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Subject: Council Conclusions on the EU Industrial Maritime Strategy

Delegations will find in the Annex the Council Conclusions on the EU Industrial Maritime Strategy, as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 8 June 2026.

Council Conclusions on the EU Industrial Maritime Strategy

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

HAVING REGARD TO

- the Commission Communication on the EU Ports Strategy ¹;
- the Commission Communication on the EU Industrial Maritime Strategy ²;
- the Council Conclusions on "EU Waterborne Transport Sector – Future outlook: Towards a carbon-neutral, zero accidents, automated and competitive EU Waterborne Transport Sector" ³;
- the Council Conclusions on the EU Ports Strategy ⁴;
- the Council Conclusions on "Priorities for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2020: Competitiveness, Decarbonisation, Digitalisation to ensure global connectivity, an efficient internal market and a world-class maritime cluster" ⁵;
- the Council Conclusions on "A competitive European industry driving our green, digital and resilient future" ⁶
- the Council Conclusions on the European Ocean Pact ⁷

RECALLING that Europe is a waterborne continent and that maritime manufacturing, shipping, ports and related services form a comprehensive strategic ecosystem for the Union's strategic autonomy, industrial and technological leadership, resilience, defence capabilities, economic security, prosperity, decarbonisation and sustainable use of marine resources, including their role in strengthening supply chain resilience and energy security;

¹ Doc. ST 6926/26
² Doc. ST 6987/26
³ Doc. ST 8648/20
⁴ Doc. ST 10345/26
⁵ Doc. ST 9976/17
⁶ Doc. ST 10127/24
⁷ Doc. ST 15807/25

RECOGNISING the importance of a strong, innovative, competitive and sustainable European waterborne ecosystem and ACKNOWLEDGING the challenges related to global competition, decarbonisation, digitalisation, security and workforce shortages;

RECALLING the Lefkosia Declaration of the European Union Ministers responsible for Maritime Affairs on Enhancing Seafarers' Education and Training and Promoting Equal Participation of Women in the Shipping Industry;

STRESSING the need for coordinated action across the Union, Member States and stakeholders;

1. WELCOMES the Commission Communication on the EU Industrial Maritime Strategy and RECOGNISES it as a comprehensive framework for strengthening the EU maritime and inland navigation ecosystem; WELCOMES and SUPPORTS its objective of strengthening the competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of this ecosystem.

I. BUILD, EQUIP & REPAIR

2. SUPPORTS strengthening EU maritime manufacturing sector for industrial sovereignty, resilience and technological leadership, while preserving an open, fair and competitive global market environment.
3. EXPRESSES CONCERN about trade distortions and unfair subsidisation from third countries affecting EU maritime industries, including cost disparities linked to energy prices, and CALLS for researching options to strengthening the protection of the EU maritime industrial base against unfair competition, including through existing trade defence instruments to ensure a level playing field and support European competitiveness, in line with international agreements, considering that Regulation (EU) 2016/1035 on protection against injurious pricing of vessels cannot be applied due to the non-ratification of the 1994 OECD Shipbuilding Agreement⁸.

⁸ Agreement Respecting Normal Competitive Conditions in the Commercial Shipbuilding and Repair Industry (1994); [OECD Legal Instruments](#)

4. ACKNOWLEDGES that a substantial share of equipment and technology suppliers in the maritime value chain are European; RECOGNISES that maintaining and strengthening a critical mass of maritime manufacturing capacities in Europe, such as shipbuilding and design, ship repair, conversion, maintenance, retrofitting, recycling, maritime equipment and ocean engineering, as well as systems integration and related subcontracting services across the maritime value chain is essential for the Union's prosperity, sovereignty, strategic autonomy and technological leadership, and UNDERLINES that equipment and technology suppliers with diversified portfolios beyond strictly maritime applications should also be adequately covered by relevant measures.
5. CALLS for a strategic use of public procurement and tendering procedures in order to strengthen EU maritime manufacturing and support the competitiveness and resilience of the maritime value chain, including, when appropriate, the targeted use of non-price requirements like sustainability, circularity and European content, while respecting internal market rules, international obligations and national priorities.
6. SUPPORTS the launch of an EU Industrial Maritime Value Chains Alliance and ENCOURAGES its rapid establishment to foster industrial cooperation and identify strategic investment priorities, while ensuring strong industry and member states' involvement, with a clear mandate and governance framework. CALLS FOR the development of national and regional maritime clusters bringing together shipyards, equipment manufacturers, SMEs, research centres, universities, design offices, financial institutions and public authorities. Such ecosystems can accelerate innovation, improve industrial cooperation, strengthen supply chains and facilitate access to finance, especially for SMEs.
7. SUPPORTS the rollout of the "Shipyards of the Future" initiative, including through Horizon Europe, and CALLS for accelerated uptake of digital, clean and circular technologies, including AI-driven and sensing technologies, automation, robotics and smart maintenance solutions, in shipyards. Also CALLS for dedicated measures for small and medium-sized shipyards, particularly in cohesion regions, islands and peripheral areas, in order to support digital transformation, automation, clean technologies, retrofit capacity and participation in EU value chains.

