



EU Policy for the inland waterways – relevant for personnel issues

Updated information on the policy framework in the field of inland waterway transport

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Danube Commission Expert Group Meeting

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European Commission – DG MOVE

Legal Framework (1)

- ❖ [Directive \(EU\) 2017/2397](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directives 91/672/EEC and 96/50/EC
- ❖ [Directive \(EU\) 2021/1233](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 July 2021 amending Directive (EU) 2017/2397 as regards the transitional measures for the recognition of third-country certificates
- ❖ [Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2020/473](#) of 20 January 2020 supplementing Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the standards for databases for the Union certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks
- ❖ [Commission Delegated Directive \(EU\) 2020/12](#) of 2 August 2019 supplementing Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills, for the practical examinations, for the approval of simulators and for medical fitness

Legal Framework (2)

[Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/182](#) of 14 January 2020 on models in the field of professional qualifications in inland navigation

[Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2022/184](#) of 22 November 2021 amending Annex IV to Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council

[Council Directive 2014/112/EU](#) of 19 December 2014 implementing the European Agreement concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time in inland waterway transport, concluded by the European Barge Union (EBU), the European Skippers Organisation (ESO) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)

Crucial link for cooperation and transparency of EC and the Member states

- https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/inland-waterways/social-dimension_en

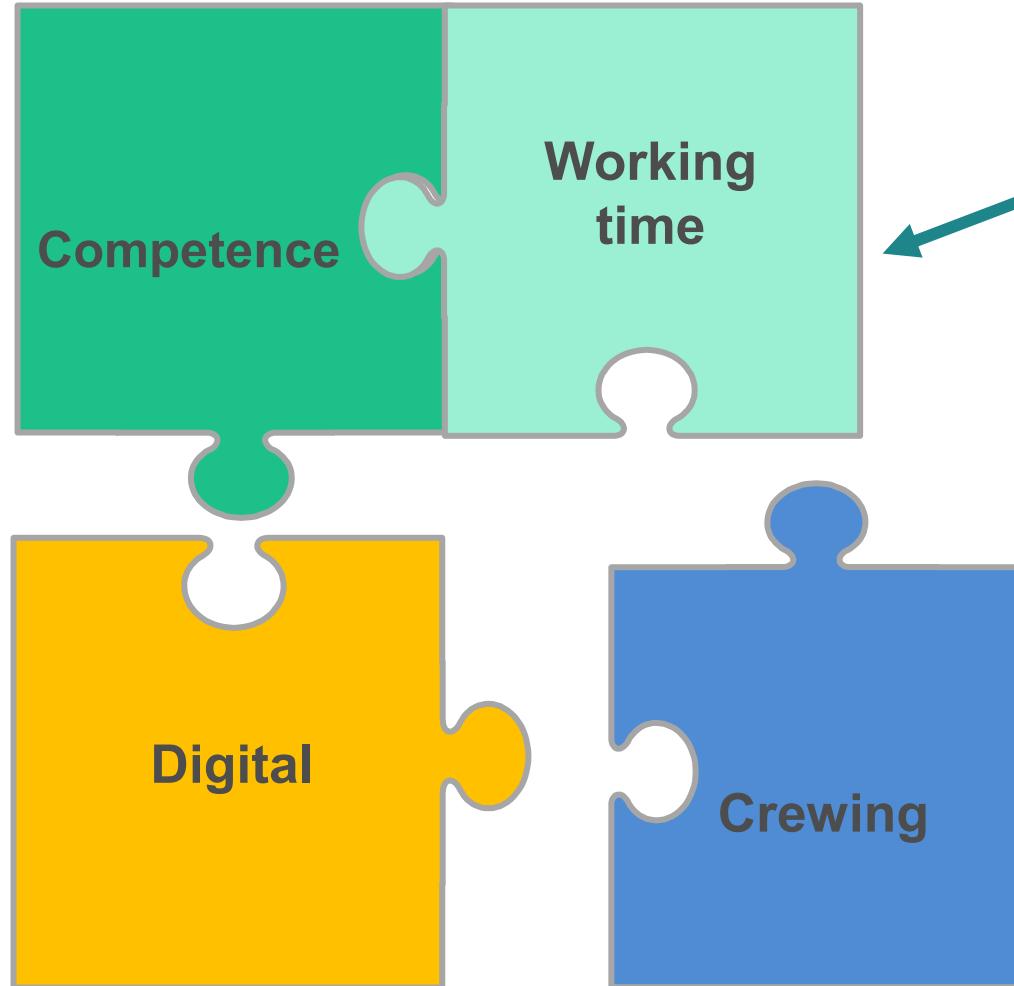
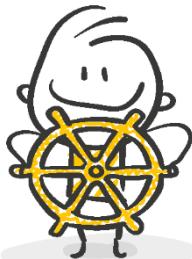
Info to be notified from the side of MS to the Commission:

