



Brussels, 12 November 2025
(OR. en)

15307/25

TRANS 540
DELECT 171

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	10 November 2025
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

Subject:	COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../... supplementing Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills, for practical examinations, for the approval of simulators and for medical fitness and repealing Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12
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Delegations will find attached document C(2025) 7456 final.

Encl.: C(2025) 7456 final



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 7.11.2025
C(2025) 7456 final

COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../...

of 7.11.2025

**supplementing Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council
by laying down standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills, for
practical examinations, for the approval of simulators and for medical fitness and
repealing Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12**

(Text with EEA relevance)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE DELEGATED ACT

Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation¹ lays down the conditions and procedures for the certification of the qualifications of persons involved in the operation of a craft navigating on Union inland waterways, as well as for the recognition of such qualifications in the Member States.

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) is an international organisation with regulatory competences for inland navigation transport matters on the Rhine. Four EU Member States (Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands) and Switzerland are parties to the CCNR.

In 2015, the CCNR approved the creation and functioning of the European Committee for drawing up Standards in Inland Navigation (CESNI). Its mission includes the adoption of technical requirements in the field of inland navigation in various fields, in particular as regards vessels, information technology and crew, the uniform interpretation of these standards and of the corresponding procedures, as well as deliberations on safety of navigation, protection of environment or other areas of navigation. CESNI is composed of experts representing Member States of the CCNR and the EU which have voting rights on the basis of one vote per State.

The EU is neither a party to the CCNR nor to CESNI. However, it may participate in the work of CESNI, along with international organisations whose mission covers the areas concerned by CESNI, without voting rights.

The CCNR has built up significant experience in establishing technical requirements for inland waterway vessels. Established in the framework of the CCNR and with the participation of four EU Member States and Switzerland, CESNI possesses the necessary expertise to draw up requirements common to the entire network of inland waterways in the European Union.

One of the standards established by CESNI is the European Standard for Qualifications in Inland Navigation (ES-QIN). ES-QIN lays down harmonised requirements for the certification of qualifications in inland navigation, in particular setting of standards of competence, standards for medical fitness, standards for practical examinations, standards for the approval of simulators and standards defining the characteristics and conditions of use for the European Crew Database, as established by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/473². It also includes models for Union certificates of qualification as well as for the service record book.

The first version of ES-QIN was adopted at the CESNI meeting on 8 November 2018 (ES-QIN 2018/1). ES-QIN 2018/1 may be updated taking account of the work of the CESNI working groups. The updating of the ES-QIN 2018/1 standards is necessary to maintain a high level of safety in inland navigation and follow the latest developments in the sector (in

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 (OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 53, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2017/2397/oj>).

² 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 (OJ L 100, 1.4.2020, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/del/2020/473/oj>).

particular in the area of digitalisation and automation). In accordance with CESNI work programme 2022-2024, CESNI experts, through intensive work at the CESNI/QP working group, prepared the standards for professional qualifications.

A large range of public and private sector experts has been consulted in this respect. The following technical meetings have been carried out during the development of the standards at the level of the CESNI:

Expert meetings:

- CESNI/QP/QM (temporary working group on quality management): 15.11.2022, 20.02.2023, 22.05.2023, 18.09.2023;
- CESNI/QP (working group on professional qualifications): 23.02.2023, 25.05.2023, 21.09.2023.

Committee meetings: 19.10.2023 (first reading), 11.04.2024 (second reading and adoption).

These meetings allowed an agreement to be reached at the level of experts concerning ES-QIN.

Before the adoption of a new ES-QIN standard by CESNI the procedure pursuant to Article 218(9) TFEU was carried out. Council Decision (EU) 2024/1005 of 25 March 2024³ established the position to be taken by EU Member States at the voting at CCNR and CESNI levels on the adoption of standards concerning professional qualifications in inland navigation. This decision was to vote in favour of the adoption of the European Standard for Qualifications in Inland Navigation 2024/1 (ES-QIN 2024/1). CESNI eventually adopted the updated version of ES-QIN 2024/1 at its meeting on 11 April 2024. This edition incorporates various amendments, in particular concerning the following areas:

- strengthening certain competences at management level for navigation in the vicinity of sea-going ships;
- update of the references to the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation vessels (ES-TRIN);
- update of the references to the European Standard for River Information Services (ES-RIS);
- terminological and editorial clarifications.

Directive (EU) 2017/2397 provides that delegated acts to be adopted under the directive shall, save one exception, make reference to standards established by CESNI. The Regulations for Rhine Navigation Personnel (RPN) also refer to those standards.

Accordingly, Directive (EU) 2017/2397 was first supplemented by Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12⁴. Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12 was adopted before the end of the transposition period for Directive (EU) 2017/2397 and needed to be transposed at the same time as the latter directive.

³ OJ L, 2024/1005, 2.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/1005/oj>.

⁴ Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12 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 (OJ L 6, 10.1.2020, p. 15, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir_del/2020/12/oj).

Subsequently, the Commission has opted to refer to ES-QIN 2024/1 by way of a delegated regulation since ES-QIN 2024/1 is a self-standing and coherent set of rules where the Member States have no discretion in the transposition of the provisions concerned. To ensure legal certainty, clarity and transparency, the implementation of ES-QIN 2024/1 is now to take place uniformly and immediately in all Member States.

In accordance with principles of better regulation and simplification, this necessitates replacing outdated Annexes I, II and III to Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12 by Annexes I, II and III to this Regulation, and incorporating unchanged Annex IV of the said directive into this Regulation as Annex IV.

