

UPDATE FROM CESNI INLAND NAVIGATION MEETINGS

European Directive EC 2016/1629 lays down the technical requirements for inland waterway vessels. The Directive was based in full on the regulations applicable to the Rhine which were designed for large cargo and cruise ships, and are not appropriate for small vessels. The Directive allows individual States to derogate from the Directive, denying the fundamental principle for which it was intended, namely that of promoting free circulation in all European inland waters and expanding the market to shipowners and shipyards

Following representations from many countries on the inapplicability of the Directive to all inland water way vessels, the CESNI Commission in Strasbourg instituted a number of meetings, resulting in the acknowledgment in 2018 by the various delegations of the need to update some requirements of the Directive, in particular those of small passenger ships (under 24 m and with a capacity of less than 150 pax). An ad hoc commission was therefore set up to address these issues, and will finish its work in 2021. However, CEMT and other countries are concerned that the members of the commission may not be fully addressing the technical issues, and appear to be in favour of maintaining the status quo of the procedures which have now been consolidated in the various countries.

Notwithstanding this concern, during the meetings held in 2020 it was possible to gain agreement that some points of the Directive need to be changed. Work is now underway to ensure that an agreement can be reached in the next 2021 meetings on very important issues concerning intact and damaged stability.

Details of Directive (EU) 2016/may be viewed at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32016L1629>