8. EMPHASISES the importance of simplifying permitting procedures, including through relevant EU initiatives that respect the principle of subsidiarity, to facilitate industrial expansion and decarbonisation investments.
9. WELCOMES the development of a coordinated pipeline of public and strategic demand, including where appropriate, to support the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of European shipyards including through dual use synergies, without imposing additional administrative burden.
10. RECOGNISES the importance of modular construction, standardisation and series production approaches to enhance efficiency, as well as the importance of focusing on high-value market segments such as cruise ships, ferries, military vessels, offshore wind support vessels and converter platforms, cable-laying vessels, research vessels, dredging vessels, recreational crafts, icebreakers and Arctic vessels, and the need to strengthen EU production capacity in advanced and low- and zero-emission vessels, and CALLS for prioritizing investment into advanced shipbuilding, clean propulsion systems and waterborne innovation clusters to ensure global competitiveness. RECOGNISES also the strategic importance of ferries, RoPax vessels and short sea shipping vessels for European connectivity, territorial cohesion, emergency preparedness and military mobility, and calls for strengthening European production capacity in these segments.
11. NOTES that 97 % of the world's fleet of cruise ships is built in Europe and that cruise represents 80 % of the commercial ship order book value for European shipyards, which makes cruise key to maintain and strengthen European complex shipbuilding as well as marine equipment capabilities in the European maritime cluster at large.
12. CALLS for strengthened international alignment for ship recycling, including enhanced coherence between the Hong Kong Convention and the Basel Convention and with the aim to reach full alignment between international rules and the EU Ship Recycling Regulation⁹, and SUPPORTS efforts to expand sustainable recycling capacity including within the EU, RECOGNISING its role in securing secondary raw materials and preserving technology know-how in Europe.

⁹ Regulation (EU) No 1257/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on ship recycling and amending Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 and Directive 2009/16/EC

13. INVITES Member States to prioritise investments reducing strategic dependencies and ENCOURAGES industry to enhance digitalisation, modularity and value chain cooperation.
14. RECOGNISES the important role of SMEs, including small and medium-sized shipyards, specialised maritime equipment manufacturers, marine technology suppliers and subcontractors in specialised markets including newbuilding and retrofitting activities supporting decarbonisation and innovation.
15. RECALLS the importance of integrated maritime spatial planning and adequate dock capacity to support the maintenance and servicing of, inter alia, naval vessels and INVITES the Commission and Member States to ensure that maritime industrial and transport needs, are adequately taken into account.

II. TRANSPORT & CONNECT

16. UNDERLINES the strategic role of waterborne transport for EU and global connectivity and trade, while emphasising its central importance for the EU's economic security, strategic autonomy, internal market integration, as well as its essential contribution to the resilience of supply chains; REAFFIRMS the importance of maintaining a stable and predictable State aid framework for maritime transport, as a key element in safeguarding the global competitiveness of European shipping, and HIGHLIGHTS the importance of ensuring a level playing field at global level and preserving the global competitiveness of European shipping.
17. HIGHLIGHTS the risk of competitive distortions, including traffic diversion to ports in third countries, and the need for appropriate measures to mitigate such risks, taking into account the exposure of the maritime sector to international competition and its central role in global logistics chains.
18. UNDERLINES the importance of maritime connectivity for islands, island Member States, peripheral and outermost regions, and Overseas Countries and Territories, including through public service obligations, for territorial cohesion, supply security and tourism.

