



Maritime-focused Competitiveness Council

News

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#Competitiveness

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Competitiveness Council

Recently, the EU ministers responsible for internal market and industry policy areas met in Brussels. On behalf of the Netherlands, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Dirk Beljaarts, participated in this Competitiveness Council.

The agenda included several important policy initiatives presented by the European Commission last month. The ministers discussed, among other things, the following:

- the Clean Industrial Deal,
- the Competitiveness Compass,
- the first two Omnibus packages.

The responsible ministers also discussed initiatives that are still in the pipeline, such as

- the upcoming revision of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- a robust industrial chapter in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 (MFF 28-34)
- and removing trade barriers in a renewed Single Market Strategy.

In short, a packed agenda, we will share the main points with you in this news item.

Single Market Strategy

Starting with the latter: a renewed Single Market Strategy. Stéphane Séjourné, the responsible European Commissioner for Industry, SMEs, and the Internal Market, shared that this renewed strategy will be published in the second quarter of this year. In preparation for this publication, the

Netherlands, together with 15 other EU member states, submitted a non-paper calling on the Commission to:

- promote the free movement of goods and services
- reduce administrative burdens and reporting requirements
- and improve the quality of legislation.

Séjourné indicated that the member states who signed the White Paper are aligned with the Commission and further emphasized that the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET), must play a crucial role in the Internal Market Strategy. This involves improving corrective mechanisms, preventing bottlenecks in the internal market, and ensuring compliance with current legislation.

For shipowners, further cooperation between member states is of great importance, for example, by adopting uniform European standards for data delivery instead of each member state requesting this information differently.

[Read the Non-Paper](#)



Industrial chapter

At the request of Spain, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia, the ministers also discussed the importance of a strong industrial chapter in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 (MFF).

The four member states emphasized that a strong industrial pillar will not only increase production capacity in Europe but also enhance the Union's technological leadership. European Commissioner Séjourné responded by stating that an industrial pillar must be simple and consistent to attract investments and promote innovation. He also stressed that sufficient flexibility must exist within the MFF 28-34 to respond to significant global changes. The European Commissioner concluded by stating that investments are necessary throughout the entire investment cycle, meaning from research and development through to scaling up.

This final point aligns well with strengthening the competitiveness of the maritime cluster in Europe, allowing maritime innovations to scale up earlier and enter the market more quickly.

Omnibus packages

Furthermore, the ministers discussed the previously published [Omnibus packages](#):

- The first package aims to reduce sustainability reporting
- The second package is about simplifying investment rules

The Dutch cabinet expressed its support for reducing regulatory pressure and administrative burdens. However, the cabinet will still need to draft a BNC note, in which it will take a more detailed position. For shipowners, it is important that data they must provide aligns with the data they already need to collect under existing European and international laws and regulations. Opportunities exist to harmonize the requested data so that companies do not have to provide the same data repeatedly in different formats, make sustainability reports workable, and ensure no unnecessary administrative burdens are involved.

Opinion on regulatory pressure

20-11-2024

Another rule? Bring it on!

For years now, the pressure on workers and companies has been increasing as a result of more and more laws and regulations. Not only at national level, but also European and even global. The phenomenon of regulatory pressure has a major impact on the entire business community, including in the Dutch shipping industry. Shipowners and their shore-based...



In conclusion

The [EU Competitiveness Compass](#) and the [Clean Industrial Deal](#) were also on the agenda as policy debates. The Netherlands emphasized its support for both initiatives and stated that energy, raw materials, and circularity must be crucial for future-oriented industrial policy. The importance of accelerating the sustainability of energy-intensive industries was also highlighted to meet the climate goals for 2040 and 2050. The greening of shipping and aviation is mentioned as one of the five pillars in the Clean Industrial Deal. The [Sustainable Transport Investment Plan \(STIP\)](#), expected in the third quarter of this year, should provide a concrete elaboration of this fifth pillar in the Clean Industrial Deal.

In conclusion, discussions were held behind closed doors regarding the relationship between the [CBAM](#) and the competitiveness of the EU. The Commission has scheduled the evaluation of the CBAM for the second half of 2025. In the [annotated agenda](#) shared by the Ministry of Economic Affairs with the House of Representatives, the Dutch cabinet acknowledges the importance of such a mechanism to protect its own industry, but also sees that carbon pricing does not create a level playing field in all cases. For a strong European fleet, maintaining a good international competitive position is necessary. We view the impact of instruments like CBAM on shipowners with the upcoming evaluation in that light.

We will keep you informed from Brussels of the further developments of these policy initiatives.

Other interesting items...





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