1. Exemptions related to national inland waterways that are not linked to the navigable network of another Member State (Article 7(3))
2. Inland waterways with a maritime character (Article 8(2))
3. Stretches of inland waterways with specific risks and related requirements (Articles 9(2) and 20)
4. Approved training programmes (Article 19(5))
5. Approved simulators (Article 21(5))
6. Competent authorities (Article 26)
7. Non-EU countries whose documents have been recognised as valid on all Union inland waterways (Article 10(2) and (3))



Smart and Flexible crewing requirements – NEW APPROACH

Directive (EU)
2017/2397 on
professional
qualifications in IWT



Directive (EU)
2014/112 on
organisation of
working time in IWT



On-board smart device

Flexible and modern
framework at EU level

Why splitting the initiative ? CREWING PART

- Regarding the harmonised crewing requirements, while carrying out the support study the contractor consulted a wide range of stakeholders (including a SME panel). The draft final report of the study concludes that:
- There is **not sufficient evidence to justify an EU legislative approach** at this stage on harmonised crewing requirements;
- About 25% of the consulted stakeholders do not consider the problem as such relevant.
- The plan is to finalise the ongoing work on defining standards for crewing in CESNI (scheduled to finish in Q4/2026), and then **integrate these standards into the Commission Recommendation**.
- Based on a future analysis of the application of the recommended standards, we will potentially consider the need for additional EU legislation to enforce application at later stage (2030 +)

Commission Recommendation on Crewing Requirements in IWT

Key characteristics of a Commission Recommendation :

- A recommendation in the European Union, according to Article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, is one of two kinds of non-legal binding acts, the other being an opinion
- **Non-binding:** Unlike regulations or directives, recommendations **do not have legal force and do not create legal obligations** for those they are addressed to.
- **Guidance:** They provide tailored advice and suggestions on how to achieve specific goals or interpret EU law.
- **Aims to influence:** Despite being non-binding, they are **important tools for influencing Member States' policies and** promoting common approaches across the EU. Though without legal force, they do have a political weight
- They aim to promote a **uniform understanding of the legislation and encourage Member States to adopt policies that align with EU objectives.**
- CESNI Standards which will be annexed to the EC recommendation will act to reinforce the recommendation and continue the tested governance and ownership process

Agreed timeline for the CESNI standards for the EC crewing recommendation

Step	Date
Draft proposal for the scope of the EC recommendation + discussion on convoys	February 2026
CESNI/QP/Crew meeting Discussion on possible adaptations according to the draft recommendations Agreement of principle on the full draft, including tables for motor vessels, passenger vessels and convoys	May 2026
CESNI/QP Examination and agreement on the draft including orientation for future updates (next steps)	September 2026
CESNI Committee 1 st examination of the standards	October 2026
Coordination procedure (art. 9 of CESNI's internal rules)	October 2027 -> April 2027
CESNI Committee 2 nd examination and adoption of the standards	April 2027

Why splitting the initiative ? E-TOOLS PART (1)

- **Two main policy measures included in all considered options:**
- Establish an obligation for IWT operators to use digital documents (i.e. electronic service record book and electronic logbook) and for national authorities to accept the digital documentation;
- Establish mandatory automated electronic recording of crew member presence, rest time, navigation time and journeys.
- The two main measures to achieve digitalisation and simplification, mentioned above and included in all policy options, only require **surgical amendments to Directive (EU) 2017/2397 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/182 on models in the field of professional qualifications in inland navigation.**

Why splitting the initiative ? E-TOOLS PART (2)

- These measures **do not involve any other change** regarding the recognition of professional qualifications or changes in rules on crew member presence, rest time, navigation time and journeys.
- These measures **meet the basic needs to simplify and modernise processes and reduce administrative burden for the sector while rendering the documents less prone to being tampered with**, without having any other significant impacts
- It is important to mention that **Article 22 of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 already envisaged the existence and application of e-tools (Art 22, para (2)** – “Where electronic tools are put in place, including electronic service record books and electronic logbooks, including appropriate procedures for safeguarding the authenticity of the documents, the corresponding data may be validated without additional procedure). Therefore, these **amendments represent a minor, unintrusive and most importantly, simplified way to include the e-tools which were already planned by the Directive and will complement it seamlessly**.
- Further measures on establishing databases for data collection on crew and vessels safety documents/data would follow at a later stage, in implementing/delegated acts, once the provisions on digitalisation are in force and applied and therefore vital preconditions for such databases are fulfilled.

E-tools tentative planning and steps

- Commission proposal – Q4 2026 (IE PRES)
- Negotiations in the Council Q4 2026/Q1 2027 (LT PRES)
- Publication of the amended Directive – 2027
- Delegated acts (to incorporate E-tools standards i.e. functional and technical requirements) – 2027/2028

Thank You!

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Unit D.3 Ports and Inland Navigation