

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW SWISS PRESIDENCY FOR 2026-2027

Ref: CC/CP (26)01

From 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027, Switzerland will hold the Presidency of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR). Germany will take on the Vice Presidency.

President: Roland Portmann, Ambassador and Deputy Director of the Directorate of International Law at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, head of the Swiss delegation

Vice President: Martina Kohlhaas, Head of Directorate Shipping at the Federal Ministry of Transport, head of the German delegation

The rotating presidency of the CCNR, with a term of two years, assures fair representation for all Member States and allows particular attention to be paid to key areas.

SUPPORTING MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY INLAND NAVIGATION

The Swiss Presidency supports all the efforts made to date to ensure a more environmentally friendly inland navigation system. It will continue the work required to revise the CCNR roadmap for reducing inland navigation emissions (greenhouse gases, air pollution). This will include updating the research work, amending the relevant requirements and adopting recommendations relating to innovative vessels. The transition to more environmentally friendly inland navigation will also involve adapting infrastructure and increasing the availability of alternative fuels.

The Swiss Presidency will also continue to examine and discuss the possibility of progressive taxation of fossil fuels as well as additional measures to improve sustainability in inland navigation. In addition, Switzerland will encourage further work on an international label to indicate the emission levels of inland navigation vessels. Finally, work related to climate change and low water levels will be a key focus, particularly in the context of efforts to make the Rhine waterway more resilient.

CONTINUING THE COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION

In 2026-2027, the CCNR will pursue its commitment to innovation in the field of digitalisation and automation. Key areas will be the continuation of pilot projects for remote operation and the development of automation, as well as other applications such as river information services (RIS).

The Swiss Presidency is also committed to promoting careers in inland navigation, with a view to making them more visible and more attractive. In line with the motto 'Safety through training', emphasis will be placed on initial and continuing training. Whether a vessel is operated from the wheelhouse or from the shore, with or without assistance systems, the safety of people and the environment must remain the top priority. Switzerland is therefore committed to promoting high safety standards and the continuous updating of CCNR regulations. The new challenges, particularly in the field of cyber security, will also have to be taken into account.

STRENGTHENING COOPERATION WITH THE EU, THE RIVER COMMISSIONS AND THE UNECE

The Swiss Presidency will continue to foster cooperation with the European Union (EU). The strengths and advantages of the CCNR and the EU will play a useful role in consolidating inland navigation as an important mode of transport for the future at European level. Switzerland is also committed to continuing the excellent work carried out by CESNI, the European Committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation. Finally, it is essential to ensure good cooperation with the other European river commissions and the UNECE, for example in the field of the carriage of dangerous goods.

MODERNISING THE CCNR

The Swiss Presidency supports the optimisation of the CCNR Secretariat, in particular by further developing working conditions. A strong and efficient Secretariat will play a key role in tackling the challenges facing the CCNR. The aim is also to strengthen the role of the CCNR, both as an organisation with regulatory powers and as an international centre of excellence for inland navigation. As part of this modernisation process, the CCNR website will also be updated to provide clear and easy access to the Organisation's various areas of activity.



ABOUT ROLAND PORTMANN

Roland Portmann grew up on Rheinstrasse in the Rheinquartier neighbourhood near the source of the Rhine in the canton of Graubünden in Switzerland. He studied law and international relations in St. Gallen, Geneva and Cambridge. He has been a member of the Swiss diplomatic service since 2010. In this capacity, he has held various positions at the headquarters in Bern and at the Swiss embassies in the United States and Kosovo. Since 2024, he has been Deputy Director of the Directorate of International Law at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern. In January 2025, Ambassador Portmann took up the position of head of the Swiss delegation to the CCNR.

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.



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