19. RECOGNISES that European shipowners are key drivers of demand across the maritime industrial ecosystem and the importance of maintaining a competitive and attractive European fleet, including under EU flags, for ensuring economic security, supply chain resilience and global competitiveness, and ACKNOWLEDGES the crucial role of the bulk/tramp sector, which accounts for 75% of EU shipping, in safeguarding the energy and food security of EU Member States; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of specific segments such as inland, RoRo and RoPax vessels particularly in support of island connectivity, strategic maritime links and territorial cohesion services for supply chains, mobility and as testbeds for alternative fuels and innovative technologies, as well as ferries and short sea shipping vessels for European connectivity, territorial cohesion, emergency preparedness and military mobility, and RECOGNISES their potential to evolve into high-value segments, including in a dual-use context and CALLS for strengthening European production capacity in these segments.
20. STRESSES that, in the event of the adoption of global measures in line with the goals of the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy, appropriate adaptations to the FuelEU Maritime Regulation, the MRV Regulation and the Maritime EU ETS will be required in order to effectively avoid double financial payments and administrative burdens and to ensure harmonised implementation and coherence with international regulations while safeguarding the competitiveness of the European maritime sector and the Union's objectives to achieve climate neutrality by 2050; and ENCOURAGES simplification, where appropriate, of monitoring, reporting and verification frameworks under EU ETS Maritime and FuelEU Maritime.
21. NOTES the importance of preserving the EU recognised classification system as the cornerstone of safety assurance in the context of high-quality shipping as referenced in the Industrial Maritime Strategy, and STRESSES that Mutual Recognition arrangements should remain limited to non-safety-critical equipment in order to maintain the highest level of safety and confidence.

22. CALLS FOR enhanced efforts to improve market access for European shipping services, including through the effective use of EU trade agreements and appropriate support for bilateral maritime arrangements compatible with Union law.
23. ACKNOWLEDGES the need to strengthen cooperation at international level on maritime chokepoints and global partnerships.
24. SUPPORTS the establishment of EU Green Shipping Lanes and Hubs and coordinated deployment of sustainable maritime fuels, including innovative solutions for low-emission technologies.
25. UNDERLINES the need for predictable transitional frameworks for the uptake of alternative fuels and technologies, taking into account their availability and infrastructure development, in order to avoid carbon leakage and disruptions in connectivity; RECOGNISES that transition costs may have impacts on connectivity and prices, particularly for island, island Member State, icebound and outermost regions' economies; CALLS for targeted support measures to mitigate disproportionate impacts.
26. STRESSES that the decarbonisation of shipping requires the active involvement of all actors across the waterborne value chain, including fuel producers and suppliers, and HIGHLIGHTS the importance of ensuring the timely availability of safe and sustainable alternative fuels in sufficient quantities and at competitive prices. NOTES that the availability and infrastructure for bunkering new fuels depends on the market uptake of such fuels.
27. RECALLS the importance of using EU ETS revenues for climate-related purposes and ENCOURAGES Member States, in accordance with national priorities, to support the decarbonisation of the maritime sector across the value chain, including shipping companies, shipyards, retrofitting projects, equipment manufacturers, technology providers, fuel suppliers and ports, and ENCOURAGES Member States to make use of revenues generated from the inclusion of shipping in the EU ETS to support the energy transition of the sector, including fleet renewal, green retrofitting, island maritime transportation services, alternative fuels and port energy infrastructure.

28. EMPHASISES the importance of high maritime safety standards, including quality shipping through effective implementation and enforcement of legislation, and SUPPORTS further work on safety frameworks in light of new fuels and technologies.
29. CALLS FOR simplification and digitalisation of administrative procedures, including digital certificates and including full implementation of the European Maritime Single Window environment (EMSWe) and future Customs Data Hub interconnectivity; INVITES the Commission to deliver on remaining implementing measures and avoid additional administrative burdens for the maritime sector; ENCOURAGES the Commission to work together with the Member States towards simplification and streamlining national and EU reporting requirements, in consultation with the maritime and ports industry.
30. ENCOURAGES Member States to complete EMSWe implementation and streamline reporting requirements.

