

PLENARY SESSION AUTUMN 2024

Ref: CC/CP (24)12

On 5 December 2024, the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) held its autumn plenary session. The meeting was chaired by Mr Michiel van Kruiningen, head of the Dutch delegation. At the plenary meeting, a number of resolutions were adopted, relating to stretches designated as presenting specific risks, the economic situation of inland navigation in Europe, police regulations, technical requirements for vessels and matters concerning the Rhine waterway.

REDUCTION IN THE STRETCHES WITH SPECIFIC RISKS ON THE RHINE

At its plenary session, the CCNR agreed a significant reduction in the number of stretches on the Rhine designated as presenting specific risks. In the future, therefore, the specific authorisation will only be required for:

- On the Upper Rhine: the stretch from km 335.66 (Wintersdorf road bridge) to km 425.00 (Mannheim);
- On the Middle Rhine: the stretch from km 498.00 (Mainz/Mainz-Kastel road bridge) to km 592.00 (Koblenz, mouth of the Moselle).

In addition, national authorities will be able to recognise national licences on the entire Rhine: these can be used in place of the sports licence or the administration licence. This amendment to the Regulations for Rhine Navigation Personnel (RPN) will enter into force on 1 July 2025.

Further details are available in the [dedicated press release](#).

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION FOR INLAND NAVIGATION IN EUROPE

During the first half of 2024, the global economy showed signs of improvement. Inflation fell and, by 2025, is expected to reach 2% in developed economies. However, trade is experiencing more difficulties, with its recovery hampered by numerous trade barriers, and geopolitical crises and wars. Thus, a slight fall in freight transport was observed for the Rhine (-1.5%*) and almost all the Rhine States during the first half of 2024. France was the exception, with a slight increase in freight transport. The transport of dry bulk showed a negative trend (-7.8%*), linked to two market segments: sand, soil and construction materials, and solid fuels. The transport of liquid bulk (petroleum products and chemicals) showed a positive trend (+5.4%*). Container transport on the Rhine fell by -1.1%*. Economic growth is expected to strengthen slightly in the second half of 2024 and in 2025, which should lead to a recovery in freight transport.

* Comparison between the first half of 2023 and the first half of 2024.



Source: Adobe Stock

Inland waterway fuel prices fell slightly in the first half of 2024, averaging around 77.60 Euros per 100 litres of gasoil. These prices are expected to undergo a further slight fall in the second half of the year and to remain stable in 2025. In addition, freight rates on the Rhine in the first half of 2024 were slightly higher than the average for previous years.

Finally, passenger transport - in particular river cruises on the Rhine - has seen a clear upturn in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

The CCNR's annual, biannual and thematic reports are available online at <https://www.inlandnavigation-market.org>.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS AND RIVER INFORMATION SERVICES

Some amendments to the Police regulations for the navigation of the Rhine (RPR) were also adopted.

As a result, certain certificates and other on-board documents relating to the transport of dangerous goods will now be authorised in electronic form on board inland waterway vessels. This amendment ensures consistency between two legal frameworks: the RPR and the ADN Regulations (2025 edition). This move towards a paperless environment was initiated by the CCNR back in 2021: the aim is to gradually convert certificates and other on-board documents to electronic formats. The presentation of documents in electronic form makes it easier to provide information, particularly in the case of inspections. Paperless documents also reduce the administrative burden on the profession. The amendment will come into force on 1 December 2025.

ABOUT THE CCNR

The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) is an international organisation that exercises an essential regulatory role in the navigation of the Rhine. It is active in the technical, legal, economic and environmental fields. In all its areas of action, its work is guided by the efficiency of transport on the Rhine, safety, social considerations, and respect for the environment. Many of the CCNR's activities now reach beyond the Rhine and are directly concerned with European navigable waterways more generally. The CCNR works closely with the European Commission as well as with the other river commissions and international organisations.



CCNR

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Other amendments relate to specific provisions for certain sectors:

- Between the Dreirosenbrücke (km 167.80) and the Mittlere Rheinbrücke (km 166.53) in Basel, motorised vessels, towed convoys and pushed convoys must maintain a minimum speed of 4 km/h when travelling upstream. From a length of 110 m, a minimum speed of 6 km/h must be maintained. The aim is to increase the level of safety, as currents in this sector can be very strong.
- As a result of developments in the shipbuilding industry, the risks associated with entering the port of Basel have been reduced. The specific manoeuvre for entering the port of Basel is therefore considered obsolete and will be removed from the RPR.
- In the area between Basel and the Kembs locks, the flood mark is 8.20 m. However, navigation may be authorised up to a water level of 8.50 m at the Basel-Rheinhalle gauge. This provision was introduced following the major floods of 1999, but has never been applied: it will be removed from the RPR.

