

## COURSE MANUAL FOR INLAND NAVIGATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Dear Colleagues,

As pointed out in our introductory welcome address, ETF largely invests in training and education opportunities and sets up capacity building initiatives for its affiliates. Training and Education is a standing item on the ETF work priorities and is reflected in the results achieved in the various sectorial social dialogue committees. So, of course we were very willing and happy to be able to participate in this European project as well.

If we look back on things, we have done a lot of work. I remember when I took over the ETF Inland Waterways section from my predecessor in 2008, that she told me that Inland Waterways was her Friday afternoon activity. But I must say that these last couple of years IWT has moved up the European political ladder and largely consumes my full time attention.

The Inland Navigation sector is somewhat a peculiar sector as it is governed at several levels. From long before the arrival of the European Union, Inland Waterways was already governed on an international level. The Rhine Commission who soon will celebrate its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary brought together national authorities and social partners of its 5 Member States to discuss and regulate the sector.

These last couple of years we noticed a big change in the overall appreciation towards a more integrated European coordination and approach of the sector. Also in the area of training and education various initiatives are being organised parallel to each other, but will most certainly at a particular moment in time converge into one coherent piece of legislation.

The CMINET project started in 2012 and actually picked up on the Platina Competency tables developed for working on the inland waterways, and used this as a basis to create a joint, and harmonized system for training and certification of crew members on board of inland waterway vessels.

The overall objective is to have well trained and skilled staff working on inland waterway ships, thereby both improving safety standards on the European inland waterway network and facilitating crew member mobility.

The development of the competency tables for both operational (boatman) and managerial (boatmaster) level constituted the basis used by Edinna to define STCIN – Standards on Training and Certification for Inland Navigation.

The main objective of the CMINET project was to implement the STCIN in the vocational education and training practice and to create an EU wide harmonized curriculum with standardized content as a prerequisite for the high-quality and successful VET.

The first phase of the project was to develop a standardised methodological skeleton framework for VET courses. A second phase was to put flesh to the bone by means of concrete examples. A third phase prepared the integration of the concept in the VET programmes.

When we started at the beginning of 2012 to fill out the project contract, the entire objective seemed a bit abstract and perhaps a bit far-fetched too. Somewhere in the back of our minds we had the big ambition to mirror ourselves to our big brother the maritime sector, but we were very much aware of the fact that the IWT sector has its own particularities that needed clear reflection.

The initial green light for the CMINET project was finally given in July 2012 and we had a bumpy start as due to all sorts of other commitments, the kick off meeting had to be postponed to December 2012.

As we pointed out the IWT sector somewhat got caught in a multitude of parallel activities – so also in the area of the creation of the STCIN. In September 2012 the European Commission convened for the first time its Common Expert Group on professional qualifications and training standards in inland navigation. At that time, STCIN was still a bit taboo. The creation of this common expert group was one of the aims of the Commission’s Staff working document ‘Towards NAIADES II’. The main objective of this group was to support the Commission throughout 2012 and 2013 in developing legislative measures concerning future European standards for professional qualifications certification and minimum level of training in inland navigation. The STF/MQG Committee of the Rhine Commission, responsible for all social and training matters, also stepped in and assisted in completing the aforementioned goals.

At that time, the Commission was very ambitious and urged stakeholders forward at a fast pace with the sole desire to complete the works before the end of 2013. We must admit that, more than two years later, the works are still not fully completed, but a draft directive – a so-called non-paper for a new legislative framework for the recognition and harmonization of professional qualifications in inland waterway transport has been developed.

And exactly at this critical point in time, the internal Impact Assessment board of the European Commission, decided that this new legislation is disproportional vis à vis the sector, and advised against it.

Not later as last week, all European stakeholders including the European social partners, Edinna and Aquapol met and issued an open letter addressed to all whom is concerned, underlining the need to come to a coherent EU-wide legal framework that sets easy-to-enforce uniform and modern standards for training and qualifications and that ensures recognition of qualifications of crew members on board the vessels across the EU.

The signatories of the open letter are committed to continuing this process and call upon the European Commission to come forward without delay with its legal proposal as announced in the NAIADES communication, and call upon the European Parliament and the Council to give priority to this important initiative for a transport sector that is of strategic importance to the EU's economic development.

The White Paper on Transport stated in 2011 that market opening needs to go hand in hand with quality jobs and working conditions, as human resources are a crucial component of any high quality transport system.

In the IWT sector the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007 brought about the need for further integration of the New Member States' inland waterways network into the Community network.

The initiative on the recognition of professional qualifications and on the minimum level of training is one of the measures required to accomplish the integration of the IWT sector and is as such also included and reflected in the European Staff Working document - Towards NAIADES II. It facilitates the free access to the labour market in IWT and the free movement of labour/crews across the EU. Labour mobility could help tackle one of the major challenges of the sector, namely the shortage of qualified staff.

If the European Commission wants to see its ambitions turned into reality where they state that Inland Waterways should take on a larger market share of the overall freight volumes that will quadruple by 2030, then we must make haste and render the sector more attractive to new and young workers - and in this training and educations are two of the strong holds.

It is high time that the European Commission changes its philosophy and also takes on board the smaller fishes. IWT represents more than 40.000 mobile staff and 500

million tons of freight and tens of millions of passengers a year, and is of a strategic importance in a sustainable and integrated transport network.

The Course Manual is just one, but big important part of the larger STCIN picture. Other parts are completed within separate projects as the TTIET – the Train the Trainer package for simulator trainings and the QAQCS project on quality Assurance and Quality Control for Inland Waterway Education and Training.

Also as we could observe last week at the Edinna General Assembly, the interest in STCIN grows outside Europe. (Africa, India, Sudan, Egypt, China, South America) This underlines the importance of the work that has been completed within the CMINET project as we need to produce quality.

The European IWT sector actually is living state of the art evolution as we speak. The mere fact that ALL stakeholders – Edinna as the European Educational platform – the European Social Partners (employees, employers, businesses, owner operators) – the various River Commissions (Rhine, Danube, Mosel, Sava) – and the control and enforcement authorities – are on one and the same line and work together in a concerted and coordinated way is UNIQUE in its kind! Never have we witnessed such a commitment towards a better future. Never before has the sector been so innovative, inclusive, creative, cooperative and visionary – and for this I can only say THANK YOU to each and every one of you for making this happen.

ETF is very proud of the result that has been achieved through the CMINET project.

Thank you very much.