

Approaching ban on barge degassing

The degassing of inland tankbarges will be banned in stages during 2024. Indeed, Switzerland recently became the last country to ratify the revised '[Convention on the Collection, Deposit and Reception of Waste in Rhine and Inland Navigation](#)' (revised CDNI Convention for short). With this, all six contracting countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland) have ratified the document. The entry into force of the revised CDNI Convention will have legal and operational implications for the transport of hazardous substances on Western European inland waterways.

Degassing

After unloading hazardous substances, so-called residual vapours remain in the tank. These vapours, with a few exceptions, currently may still be degassed freely to the outside air. For various reasons (safety, quality and/or permit conditions), a clean and dry ship needs to be available for a follow-up cargo, making degassing necessary. These vapours, released during degassing, are harmful to humans and the environment. The ban on degassing will be introduced in phases according to the following timetable.

Table	Substances (UN-nummers)	Fasering
I	1114, 1203, 1268, 3475	6 months after ratification CDNI-treaty
II	1267, 1993, 3295 (>10% benzene)	2 years after ratification CDNI treaty
III	1090, 1145, 1170, 1179, 1216, 1230, 1267, 1993, 2398, 3257, 3295, 9001, 9003	3 or 4 years after ratification CDNI treaty

Dutch situation

The Netherlands is anticipating the entry into force of the revised CDNI treaty by **declaring an earlier degassing ban on Table I and probably Table II substances as of July 1, 2024. A degassing ban on Table II substances will follow soon after, expected between July and September 2024.** Investments are currently being made by the government, including a covering e-noses network and expansion of enforcement capacity, to establish such an effective enforcement system.

Degassing options

Once degassing to the outside air is no longer allowed, the importance of the availability of degassing facilities increases. Such an installation might be available at successive loading/unloading sites to process the vapours. However, such installations often cannot/may not process all vapours and are unlikely to be available for regular degassing already because of current scaffolding occupancy and capacity.

An infrastructure of mobile degassing installations is currently being established. Legal complexity and investment readiness however make it **very unlikely** that this infrastructure will be sufficiently available by the time the degassing ban takes effect (1-7-2024). Alternatives to prevent tankbarge degassing are so-called 'dedicated' and/or 'compatible' transports: Similar(worthy) substances in relation to a successive voyage do not necessitate degassing of vapours from a previous voyage. However, this requires checking whether the facility where final reloading is to take place has a vapour handling facility that is suitable and licensed for the vapour from the ship's tank. This does

require the charterer to check whether the facility where loading is to take place has a vapour handling facility suitable and licensed for the vapour from the ship's tank.

Cost of degassing

Under Article 8 of the CDNI Convention, the charterer (i.e. the one who issued the transport order) bears the costs of degassing the vessel, including the costs of rerouting to a designated degassing facility location and the time involved. According to CDNI article 7.05, the charterer is obliged to assign the carrier a reception facility, where the vessel is to be degassed after unloading (including after-discharging and removal of liquid transshipment residues).

Questions ?

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