

## Crews, vessels and dangerous goods

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Navigation on the Rhine is a regulated profession. A boatmaster who steers a vessel on the Rhine requires a qualification recognised under the Rhine regime, traditionally the Rhine patent (*Rheinpatent*) issued under the CCNR regulations on the patents of Rhine boatmasters. For specific stretches with difficult conditions, additional sector knowledge is required. The Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and the corresponding CCNR rules have aligned the qualification systems, so that the certificates issued under both systems are mutually recognised under defined conditions.<sup>1</sup>

The technical requirements for vessels are laid down in the European Standard laying down Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation vessels (ES-TRIN), developed by CESNI and updated every two years. ES-TRIN governs the construction, equipment and safety of vessels, from hull strength and stability to fire protection and emissions. Vessels navigating on the Rhine require a Rhine vessel certificate or a Union inland navigation certificate that confirms compliance with these standards. Transitional provisions allow older vessels to continue operating for defined periods, although the cost of adapting them to new standards has contributed to the scrapping of parts of the ageing fleet.<sup>2</sup>

Dangerous goods, which form a large part of the cargo carried to Basel, are subject to a specific regime. The European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN), concluded in Geneva in 2000 under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Europe and the CCNR, entered into force in 2008 and replaced the earlier Rhine regulations on dangerous goods known as ADN<sup>R</sup>.<sup>3</sup> ADN regulates the classification, packaging, labelling and documentation of dangerous goods, the construction of tank vessels and the training of experts on board. For the Swiss ports, whose throughput includes large volumes of mineral oil products and chemicals, compliance

with ADN is part of the daily operations of shippers, carriers and terminal operators.

## 1 Notes

1. Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of 12 December 2017 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation; CCNR Regulations for Rhine Navigation Personnel (RPN), in force since 2022 or 2023 and replacing the earlier Rhine Patent Regulations. Dates and titles to be verified. ↩
2. On ES-TRIN, its incorporation into the Rhine Vessel Inspection Regulations (RheinSchUO) and Directive (EU) 2016/1629 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels, and the transitional provisions for existing vessels, see the CESNI and CCNR publications. To be verified. ↩
3. European Agreement of 26 May 2000 concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN), in force since 29 February 2008; Swiss text in SR 0.747.207.1. Dates and SR number to be verified. ↩

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*For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.*

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