Finally, from 1 January 2026, the RPNR will refer to the new edition of the ES-RIS (European Standard for River Information Services). The ES-RIS 2025/1 contains [changes](#) relating to Inland ECDIS and Inland AIS devices, notices to shipping and electronic reporting. It will also make it possible to declare in electronic reports the presence on board of installations using alternative energy sources, such as hydrogen, methanol or batteries for propulsion. These [reports](#) will become mandatory on 1 December 2026.

VESSEL TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND GREENING THE FLEET

During the plenary session, the CCNR decided to undertake the combined amendment of its regulations ([RVIR](#), [RPR](#) and [RPN](#)) to include references to the ES-TRIN 2025/1 (European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation vessels). The CCNR and the EU will implement the ES-TRIN 2025/1 in a coordinated manner on 1 January 2026. This new edition will play a role in facilitating the greening of the fleet as it includes requirements for the use of methanol as a fuel, electric propulsion and lithium-ion batteries. As set out in its [roadmap for reducing emissions](#), the CCNR is committed to adapting the regulatory framework to support the energy transition in Rhine navigation. In addition, the new edition of ES-TRIN will simplify administrative procedures for engines and on-board purification stations. It also contains other [changes](#).

MATTERS RELATING TO THE RHINE WATERWAY

At its plenary session, the CCNR approved various construction projects on the Rhine:

- the construction of an observation platform by the municipality of Drusenheim;
- the installation of two additional dolphins at the Tereos loading station in Marckolsheim;
- the installation of two dolphins for mooring outside vessels upstream of the Marckolsheim lock.

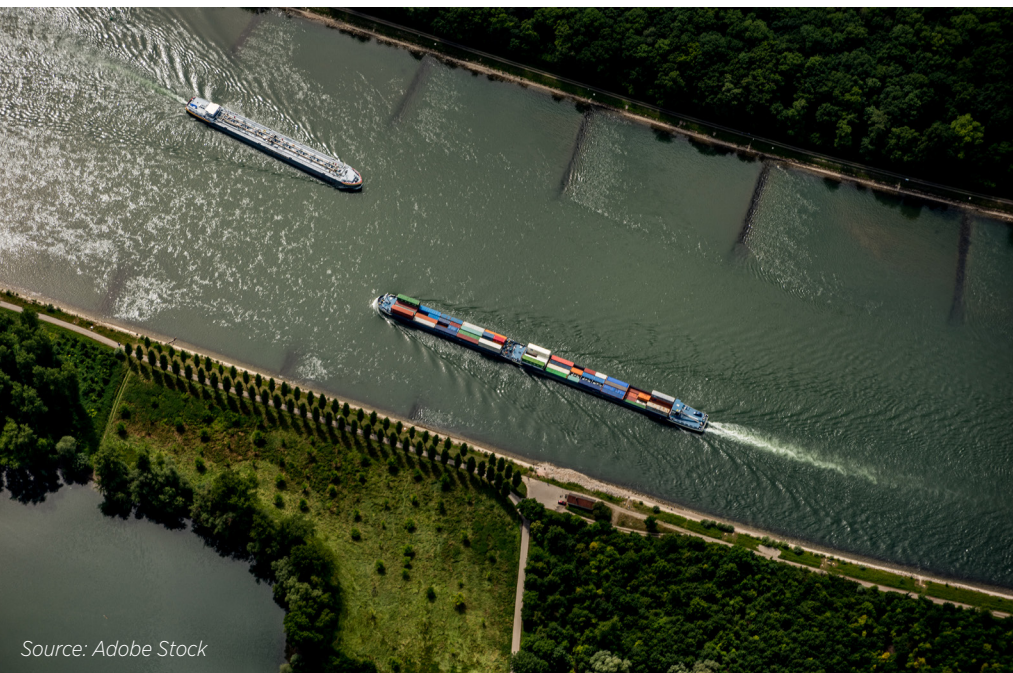
None of this work on the waterway will constitute an obstacle to navigation on the Rhine. On the contrary, the measures adopted by the CCNR help to guarantee the prosperity of Rhine and European navigation, as well as a high level of safety for navigation and the environment. The CCNR has also approved the closure of various lock chambers on the Upper Rhine to allow maintenance work to take place.

NEXT PLENARY SESSION

The next plenary session of the CCNR will be held in Strasbourg, on 5 June 2025.

From mid-January 2025, all the resolutions adopted at the plenary session will be available on the CCNR website at: <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020400-en.html>.

THE CCNR WISHES YOU A VERY HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON!



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