrange in detail how that should be achieved.

Preventing drowning, for example, can be achieved through a life jacket, a railing or perhaps a lifeline. According to Devos, this also prevents that regulations are often overtaken by the practice of innovations.

Berths

Particularly through our colleagues from Royal BLN-Schuttevaer (NL) much attention is paid to berths in our shipping area. That is not easy and often not a rewarding job. Our berths are under heavy pressure and all too often inland shipping must give way to other interests such as (new) housing, residents and / or recreation. However, we have not resigned ourselves to that and we are clearly seeing a change, certainly also on the Rhine.

Consultation about berths

At the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR), the importance of berth and vehicle drop off facilities is recognized. In the IEN Committee (Infrastructure and Environment) it is high on the agenda, not least because we constantly ask for it. This has partly resulted in a workshop in Vienna on November 9, 2018. The Danube countries were also represented at this workshop. Shore power also took a very large part of the workshop.

The conclusions of the workshop:

- *High-quality berths are important, both from an economic and social point of view.*
- *No more berths in the city without shore power.*

The German Berufsgenossenschaft stated that good berths have a positive effect on the psychological stress on the crew. This institution's statement was more emphasis on and an eye for people. This improves safety.

The workshop was very useful, met a need and is likely to be repeated.

Cologne berths

In addition, a lot of effort was put into the berths in Cologne that were in danger of disappearing. Fortunately this could be prevented and we were recently able to take note of the plans for berths on the Rheinaukade. 38 dike vents with drainage and shore power connection are installed there. A total of 8 berths are planned, 6 of which are for 135-meter vessels, each with one access (stairs) to shore and 2 for linkages of 193 meters with 2 ends. By way of example, the number of berths is linked to a ship's size, for example 6 places for ships up to 135 meters. Of course these places will not be classified by ship's length. This is the case with the places that will be built for the connections. The intention is that shore-based power boxes do not have to be dismantled during high water. The shore power supply is mounted directly on the stairs. Connecting to shore power at the berth is mandatory. Compliance will be checked by the Wasserschutzpolizei. Until the construction of these berths, mooring at the Rheinauhafen from 1 October 2018 is only permitted for ships of up to 9.50 meters wide and a loading capacity of up to 1200 tons (one wide).

Unfortunately, the authorities cannot yet indicate when this will be definitively achieved. That also depends heavily on the granting of permits. The wish for an additional possibility to park the car was also on the agenda. Whether and how this is possible has not yet been decided.

Berths Mainz

Furthermore, the situation in Mainz has been and continues to be closely monitored. There is a commitment from both the Oberbürgermeister and the WSA Bingen that the berths will return. However, the question is whether this promise can ultimately be kept. If that turns out not to be the case - no fewer than 400 appeals have been submitted by the residents - then a good alternative will of course be called for. Inland shipping needs these berths very hard.

Berths Upper Rhine

The IEN Committee once again called for the repair of the berths at the locks in the Grand Canal d'Alsace. At the strong insistence of the Netherlands, France, through the VNF, promised to take another look at it. This is done on the basis of a document supplied by our Dutch member Organisation Royal BLN-Schuttevaer. The VNF also intends to do the same for freight transport after the inventory of the berths for passenger shipping. That will probably start at the end of 2019.

CDNI Ship Waste Convention

In June 2017, after long and intense negotiations, an amendment to the Treaty was approved with regard to the gaseous cargo residues. We were able to successfully keep the CDNI principle, the polluter pays, in the change. This implies that in principle the shipper will have to bear the costs of the degassing. In 2018 we always inquired about the state of ratification procedures. The amendment of the Treaty will only take effect when all CDNI countries have ratified it. We will of course continue to insist on this in 2019 as well. In 2018, ESO actively participated in the creation of information sheets to make clear to the sector the difference between "unit transports" and the newly introduced concept of "compatible transports".

Much attention was given to providing input for formulating answers to the many FAQs (frequently asked questions). The purpose of these FAQs is to clarify the Treaty with unambiguous interpretations. ESO has helped to ensure that the interpretations are formulated correctly and that the interests of inland shipping entrepreneurs are respected. But the rules must also remain workable in practice. A selection of the many FAQs dealt with in 2018:

- Correctly fill in the discharge statement.
- Removal of viscous, liquid residue after unloading.
- Unloading declaration in digital form.
- Dealing with loading / unloading arms and loading / unloading hoses on the shore side that are not empty when connecting to the tanker.
- Handling of ballast water in the event of consecutive compatible follow-on loads.