III. SECURE & PROTECT

31. RECOGNISES increasing maritime security threats and the significant risk the shadow fleet¹⁰ poses to maritime safety and security, critical maritime infrastructure and the marine environment; UNDERLINES the need for the EU to strengthen its resilience, preparedness and defence capabilities, including against hybrid threats in the maritime domain and by enhancing situational awareness; EMPHASISES the importance of protecting critical maritime infrastructure, reinforcing the resilience of supply chains, particularly in light of the evolving geopolitical challenges. CALLS FOR enhanced civil-military cooperation and international partnerships to ensure maritime security.
32. SUPPORTS, where appropriate, the strengthening of naval industrial and technological capacities, including through relevant EU initiatives.

¹⁰ As defined in IMO Resolution A.1192(33)

33. EMPHASISES the importance of strengthening maritime domain awareness through the integration of advanced technologies and systems, including equipment, software, operational procedures and skills needed to enhance overall resilience through a multi-domain surveillance approach including undersea, surface, air, and space elements; SUPPORTS enhanced data exchange and interoperable systems between civilian and military actors to create a common maritime picture.
34. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of underwater technologies and infrastructure, as well as the development of dual-use maritime capabilities to enhance the EU's capacity to respond to hybrid, cyber and geopolitical threats in the maritime domain.
35. RECOMMENDS a coordinated EU approach to developing infrastructure serving both civilian and military needs, across all European sea basins and regions, particularly those that are strategically sensitive, and RECOGNISES the importance of dual-use vessels, including ferries, with particular relevance for island resilience, emergency preparedness, civil protection and strategically important sea routes, and WELCOMES strengthened monitoring and enhanced surveillance capacities.
36. RECOGNISES the key role of Short Sea Shipping in strengthening the resilience of the European transport system and enhancing regional connectivity and ENCOURAGES further measures to support its development, including by reducing administrative burdens.
37. ENCOURAGES Member States to make full use of EU initiatives to strengthen maritime security and their defence capabilities; INVITES the Commission to allocate resources in order to develop a dual-use ferry construction support mechanism.
38. EXPRESSES CONCERN about the huge amounts of unsafe ammunition in European and international coastal waters and oceans which were previously dumped in the context of wars and military conflicts. ENCOURAGES cooperation between Member States, international organisations and the industries to raise greater awareness with the aim of jointly promoting technical solutions and their applications which enables to identify, monitor and, if possible, recover and dispose dumped ammunition in an environmentally friendly manner.

IV. ACCESS TO INNOVATION

39. UNDERLINES the importance of innovation for maintaining EU leadership in maritime technologies and supporting the twin green and digital transition, and EMPHASISES the importance of promoting investment, innovation and technological development in the waterborne sector, as key drivers of competitiveness and sustainability.
40. SUPPORTS development of global regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies, including electrification, carbon capture, wind propulsion, hydrogen and other alternative propulsion technologies, such as nuclear technologies, while ensuring a technology-neutral approach that allows innovation to progress in line with market needs and safety requirements.
41. SUPPORTS innovation in safe autonomous and remotely operated vessels and underwater robotics applications and improved access to testbeds and regulatory sandboxes.
42. ACKNOWLEDGES the need for strong research and innovation support, building on existing public-private partnerships and programmes, including the continuity of the Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport Partnership (ZEWT) and related networks, while ensuring that innovation funding effectively translates into industrial upscaling and deployment and supports production capacity also in the wider blue economy, including fisheries and emerging ocean energy technologies, in areas such as energy efficiency, digitalisation and safety, and STRESSES the importance of addressing non-technical barriers such as regulatory constraints, operational requirements and cross-border inconsistencies that limit large-scale deployment.
43. WELCOMES initiatives to map and expand access to research infrastructures for SMEs and innovators. STRESSES the importance of safeguarding EU technological assets and know-how.
44. SUPPORTS the creation of EU testbeds, pilot projects and demonstration platforms for ferries, hybrid vessels, electric vessels, smart shipyards and digital maritime solutions, with active participation of island Member States.

