

A photograph of three individuals standing in front of several European Union flags. On the left is a woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a green jacket. In the center is a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. On the right is a man with dark hair and a beard, also wearing a dark suit and tie. They are all smiling slightly.

# Policymakers and stakeholders together during European Shipping Summit

News

21 March 2025

#Competitiveness

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## European Shipping Summit

Last Wednesday and Thursday in Brussels, various maritime stakeholders and policymakers gathered to discuss the future of a strong and competitive maritime cluster.

The core message of the two-day European Shipping Summit stands firm: the European maritime cluster is the backbone of European trade and society. Therefore, in Europe, we must join forces and strive for a competitive and sustainable waterborne sector.

This message was widely supported by all speakers in the various panels. Moreover, it was reinforced by key policymakers, such as the European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, and maritime stakeholders, such as the President of European Shipping (ECSA), Karin Orsel.

The first day of the European Shipping Summit was marked by panel discussions organized by maritime stakeholder groups and concluded with the European Shipping Summit Gala Dinner.

The KVNR also organized, together with the Italian and Spanish shipowners' associations, Confitarma and Anave, a panel discussion on the strategic role of short-sea shipping and promoting the modal shift to water.

Other important maritime topics were addressed in the other panel discussions:

- Attracting sufficient seafarers
- Promoting diversity
- Scaling up clean ship fuels by bringing together consumers and suppliers
- The importance of clear global regulations and uniform standards for ship recycling.

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## Unlocking the potential of short sea shipping

Last Wednesday, during the European Shipping Summit, the KVNR organised a panel discussion together with shipowners' associations Anave (Spain) and Confitarma (Italy) on the theme "unlocking the potential of short sea shipping".



In the evening, everyone gathered again for the gala dinner. This provided an excellent opportunity to further discuss the challenges and opportunities for European maritime shipping. After Sotiris Raptis, Secretary-General of European Shipping, welcomed the guests, Apostolos Tzitzikostas took the floor.

In his speech, the Greek European Commissioner was clear: maritime shipping must be central to Europe's policy, as it forms the basis for a sustainable and competitive future. He elaborated on this further the next morning during his opening speech.

Tzitzikostas emphasized that seafarers make this possible, and we must therefore invest in maritime professions and skills. The European Commissioner also mentioned that EU-ETS revenues should be used to reduce the price difference between conventional and clean fuels.

"EU-ETS revenues must be used to breach the price gap with clean fuels"

APOSTOLOS TZITZIKOSTAS

The fact that Tzitzikostas makes these statements in the presence of European and national policymakers is of great value, as European maritime policy for the coming years is being shaped right now.



The importance of a strong European maritime cluster is great, and collaboration within this cluster and with policymakers is essential. Therefore, the next day continued discussions on the future of the sector in Europe. A wide range of topics were discussed, all revolving around the central question: how do we strengthen the European maritime cluster and remain competitive on the world stage?

Prior to Tzitzikostas' speech, Karin Orsel, as chair of European Shipowners (ECSA), emphasized the strategic importance of European maritime shipping for Europe. It is essential for the transport of goods (such as medicines and food), passengers, and energy production. To continue fulfilling this crucial role sustainably in the future, Orsel underscored the importance of investing in seafarers, as they enable maritime shipping. She illustrated this by looking back at the corona pandemic, which demonstrated the resilience of seafarers. Despite difficult circumstances, they continued to supply Europe with essential goods.

