

Inland waterways vessels: technical requirements

1997/0335(COD) - 09/12/2004

The Council unanimously adopted a partial political agreement on the operative part of a draft Council Directive laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels. The Council will adopt a common position on this matter once agreement has been reached on the annexes (around 400 pages) to the proposed amendment. The annexes are yet to be translated into all of the EU's official languages. Work on the draft Directive, which was first proposed in December 1997, has been delayed because of issues relating to the admittance of vessels with Community certificates to the navigation on the Rhine. Currently, vessels using the Rhine waterways must have a certificate proving conformity with the Rhine vessel inspection regulation, as adopted by the CCNR. The Community certificate, being proposed in the draft Directive, provides for equivalence between the Rhine certificate and the Community certificate. However, until now, such equivalence was not legally possible according to CCNR rules. In December 2004, the CCNR introduced a legal basis for navigation on the Rhine with certificates delivered by bodies other than the CCNR. In other words Community certificates will be considered as equivalent to Rhine certificates.

The Council also made a unilateral statement to the Commission in which it stated that when implementing the present Directive, the Commission must co-ordinate closely with the CCNR, both concerning the adaptation of the annexes and in relation to the application of the Directive by the Member States. In addition the Commission should take account of all further initiatives undertaken by the CCNR. The Federal Republic of Germany understood this to mean the application of the co-operation agreement dated 3 March 2003 between the European Commission and the Central Commission for navigation on the Rhine.