And then a very important issue regarding responsibilities in the logistics chain. As ESO, we try to avert the fact that the actual transporter (say the skipper) could not turn to his charterer, but should address an unreachable party abroad. This discussion will continue in 2019, of course we will continue to actively follow that closely. The definitively approved FAQs can be found on the CDNI website.

ADN

ESO and EBU have been working closely together in this area for years. This will of course continue under the umbrella of IWT. The results that were achieved could only be achieved through intensive and constructive cooperation. The ADN Safety Committee also traditionally met in 2018 in January and August in Geneva. In addition, there were the meetings of the many sub-working groups that perform preparatory work for the January and August meetings. That requires a lot of effort (and costs) from the ESO / EBU representatives. Many topics were discussed, often in preparation for the ADN 2019 edition.

A selection of subjects where ESO / EBU has actively played a role:

- Latest adjustments related to explosion protection. This has become one of the most significant changes to ADN in recent years, including several multilateral agreements that allow a transition to the new rules in practice.
- Bringing clarity around the classification of palm kernel flakes. This prevented this important transport flow from being regarded as ADN goods at all times. This has preserved the transport for a large group of smaller ships.
- Loading on top, a daily practice in tank shipping, for which ESO / EBU strive for clear rules. A subject that is still on the agenda in 2019.
- A table of approved construction materials, submitted by ESO / EBU.
- Discussion about the use of vapour return during unloading.
- Dinghy and lifeboats in the cargo area of tankers.
- Coordinate procedures for the transport of stabilized substances in dry cargo ships.
- Editorial improvements submitted by ESO / EBU with regard to readability of the ADN.

EBIS

The ESO Tankship Commission has written to EBIS management about the privacy issues related to General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 / EC. Everything has not yet been resolved, but we have achieved that it is no longer necessary to state names when completing the EBIS questionnaire. EBIS has formulated answers for the other issues that are currently being legally assessed by the GDP Regulation.

ESO Inland Barging Terms & Charterparty

In 2018, the ESO Tankship Commission delivered an important paper with the preparation of the "ESO Inland Barging Terms & Charter Party". It is a basis of general conditions on which the private tanker operator can fall back on when negotiating chartering conditions. The document was officially launched at the ASDEM conference on 5 May 2018 in Rotterdam. As a result, work is currently underway under the auspices of ASDEM (<https://asdem.com>) on a consolidated version of the ESO Inland Barging Terms & Charterparty, the ASDEM Barge VOY1 Charterparty and the TTB conditions. Realisation of that work will be an important step forward.

ESO asbl

We have already briefly mentioned that the legal form of ESO has undergone a major change. On 26 February 2018, ESO was registered in Brussels as a non-profit association governed by Belgian law, thus ending ESO as a de facto association. The objective of ESO, the promotion of the interests of the inland navigation sector at European level, has not changed. In particular, the interests of the independent inland shipping entrepreneur remain at the highest level for ESO.

ESO's highest body is now the General Assembly, the members of which are the seven national member organisations from Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland. ESO also has one associated member organisation from the United Kingdom. The General Meeting adopts the policy plan. The management and delegation of ESO has been delegated to the Executive Board by the General Meeting. The General Meeting met twice in 2018, the Board of Directors six times. A lot of preparatory work is done by the various committees that are managed by their own secretary and chairman. The committees report to the Board of Directors. Chairman of ESO is Mr Christiaan van Lancker, Messrs Gerard Kester and Alain Devos are respectively Secretary-General and Director. Devos is also a committee coordinator. Treasurer is Mr Piet Crielaard. The administration is done from Bruges, Mrs. Sharon Adam is in charge there.

Finally

Many things done by hard-working and involved people from various ESO sections are not mentioned here, but therefore no less important and these people do not deserve less appreciation. This also applies to the people around our sector; civil servants from various countries, the European Commission, the CCNR, employees' Organisations, ports, waterway managers, etc., etc..

We would like to refer you also to the annual report of the IWT Platform:
(<http://inlandwaterwaytransport.eu/>).

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Christiaan van Lancker, president
Alain Devos, director
Gerard Kester, secretary general