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Shipping will not have to pay twice under both European and potential international rules aimed at curbing its CO₂ emissions.

The European Union commissioner for sustainable transport, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, told Greek shipowners that while they currently have to abide by the regional FuelEU Maritime and Emissions Trading System, they will not have to fear double payment as or when the IMO finalises a Net-Zero Framework.

“Let me be crystal clear. Shipping companies will not have to pay twice to EU and IMO,” he told an audience in Athens at the official opening of Posidonia 2026.

“This is something everyone needs to understand.”



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He also said he sees it as important that the revenue the EU draws in from the industry through its regional schemes is invested back in shipping to support clean fuel development, new propulsion systems and new technologies.

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In a speech to a large audience that included IMO secretary general Arsenio Dominguez and Union of Greek Shipowners president Melina Travlos,

Tzitzikostas hinted at a possible softening of the European position at the IMO regarding the Net-Zero Framework.

“The majority of the IMO wishes to have a framework to reduce emissions, but shipping is 2% of the global problem, so we have to be realistic with the framework and lean to the concerns of the sector,” he said.

“The EU has now got a new negotiation mandate to find consensus.

“But these measures, I want to be clear, they must be just, realistic, applicable and protect European and Greek competitiveness.”

Tzitzikostas mentioned a proposed European Competitiveness Fund that is being discussed by the European Commission.

The measure would enhance the bloc’s industrial position and promote innovation, which he said would also be used to support shipping’s transition.

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Dominguez recognised the position of the Greek shipowner community, particularly on issues such as the position of LNG as a clean fuel.

“We listened in October,” he said, referring to the decision to postpone key climate talks for a year.

“But bear in mind we are 176 member states.”

Travlos responded by saying that shipping needs to have realism to have a green transition, pointing to how shipowners rely on other sectors such as fuel makers and technology firms to be able to transition.



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Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis expressed the hope that other European member states would join Cyprus and Greece in pushing for a change in the EU line at the IMO.

“We can’t sacrifice our leadership to the altar of an excessive climate ambition with measures that might be pointless or even punitive,” he said.

“I am certain that objections by other shipping member states of the EU will be taken into account in shaping the European position during IMO talks, so that we can have a workable solution as soon as possible.”

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