

Comparison of dangers on the waterways of the partners

By writing the outline of Safe Boating in the beginning of the project a questionnaire was sent to the partners containing questions about the definition of a danger zone and definitions of danger on the waterways in general. Between the UK, France and the Netherlands are big differences.

France – VNF (Voies Navigables de France) in this matter – stated that collisions between professional barges and recreational never have occurred like in the Netherlands. This could be explained by the fact that the inland waterways in France are much more extensive and less busy than the waterways in the Netherlands. However collisions with floating waste (mostly plastic or wood) causes damage to the boats and ships.

Also the UK (CRT – Canal and River Trust) indicated they never had any collisions between professional barges and recreational boats, however they reported the near misses. This had never been done in the Netherlands and France. The figures are included as an attachment.

A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage – but had the potential to do so. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality or damage; in other words, a miss that was nonetheless very near. The phrase “Near Miss” should not be confused with the phrases “nearly a miss” or “they nearly missed” which would imply a collision. Synonymous phrases to “near miss” are “close call” or “nearly a collision”.

The type and cause of the near misses in the UK shows that dangers have to be put in a wider perspective and that keeping a record of these events can prevent future accidents.

In the Netherlands no study had ever been made to compare the collisions on the water. These collisions have been reported for 10 years in the SOS database of Rijkswaterstaat (ministry of Transport). Not all collisions were reported but the ones reported by the Police, waterway managers of the state (Rijkswaterstaat) were. WRN (Waterways Netherlands) compared the number of accidents, type of accident and possible cause. The study is included as attachment.

The study learned WRN that not only collisions between waterway users occur but also a lot of them happen, like the situation in France and the UK, by colliding with infrastructure and floating waste. Also a lot of accidents due to poor maintenance on yachts (e.g. gas explosions or engine failure).

By discussion the definition of the ‘danger’ on the water with our partners of Numerical we (WRN) came up with the idea to survey this existing database that had never been used for this purpose. We have learned the danger is more than safe routes and behaviour on the water and we have extended our own safety programme with the input of VNF and CRT.

We have all learned that near miss reporting can prevent future accidents as they are often preceded by warnings of near accidents. Because approximately a 100 near misses occur before an accident happens.

The outputs of this are especially the apps (pogo VNF, pogo CRT and Safeguarder WRN) in which all dangers and near misses on the waterways can be reported. But also the Numerical website has this opportunity (helpdesk). The outcomes will be exchanged yearly.