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Ms Theresia Hacksteiner - Secretary General EBU

Mr Gerard Kester - Secretary General ESO

Your references

Our references SC/IV/HYDRO-UPE-2022-019134-01

Your contact Sylvanie CROUZIER, Tél : +33.6.75.54.42.98

Objet Your request: 2022 big chamber closure schedule

Mulhouse, 21 juin 2022

Dear Ms Hacksteiner and Mr Kester,

We write in response to your desire for a formal record of the discussion at the users' committee meeting held on 13 May 2022 during which you set out your unease regarding the big chamber closure schedule, in the light of the strong economic recovery and the shortage of crews.

We have acted on your concerns. For the year 2022, as a direct result of your request, and just a few weeks before the commencement of the works (which were presented to users and their representatives at the committee meetings in May and October 2021), we have examined the opportunities to defer works until 2024 and reduced the closure periods for the big chambers at Fessenheim and Vogelgrun locks by seven weeks. By deferring works, we have reduced the period of time during which users will be inconvenienced by closures to 21 weeks (a reduction of 11 weeks compared to 2018). Please note that the 2022 works schedule includes several projects deferred from 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.

We would also like to bring the following points to your attention:

As the operator on the French portion of the Upper Rhine, we at EDF provide an uninterrupted, free service to craft using the river. Almost 120,000 boats pass through the locks each year.

Our 16 lock chambers are heavily used. We operate a stringent preventive maintenance policy to guarantee their reliability and ensure they can serve skippers and crews 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in complete safety (annual fault rate of less than 1%).

Works on these vast locks demand specialist expertise. Staff must be qualified and employed in accordance with French legislation, and can only work when the meteorological conditions (water velocity, temperature and light levels) make it safe for them to do so. In addition, the very nature of certain tasks means that they cannot be completed simultaneously or compressed (for technical reasons: for example, drying time for civil engineering works).

High accident rates on the Rhine have a considerable impact on the availability of our locks, in various ways: either because a chamber has to be closed for safety reasons after an accident, or because the repair work is added to a scheduled closure, which consequently has to be extended. The priority is always to put the chamber back into service immediately and in perfect safety, to minimise the effect on navigation.

Closure schedules are presented to users and their representatives the year before the works are

to be carried out, on two occasions at the spring and autumn users' committee meetings. The schedule is then adopted and circulated via a CCNR resolution. Information is also provided via e-Ris and notices to skippers are issued one to three months before the closures begin. We would be grateful if you could communicate this information to the river users that you represent as promptly as possible.

Conscious that you have very high expectations in terms of big chamber availability, our teams are already investigating ways of optimising the 2024 schedule (the 2023 maintenance programme will focus on the small chambers).

We would like to thank you for contacting us regarding this matter. Please be assured that we are acutely conscious of our responsibilities as a concession operator to keep the structures well-maintained and reliable while providing uninterrupted, free and perfectly safe navigation to skippers and crews.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Valérie Baumann

Technical Director and Assistant Director of EDF Hydro Est

