



Commission launches EU Industrial Maritime and Ports Strategies to boost competitiveness across the maritime sector

Brussels, 4 March 2026

Today, the European Commission adopted a **EU Industrial Maritime Strategy** and a **Ports Strategy** to drive **competitiveness, sustainability, decarbonisation, security** and **resilience** within the EU's wider waterborne sector. The Strategies focus on ports, shipping, and shipbuilding.

Europe is a waterborne continent, with the world's largest collective maritime area. Its **maritime manufacturing sector** is a **global leader in high-end shipbuilding** and **advanced technologies**. The shipping sector is also a leading provider of maritime services worldwide, accounting for **more than one third of global shipping tonnage** across all segments.

EU Industrial Maritime Strategy boosts jobs, innovation and the EU's global leadership in shipbuilding and shipping

The EU Industrial Maritime Strategy will strengthen Europe's maritime leadership by a number of actions including launching an **EU Industrial Maritime Value Chains Alliance**. It is aimed at advancing high-tech shipbuilding, offshore wind support vessels, underwater drones, and cutting-edge port equipment. A **'Shipyards of the Future'** R&I flagship call, under Horizon Europe, will also support the testing of innovative solutions in real-world shipyard environments, with the goal of scaling successful technologies across Europe. To foster competitive shipping, the Commission will establish a dialogue with Member States to promote EU flags and streamline administrative formalities, including the monitoring, reporting and verification framework for EU ETS Maritime and FuelEU Maritime.

The Strategy will leverage public demand and funding to promote private investment in innovation and digitalisation of the EU shipbuilding, as well as the renewal and decarbonisation of the shipping fleet, including through the inclusion of targeted non-price criteria in the upcoming review of the public procurement directives.

The Strategy ensures fair global competition for EU shipyards and equipment manufacturers, reinforced through strengthened export financing and targeted trade policies, including a possible sector specific tool for the sector. Furthermore, it fully reflects the dual-use nature of the sector by integrating a strong military dimension, with specific actions including the ramp-up of naval industrial production capacities and the development of a dual-use ferry construction support mechanism.

Finally, its measures enhance skills, training, and quality employment across the maritime sector, including re-skilling shipbuilding workers and seafarers to adopt new technologies and green operational practices.

EU Ports Strategy to ensure competitive, sustainable and safe ports

Ports are the backbone of Europe's economy. They facilitate around **74% of external trade**, handling more than **3.4 billion tonnes of goods** and nearly **395 million passengers** each year.

The EU's ports are already evolving beyond their traditional roles, serving as hubs for new industry and innovation clusters. They also play a pivotal part in the EU's energy supply, security, defence and blue economy.

To accelerate this transformation and ensure the competitive position of EU ports, the Commission will promote their innovation, digitalisation and integration with other transport infrastructure, develop guidance on foreign ownership of EU ports and **for EU funding and investments in third-country ports**. To advance EU ports' clean energy transition, the Strategy presents measures promoting **electrification** and **improved grid connection**. It will also set out a **roadmap for**

competitive small and medium-sized ports.

Ports are also crucial entry and exit points, making them prime targets for external threats and organised criminal groups. Building up on the EU Ports Alliance, the Commission will explore ways to further strengthen maritime security legislation to prevent drug trafficking, effectively address emerging threats and enhance EU supply chain security. Therefore, the Commission will propose **frameworks for conducting port workers' background checks** and **for assessing third-country ports**. A new forum will be established to facilitate the exchange of best practices among Member State cybersecurity and port authorities. Furthermore, an EU-wide security risk assessment will be carried out to identify the most pressing cybersecurity risks and measures to mitigate them.

To ensure effective implementation of the Strategies, the Commission will establish **a high-level Maritime Industries and Ports Board**, chaired by the responsible Commissioner and Executive Vice-Presidents.

Background

The Strategies were announced as key initiatives in Commissioner Tzitzikostas' [Mission Letter](#) and as flagship actions within the [EU Competitiveness Compass](#) and the [European Ocean Pact](#). In July 2025, the Commission held [two high-level Strategic Dialogues](#) with industry stakeholders to discuss expectations for the Strategies. Similarly, stakeholder dialogues with European port CEOs in May 2025 and on port security in November 2025 fed into the Strategies.

For more information

Communication – EU Ports Strategy

Communication – EU Industrial Maritime Strategy

[Questions and answers](#) – EU Ports Strategy and EU Industrial Maritime Strategy

[Factsheet](#) – EU Ports Strategy

[Factsheet](#) – EU Industrial Maritime Strategy

[News item](#) – EU Ports Strategy

[News item](#) – EU Industrial Maritime Strategy

[Webpage](#) – EU Ports and Industrial Maritime Strategies

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Quote(s):

"Europe's maritime manufacturing and shipping industries are fundamental to our sovereignty. They are key enablers of our strategic autonomy, security, and resilience. Our strategy will not only increase manufacturing capacities in Europe but also support 'Made in EU' leadership for specific vessels segments, technologies and innovation. The Industrial Maritime Strategies reflect our new method, based on a strategic dialogue and delivering a business-plan approach covering all strategic pillars for the value chain : from decarbonisation to digitalisation challenges, from boosting demand to ensuring a level playing field and integrating dual-use specificities, with simplification measures and new dedicated financing."
Stéphane Séjourné, Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy - 04/03/2026

"Ports, maritime manufacturing and shipping are essential for the European Union's competitiveness, security and cohesion, especially in an increasingly volatile geopolitical environment. The maritime ecosystem connects Europe's territories and its regional economies with our global partners, offering opportunities to people and business across the Union. The Industrial Maritime and Ports Strategies provide an integrated and comprehensive approach that builds on the strengths of these industries and their workforce. They aim to modernise, support and, where necessary, protect the sector, while mobilising public and private investment in people, infrastructure, and the autonomy and security of the EU's maritime infrastructure and operations. "
Raffaele Fitto, Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms - 04/03/2026

"With our EU Ports and Industrial Maritime Strategies, we are equipping Europe's ports, shipping and shipbuilding sectors to lead the clean energy transition, secure trade and defence, and remain globally competitive. They renew our ambition for European maritime leadership, reinforcing economic security, driving sustainable growth, and supporting quality jobs and territorial cohesion across Europe. Working hand in hand with industry and all relevant stakeholders, we will turn these Strategies into concrete results and anchor Europe as the leading waterborne continent."
Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism - 04/03/2026

"Ports are vital gateways to our internal market, yet they are increasingly targeted by trafficking networks, organised crime and corruption. With today's EU Ports Strategy, we are strengthening security through enhanced background checks of port workers, deeper engagement with partner countries and public-private partnerships under the Ports Alliance. Already, EUR 200 million has been mobilised to upgrade customs scanning, container inspection and risk-analysis tools at major EU ports. Now we need to extend this to include smaller ports as well."

Magnus Brunner, Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration - 04/03/2026

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