## Highlights from Key Speakers

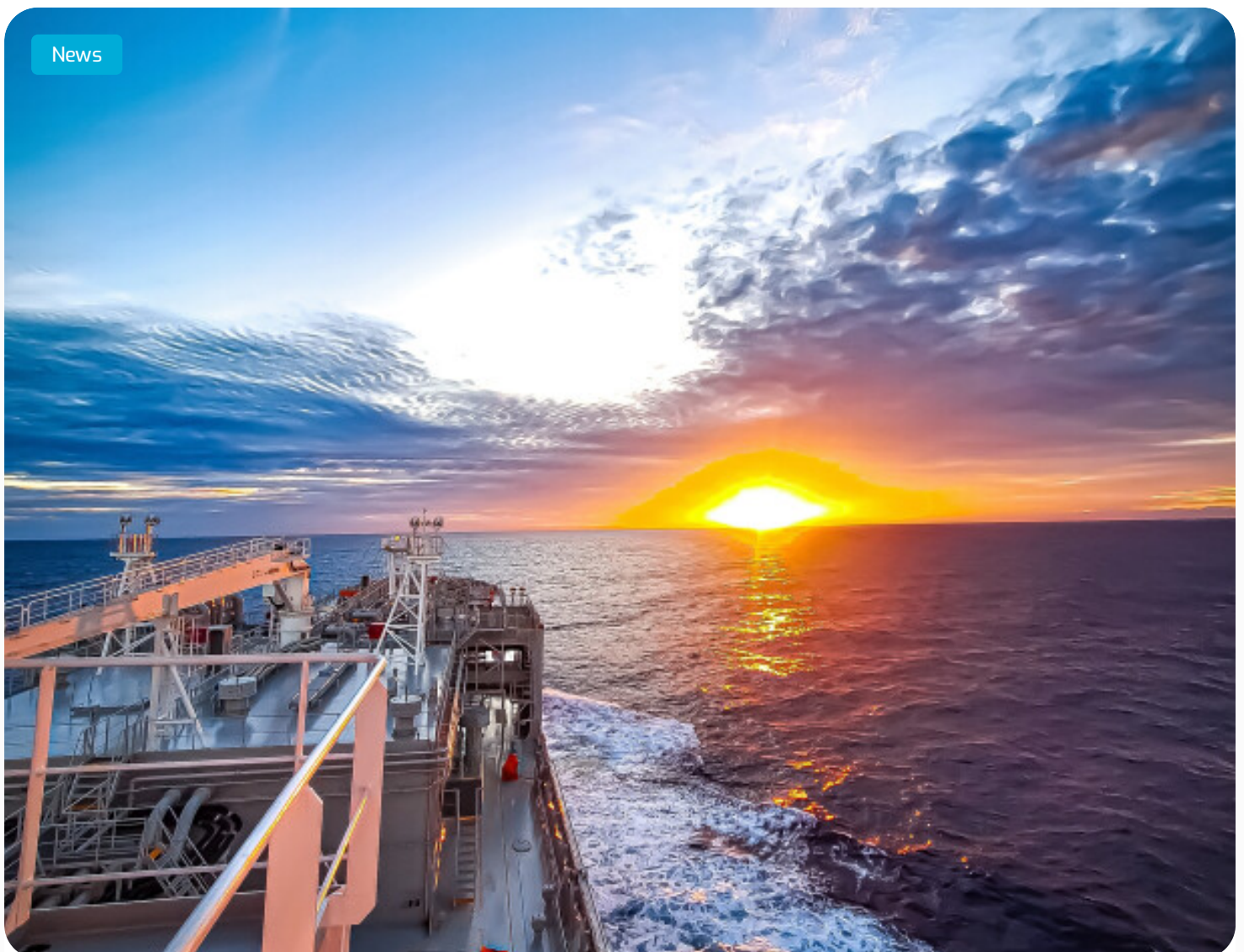
**Magda Kopczynska**, Director-General of DG Mobility and Transport of the European Commission and thus an important policymaker for European transport policy, echoed this message, emphasizing the crucial role of seafarers in the digital and energy transition. According to Magda Kopczynska, investing in their skills is essential.

**Kurt Vandenberghe**, Director-General of General Climate Action at the European Commission, participated in the panel on the competitiveness of the industrial cluster. It was made clear there that there is still too much fragmentation within the European internal market, creating barriers to funding clean maritime technology and fuels.

**Mohammed Chahim**, on behalf of the PvdA as a member of the European Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, spoke in the panel on geopolitics and shipping. In this panel, it was emphasized how dependency on third countries for fuel supply can pose a risk and the importance of being vigilant about whom we depend on when importing ship fuels.

**Jeannette Baljeu**, member of the European Renew Europe group on behalf of the VVD, spoke in the panel on accelerating fuel transition. In the panel, it was again emphasized that it is vital for EU ETS revenues to flow back to the maritime sector for the development and scaling up of clean fuels. Additionally, Jeannette noted that the sector's sustainability efforts must continue, but that the accompanying reporting obligations and administrative burdens should not hinder shipowners. It is important to harmonize the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive in national legislation to maintain a level playing field in Europe.

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