



ECSA's Recommendations on the European Oceans Pact

ECSA welcomes the opportunity to give inputs on the forthcoming European Oceans Pact. ECSA, representing European shipowners, believes that the Oceans Pact must consider opportunities and preserve a prosperous European shipping industry. Controlling 39.5% of the global tonnage, European shipping is an asset and a cornerstone of EU's energy, food and supply chain security. Making Europe a leader in global supply chains, European shipping contribute to the resilience and competitiveness of EU's economy, which is heavily reliant on trade.

ECSA believes that the Oceans Pact must be framed in a broader context, especially concerning the strategic role of European shipping for EU's security and strategic autonomy. As a strong maritime industrial cluster is crucial for the green and digital transition, the Oceans Pact should be developed in synergy with initiatives such as the Clean Industrial Deal, and the Maritime Industrial Strategy. ECSA recommends that the European Oceans Pact should consider the following elements:

- **European shipping must stay internationally competitive.** Maintaining a level playing field between European shipping and its non-European competitors is crucial for retaining shipping companies in Europe, and for fostering a thriving European maritime cluster. A fit-for-purpose regulatory and taxation framework is crucial to ensure that EU shipping companies remain globally competitive.
- **Invest in industrial capacity for clean shipping fuels, as well as for green and digital technologies - At least 40% manufactured in Europe.** The European Oceans Pact should be closely linked to the Clean Industrial Deal to ensure the scale up the production of low- and zero-carbon fuels for shipping and of state-of-the-art innovative technologies for the green transition of shipping. This would strengthen the maritime value chain. Member States should swiftly implement a 40% manufacturing benchmark for low- and zero-carbon fuels for shipping and of state-of-the-art innovative technologies under the Net-Zero Industry Act for key technologies. The provisions of FuelEU Maritime and of RED III should be strengthened by introducing a mandate on fuel suppliers to produce in the EU at least 40% of the marine fuels needed to comply with the FuelEU Maritime targets.
- **Ensure access to finance for key investments.** The EU ETS revenues should be used to bridge the price gap between conventional fuels and low and zero carbon fuels, notably via dedicated maritime mechanisms, Auctions-as-a-Service or Grant-as-a-Service. It is also crucial to enhance European ship finance through a diversity of financing and funding tools, involving banking finance, capital markets and private investors to enable better risk sharing of innovative and transitional projects, taking into account the characteristics and *modus operandi* of all shipping segments.
- **People-centred transition.** The European Oceans Pact, closely linked to the Maritime Industrial Strategy, must acknowledge the need to invest in new skills



for the green and digital transition of shipping. 800.000 seafarers need to be reskilled for the green transition by mid-2030. The Commission and the Member States must support the joint efforts of the social partners, ECSA and ETF, to make our workforce future-proof.

- **Production of renewable offshore energy:** Shipping is an enabler of the production of renewable offshore energy. European Shipowners are leaders in the field of offshore installation and service vessels. To foster the energy security and the decarbonisation of Europe, retaining technologies leadership in offshore installation and service vessels is critical.
- **Maritime spatial planning** is key to safety of navigation for all the users of the sea. The existing consultation process with local communities, sea users and neighbouring countries has helped ensure that existing shipping lanes are considered when developing national maritime spatial plans.
- **Ensure collaboration along the maritime value chain:** the competitiveness and decarbonisation of ships depend on several actors along the value chain, from shipyards, equipment manufacturers, shipowners, ports and fuel suppliers.
- **Protecting marine biodiversity:** Reducing underwater radiated noise is essential to minimise disturbances to marine life, particularly species sensitive to acoustic pollution. Similarly, biofouling management is key to preventing the spread of invasive species. The European Oceans Pact should ensure that EU measures are aligned with IMO guidelines regarding regular hull cleaning and monitoring using eco-friendly methods while encouraging the adoption of non-toxic, long-lasting coatings. In addition, the European Oceans Pact should promote knowledge on measures preventing whale strikes, such as routing measures in high-risk areas while ensuring safe and efficient navigation.

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