

Joint position

SEA Europe and industriAll Europe priorities for the next European Commission

In line with the Antwerp Declaration, signed by both SEA Europe and industriAll Europe which calls for action to strengthen the European industrial sectors by ensuring their competitiveness, sustainability and resilience in a changing geopolitical context, the social partners ask the next European Commission to adopt an ambitious **EU maritime industrial strategy**.

A coherent package of sectoral measures will enable the maritime technology sector and the first-class expertise of its employees, to remain a global technology leader, to regain lost but strategic markets for Europe and to conquer emerging markets. In doing so, an EU maritime industrial strategy will allow the EU to secure and reinforce adequate industrial production capacity. This capacity is crucial for manufacturing innovative, sustainable and digitalized ships, platforms, and technological solutions, strategically contributing to defense, strategic autonomy, trade, energy independence, and the blue economy.

Against a background of increased geopolitical tensions, European policymakers must promptly adopt an EU maritime industrial strategy along with a forward-looking industrial investment plan. This plan should actively promote a resilient, fair, and sustainable future for European industry and quality employment. Failing to do so could pose significant economic security risks and threaten Europe's strategic autonomy and technological sovereignty.

The European Maritime Industrial Strategy should be based on the following building blocks:

1. **INDUSTRIAL SOVEREIGNTY AND COMPETITIVENESS**

- **Introduce “made in Europe” requirements and non-price criteria in strategic public procurement markets** (e.g. patrol vessels, ferries, research vessels, offshore platforms).
- **Provide financial incentives for shipowners to build and retrofit vessels in Europe.** These incentives should reduce the price gap between European and Asian shipyards, especially through tax benefits framed by a European scheme. To avoid competitive distortions between Member States, they should be implemented uniformly within the EU internal market, and be notified to and monitored by the European Commission.
- **Introduce conditionalities in EU financial instruments** to prevent European taxpayers' money from being used for investments outside Europe, e.g. for building or retrofitting vessels in Asian shipyards whilst these vessels are destined for Europe.
- **Provide an effective instrument to protect the competitiveness of European shipyards against injurious pricing of foreign competitors**, by making Regulation 2016/1035 applicable.

2. **SUPPORTIVE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

- **Introduce a Maritime Industry Act supporting the business case for sustainable and digitalised waterborne transport, ship production and Blue Economy.**
- **Set up an Industrial Alliance for Blue Economy Value Chains, in combination with “Important Projects of Common European Interest”,** to facilitate collaboration among Blue Economy

stakeholders and create project pipelines (e.g. for carriers of sustainable alternative fuels, and vessels supporting offshore renewable energy infrastructure).

3. TECHNOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP

Continue to support the industry's investment in research, development and innovation, such as with the co-programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport, and introduce a new co-programmed Partnership on digitalised and automated waterborne transport and ship production.

Facilitate European Investment Bank guarantees at preferential terms to enlarge risk capacities for investment in the waterborne value chain, Blue Economy and defence.

Provide financial support to scale-up maritime innovation and enhance maritime manufacturing capacity through:

- A European Maritime Technology Fund with a budget of €10 billion in the next programming period, building on the current European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund.
- A stronger maritime dimension in all relevant EU financial instruments (e.g. Innovation Fund, Connecting Europe Facility, structural funds) via dedicated calls and earmarking, and through a full flow-back of the revenues from the Emission Trading System (ETS) and FuelEU Maritime to maritime investment.

The availability of financial resources is necessary to stimulate industrial investment in innovative green and digital technologies and production methods in Europe with guarantees to ensure the retention and creation of quality jobs, while ensuring a fair distribution of the wealth created. Strict criteria on access to EU funds should promote a fair transformation of our industries focusing on social cohesion, quality employment and promotion of social dialogue.

4. SKILLED WORKFORCE: DEVELOP A GOOD INDUSTRIAL JOBS COMPASS FOR A JUST TRANSITION: RIGHT TO TRAINING

- **Support communication campaigns** promoting the sustainable and innovative image of the maritime technology industry to attract and retain workers, especially young people and women.
- **Support companies' efforts to upskill and reskill workers in the maritime technology industry**, including through EU-wide educational and training programmes, and the recognition of trainings and qualifications across the EU.
- **Develop a just transition policy framework to support anticipating and managing the changes underway in the maritime industries with access to quality training for all workers at its core.**

Independent from an EU Maritime Industrial Strategy, the Social Partners want to reiterate the need for the following actions in support of the maritime technology industry:

1. PACT FOR SKILLS

Ensure sufficient and permanent financial support for the implementation of an ambitious Shipbuilding Pact for Skills, with a focus on attracting, training, and retaining new workers as well as upskilling and reskilling of shipbuilding workforce.

2. CREATE A MARITIME EXPERT GROUP

As for the automotive and railways' industries and thus in line with the synergies sought by the European Commission in the context of the Transition Pathways for the Mobility Industrial Ecosystem, the Social Partners call for the set of a forum composed of policy-makers from the EU and Member States, industry stakeholders, and Trade Unions for the maritime sector, including stakeholders from the maritime technology industry. This forum should:

- Formulate technology roadmaps to deliver the industrial capability targets for the greening and digitalisation of the critical value chains of the European blue economy.
- Coordinate measures to bridge skills gaps, improve workforce qualification, and harmonize social standards across the EU.
- Identify promising foreign markets, international trade barriers, and dumping practices, and recommend appropriate trade policy measures.

This Maritime Expert Group should have the prerogative to submit policy recommendations to the Commission, and the European Commission should have the obligation to take them into account.

3. SUPPORT SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND WORKERS PARTICIPATION

Social dialogue and worker's participation are indispensable to build sustainable and resilient industries at all levels (company, sectoral, national and European).

- Promote and strengthen social dialogue structures and trade union rights at all levels. Social conditionality must ensure that public money supports quality jobs and social dialogue.
- Ensure that the autonomy of social partners is respected at all levels while ensuring that legal frameworks for robust industrial relations systems are developed both at European and national levels.
- Strengthen workers' information, consultation and participation rights in companies including multinational companies. With the transformation underway, workers' involvement is key for a successful transformation.
- Develop capacity building of social partners where necessary
- Respect social standards