In order to ensure consistency of the two existing legal regimes for professional requirements in inland navigation (EU and CCNR) it is appropriate to replace ES-QIN 2018/1 with ES-QIN 2024/1 and to provide for the same date of applicability. ES-QIN 2024/1 will be applicable under Union law and CCNR Regulations as from 1 January 2026.

2. CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO THE ADOPTION OF THE ACT

In accordance with Article 31(4) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397, before adopting a delegated act, the Commission shall consult experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making.

The members of the Commission Expert Group on Social Issues in Inland Navigation shall be consulted on the draft delegated act.

3. LEGAL ELEMENTS OF THE DELEGATED ACT

In accordance with Article 32 of Directive (EU) 2017/2397, the Commission shall, when adopting delegated acts referred to in Article 17(1) and (4), Article 21(2) and Article 23(6), make reference to standards established by CESNI, provided that:

- (a) those standards are available and up-to-date;
- (b) those standards comply with any applicable requirements set out in the Annexes to the directive;
- (c) Union interests are not compromised by changes in the decision-making process of CESNI.

The three conditions are fulfilled.

The delegated act ensures the relevant update and sets the date of application for the standards as of 1 January 2026, which corresponds to the date of application of ES-QIN 2024/1 under CCNR Regulations.

COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) .../...

of 7.11.2025

supplementing Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills, for practical examinations, for the approval of simulators and for medical fitness and repealing Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to 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/EC⁵, and in particular Article 17(1) and (4), Article 21(2) and Article 23(6) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Directive (EU) 2017/2397 sets out the conditions and procedures for the certification of the qualifications of persons involved in the operation of a craft on Union inland waterways. That certification is aimed at facilitating mobility, ensuring the safety of navigation and ensuring the protection of human life and the environment.
- (2) In order to provide minimum harmonised standards for the certification of qualifications, the Commission has been empowered to adopt delegated acts to supplement Directive (EU) 2017/2397 by laying down standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills, standards for practical examinations, standards for the approval of simulators and standards for medical fitness.
- (3) Union action in the field of inland navigation should aim to ensure uniformity in the development of standards for inland waterway vessels in the Union.
- (4) The European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) was established on 3 June 2015 under the auspices of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) in order to bring together experts from Member States and the CCNR, as well as representatives of international organisations, to establish standards in inland navigation.
- (5) At its meeting of 8 November 2018, CESNI adopted the first European Standard for Qualifications in Inland Navigation (ES-QIN 2018/1). That set of standards was introduced into the legal framework of the Union by Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12⁶.

⁵ OJ L 345, 27.12.2017, p. 53, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2017/2397/oj>.

⁶ Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12 supplementing Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the standards for competences and corresponding

- (6) Since that time, practical experience in the field of inland navigation revealed shortcomings in the existing standards and showed that an updating thereof was necessary. Consequently, at its meeting of 11 April 2024, CESNI adopted an updated European Standard for Qualifications in Inland Navigation 2024/1 (ES-QIN 2024/1)⁷. The new standards include provisions regarding the strengthening of competences at management level for navigation in the vicinity of sea-going ships responding to risks resulting from a lack of boatmaster's knowledge to navigate on stretches where inland vessels and sea-going ships sail at the same time, references to the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels and the European Standard for River Information Services as well as terminological and editorial clarifications.
- (7) Pursuant to Article 32 of Directive (EU) 2017/2397, delegated acts adopted under that Directive should make reference to standards established by CESNI and include the entire text of those standards, provided that such standards are available and up-to-date, that they comply with any applicable requirements set out in the Annexes to that Directive and that Union interests are not compromised by changes in the decision-making process of CESNI. The three conditions were fulfilled as regards the adoption by CESNI of ES-QIN 2024/1. Consequently, ES-QIN 2024/1 should be incorporated into Union law.
- (8) ES-QIN 2024/1 contains a self-standing and coherent set of provisions. To ensure legal certainty, clarity and transparency as well as uniform application across the Member States, that set of provisions is to be adopted by a delegated regulation.
- (9) In addition, Annex IV to Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12, which contains as well a self-standing and coherent set of provisions, should also be included in that delegated regulation.
- (10) Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12 should therefore be repealed.
- (11) The Regulations for Rhine navigation personnel (RPN), in the version applicable as of 1 January 2026, refer to ES-QIN 2024/1. The purpose of this Delegated Regulation is to ensure compatibility of the legal frameworks of the RPN and Union legislation. In order to allow Member States to adapt their internal rules to ES-QIN 2024/1, the application of ES-QIN 2024/1 should be deferred to 1 January 2026,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills referred to in Article 17(1) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 shall be those laid down in Annex I to this Regulation.

Article 2

The standards for the practical examinations referred to in Article 17(3) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 shall be those laid down in Annex II to this Regulation.

Article 3

The standards for the approval of simulators referred to in Article 21(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 shall be those laid down in Annex III to this Regulation.

knowledge and skills, for the practical examinations, for the approval of simulators and for medical fitness (OJ L 6, 10.1.2020, p. 15, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir_del/2020/12/oj).

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Resolution CESNI 2024-I-1.

Article 4

The standards for medical fitness referred to in Article 23(6) of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 shall be those laid down in Annex IV to this Regulation.

Article 5

Directive (EU) 2020/12 is repealed with effect from 1 January 2026.

Article 6

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

It shall apply from 1 January 2026.

Done at Brussels, 7.11.2025

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN