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WORKING GROUP PROFESSIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

**Second joint meeting of the examination bodies and examiners of the approved training programmes of the CESNI Member States held on 15 September 2021 by web conference
Conclusions and recommendations**

Communication from the Secretariat

For the record: CESNI/QP (21)a 66 (agenda)

Reminder of the objectives

A new European regulatory framework for professional qualifications in inland navigation will be in force in January 2022. **There will be major changes to the content of training courses and the evaluation of the competences and knowledge of (future) crew members.** Consequently, the theoretical and practical examinations and the procedures governing them are also being overhauled in depth.

Work on the examinations is an essential part of the activities of the CESNI's temporary Working group on quality management (CESNI/QP/QM). Among other things, this group is working assiduously to draw up **examination standards**, including theoretical and practical model examinations, both at operational and management level. The quality assurance of training programmes and examinations is at the very heart of the CESNI/QP/QM's missions.

The European context requires a **high degree of harmonisation** with a view to **ensuring a level playing field** for all candidates wishing to obtain the same qualifications in the CESNI Member States.

These are all crucial challenges to be met, in the short term, **by the examination bodies and examiners of the approved training programmes of the CESNI Member States who will have a vital role in this new era of professional qualifications in ensuring that standards are uniformly applied and interpreted.**

Actions taken

1) In the general introductory part, there was a presentation to the examination bodies of **the regulatory framework of the European Union and work at CCNR and CESNI level.**

2) There was a detailed presentation on the examination at operational level. In addition to the technical framework determined by CESNI standards, the Working group prepared an examination model for the examination bodies to provide them with an operational framework setting out how to conduct the examination practice: competences and skills to be tested, conduct (aboard a craft, on a simulator, ashore), scoring.

3) There was also a detailed presentation on **the examination at management level** (boatmaster). The Working group also developed a model examination for the examination bodies, to provide them with an operational framework setting out how to conduct the examination practice.

The practical examination is in two parts: the first part “Journey planning” aims to assess the candidate’s knowledge, the second part “Journey execution” enables an assessment of the candidate’s competences.

4) Finally, all the examinations pertaining to specific competences were also presented in detail to the examination bodies, with specific practical examples:

- Examination of competence for **sailing with the aid of radar**
- Examination of competence for **sailing on inland waterways with a maritime character**
- Examination of competence as an **LNG expert**
- Examination of competence as an **expert in passenger navigation**.

Conclusions / recommendations

The examination bodies welcomed the comprehensive presentation of the CESNI’s work on developing and implementing the new examinations for professional qualifications in inland navigation.

They especially welcome the provision of clear and precise model examinations. These model examinations are valuable tools for achieving their tasks while ensuring high quality examinations, thereby ensuring that **navigation personnel are highly qualified** to ensure safe navigation.

The main conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

- **Simulators have considerable potential for training and examinations.** It would be useful to examine to what extent their use might be extended both for the operational level (practical examination) and for the use of new fuels and methods of propulsion such as LNG. It was confirmed that the working group is now looking into this matter, which will be included in the next CESNI work programme.
- There is currently no consensus on **Internet access**, to a limited extent or otherwise, during examinations being administered on computer. It would be helpful to collate experience and revisit the issue at the next meeting with a view to establishing a common approach.
- Concerning inland **waterways of a maritime character**, States have been invited to notify whether they are envisaging new stretches that fall within this category; this information will help examination bodies prepare examinations accordingly.
- For **the examination of competence for sailing with the aid of radar**, it was noted that “double-handed” operation (radar operator and helmsmen) is increasingly rare, the examination ought to be amended to reflect this. FAQs have been drafted to take account of the situation in which the simulator is equipped with a wheelhouse, part of which is designed for sailing with the aid of radar by one person (https://www.cesni.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FAQ_QP_fr_rev.pdf). The FAQs could be updated to take account of other types of vessel.
- The question of whether it is relevant to provide **basic training on basic safety for the entry level** also needs to be looked into. There is no consistent approach in this field, some people think that it is important for apprentices to have received this training before embarking with a view to ensuring safe navigation. Here too, it would be useful to collate the various experiences with these approaches, and their advantages.
- Various participants pointed out that a number of new examinations had already been deployed. In certain countries **declining pass rates** for the management level (boat master) have been observed, perhaps reflecting excessively onerous requirements. Pass rates require further examination to ensure that access to the profession is not hindered by examinations that are potentially excessively rigorous.

Next steps

Participants expressed the desire to organise a new meeting at the beginning of 2023 (and not in 3 years' time).

Indeed, the new regulatory framework will come into force at the beginning of 2022. It will be necessary **to evaluate the new rules and new tools in the light of the first few months** of implementation.

There is a need

- 1) to closely monitor the implementation of the new framework,
- 2) to ensure that common practices are developed between the various Member States,
- 3) to monitor the applicability of the new examinations (the way in which they are conducted and pass rate).

The CESNI Secretary undertook to organise a new joint meeting at the beginning of 2023.

Participants are invited to collate

- the various lessons to be learnt from implementation of the new examinations,
- possible questions arising,
- proposed improvements,

and report them to the CESNI with a view to preparing this forthcoming joint meeting.