V. ACCESS TO FINANCE & INVESTMENT

45. RECOGNISES the significant investment needs for decarbonisation, digitalisation and industrial transformation, including the need to ensure transparency, predictability and legal certainty for economic operators, and STRESSES the need for EU financial instruments to support and de-risk the investments required for the decarbonisation and digitalisation of the maritime sector, including the production and distribution of sustainable marine fuels and the development of emerging offshore renewable energy technologies.
46. CALLS FOR further improvements to the Innovation Fund, with a view to enhancing access for all shipping segments, in particular SMEs, and CALLS FOR a more targeted approach taking into account the specific characteristics of different shipping segments, including the bulk/tramp sector, and EMPHASISES the need to consider financial instruments and support measures ensuring effective access to funding for SMEs in the waterborne sector, including ferries and short sea shipping serving island connectivity and CALLS FOR greater clarity and accessibility regarding the various EU funding instruments and mechanisms available to the maritime sector, with a view to ensuring their effective uptake by Member States and industry stakeholders. Particular attention should also be given to financing newbuilding, fleet renewal, retrofitting, conversion, repair-related decarbonisation investments and equipment upgrades across the maritime industrial value chain, in a manner relevant to both short sea and ocean-going shipping.
47. UNDERLINES that the decarbonisation of the maritime sector requires substantial investment over a prolonged transition period including to modernise European fleets, upgrade infrastructure and enhance the accessibility and affordability of sustainable maritime fuels and HIGHLIGHTS the importance of enabling the modernization and industrial transformation of European shipyards and maritime industries undertaking newbuilding, retrofitting and conversion projects.
48. WELCOMES EU funding initiatives, including Connecting Europe Facility calls, Innovation Fund support and InvestEU mobilisation.

49. SUPPORTS mobilisation of public and private finance, including through advisory platforms and project pipelines, while recognising the importance of ensuring that regulatory frameworks and support measures are realistic, fit-for-purpose and aligned with market capabilities without reducing regulatory safeguards, and HIGHLIGHTS the need for stable and transparent support mechanisms to enable long-term industrial planning and, ENCOURAGES Member States, the EU and the private sector to develop a European alternative to the leasing model used in third countries.
50. ENCOURAGES Member States, in accordance with national priorities, to consider supporting maritime decarbonisation and industrial investments, including by identifying potential candidates for Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI).
51. RECOGNISES the need for stable, long-term financing, especially for SMEs, and for more coherent funding instruments; URGES simplification of key EU funding programmes, including the Connecting Europe Facility, Horizon Europe, InvestEU and the Innovation Fund, and the removal of regulatory barriers; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of the future European Competitiveness Fund to drive decarbonisation, new technology deployment and EU industrial leadership. ENCOURAGES examination of possibilities to support European maritime technologies; and HIGHLIGHTS the need for accessible financing tailored to small, island, island Member State, peripheral and outermost regions' economies, as well as economies of the Overseas Countries and Territories.
52. UNDERLINES the importance of adequate European financing tools and blended finance schemes for shipyard modernization, green retrofits, fleet renewal for strategic segments, such as ferries, maritime clusters, SME maritime suppliers, zero and low-emission vessels and digital transformation of maritime industries.
53. SUPPORTS the exploration of a dedicated European mechanism for the renewal of passenger and RoPax fleets serving islands and remote regions, combining cohesion, transport, climate and industrial policy objectives.

VI. ACCESS TO SKILLS AND QUALITY JOBS

54. **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the EU maritime transport sector is struggling with shortage of skilled professionals, an ageing workforce and demanding working conditions, which together affect its long-term resilience and competitiveness.
55. **RECOGNISES** the importance of a skilled workforce, including seafarers and shipyard workers, for competitiveness, innovation and resilience, and **HIGHLIGHTS** the need to attract and retain a qualified workforce across the maritime and port sectors, while respecting Member States' competences in education and training systems and promoting cooperation and mobility.
56. **HIGHLIGHTS** the importance of maritime education and training, including up-skilling and re-skilling, in order to ensure the availability of a qualified and future-proof maritime workforce; **OUTLINES** the need for retraining and up-skilling of the existing workforce of the shipbuilding and repair sector in order to develop new specialised skills and meet modern demands arising from the adoption and use of innovative propulsion, digital and automation technologies; **CALLS** for the support of quality and rewarding jobs, making the sector more attractive; **ACKNOWLEDGES** the importance of initiatives to raise awareness and increase young people's interest in the shipbuilding and maritime industries.
57. **COMMITTS** to uphold the attractiveness of the EU maritime sector by adopting and implementing measures that ensure fair working conditions for all seafarers, in full accordance with the standards prescribed under the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006) and relevant EU legislation.
58. **CALLS** for a coordinated European initiative on maritime skills, reskilling and vocational excellence for shipyard workers, marine engineers, electricians, automation specialists, alternative fuel technicians and seafarers.