

## APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CCNR

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The delegations of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) have appointed Mrs Hester Duursema as the new Secretary General of the CCNR, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. She will succeed Mrs Lucia Luijten, whose term of office expires at the end of December.

With this appointment, the CCNR welcomes an experienced and unifying leader with deep knowledge of inland navigation, a strong strategic and organisational development background, and extensive experience bridging the public and private sectors.

Born and raised in an international environment, Mrs Duursema completed high school in Paris, earned a science bachelor's degree in Utrecht with an exchange in anthropology at Cambridge University, and later studied international business and economics in Rotterdam. She began her career as a strategy consultant, advising organisations on complex transformation and public-private cooperation challenges. These years of consulting experience provided her with deep expertise in strategic leadership and organisational development, areas on which she later earned her PhD.

In the inland navigation sector, Mrs Duursema gained recognition as Managing Director of Koninklijke BLN-Schuttevaer, where she played an important role in strengthening and future-proofing the Dutch inland navigation industry. Simultaneously, she served as Secretary General of the European Skippers' Organisation (ESO), representing the interests of European inland navigation and fostering cooperation between industry, governments, and international institutions. During her tenure, she even obtained her skipper trainee certificate (theoretical part).

Following her work in inland navigation, Mrs Duursema held executive roles at the intersection of government and business. In her most recent position, she served as Director of Corporate Affairs at a Dutch beverage producer, overseeing public affairs, sustainability, and stakeholder engagement. As secondary positions, she also held multiple board and supervisory roles in the public, political, and civil society sectors.

"Inland navigation is a silent powerhouse of the European economy — reliable, sustainable, and innovative," said Hester Duursema. "It is a great honour to contribute to the important mission of the CCNR as Secretary General and to continue the work with the Member States, the European Commission, the industry and other partners to further strengthen this vital sector."

The Member States and the Secretariat would like to extend a warm welcome to Mrs Duursema. They would also like to express their profound gratitude to Mrs Luijten for her many contributions as the head of the Secretariat, in support of Rhine and European navigation, and wish her a happy retirement.



Hester Duursema



Lucia Luijten

### 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**CENTRAL COMMISSION  
FOR THE NAVIGATION OF THE RHINE

#### Palais du Rhin

2, place de la République - CS10023  
F - 67082 Strasbourg Cedex

Tel. +33 (0)3 88 52 20 10

Fax +33 (0)3 88 32 10 72

ccnr@ccr-zkr.org

www.ccr-zkr.org