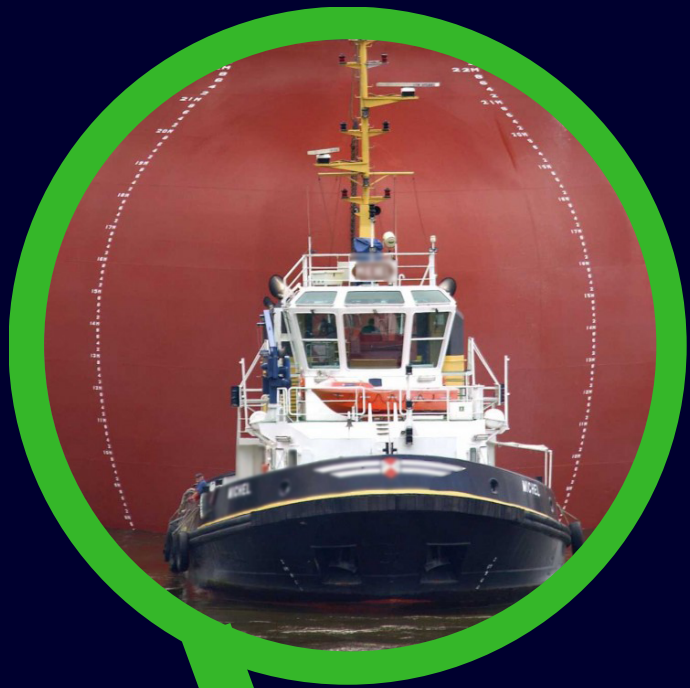




Newsletter May 2021



ETA welcomes the new EU Blue Economy Communication

The European Commission published its Communication on a New Approach for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the EU. This document works as a coherent European strategy involving all EU policies linked to the blue economy sectors (transport, energy, tourism, fisheries...). The communication underlines the essential role that all maritime and marine sectors play in order to reach the EU green and digital transition goals.



The Blue Economy sector is fundamental for the economic development of the continent as it provides 4.5 million direct jobs and generates €218 billion gross value added. It encompasses all industries and sectors related to oceans, seas and coasts, whether they are based in the marine environment (e.g. shipping, fisheries...) or on land (e.g. ports, shipyards, land-based aquaculture...).

The communication highlights the importance of short-sea shipping as an alternative to the more polluting transport modes. Thus, the Commission aims at using EU funds to support the uptake of this type of shipping and renovate the EU's maritime fleet in order to improve its energy efficiency and finance highly-advanced manufacturing in European shipyards. Moreover, the communication outlines the EU Commission plans to revise the Ship Recycling Regulation to extend its scope and reinforce the existing regime.



ETA welcomes the Sustainable Blue Economy Communication as it gives more clarity and coherence to the EU policies and actions. The maritime and marine cluster can play a fundamental role in the transition to a greener economy while generating new business opportunities and jobs. There are plenty of synergies to explore and create between the different actors in the blue economy sector.

The EU Commission has also published the 2021 Blue Economy Report which provides an overview of the performance of the EU-27 economic sectors related to oceans and the coastal environment. This year's edition also contains an overview of the impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 crisis on the EU Blue Economy.





The EU Commission publishes a new study on maritime taxonomy

The European Commission released a new study assessing which forms of maritime transport and related activities can be considered sustainable. The document is linked to the ongoing work on the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance and the Taxonomy Delegated Act published last month. The EU Taxonomy is intended to increase investment in sustainable activities across all economic sectors.

The EU Taxonomy will be aligned with the work and measures approved by the IMO to reduce shipping emissions, but at the same time, it will also take into account the EU's

targets on climate neutrality that could require actions that go beyond what is currently proposed by the IMO. Moreover, the EU Taxonomy technical criteria should also respect technology neutrality, and thus, not choosing a specific pathway as there is no single solution at the moment to replace fossil fuels. Due to the transitional nature of the shipping activities, the technical screening criteria are proposed to be time-bound, i.e. until 2025 and beyond 2025.



IMO adopts a resolution demanding priority vaccination for seafarers

The 103rd session of the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 103) adopted a resolution on "Recommended action to prioritize COVID-19 vaccination of seafarers" urging IMO member states to include seafarers among the priority groups in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

Member states are also recommended to exempt seafarers from any measures requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a condition for entry in the country, taking into account

that seafarers should be designated as "key workers", since the nature of their work obliges them to cross borders frequently. Moreover, IMO member states should develop plans, where feasible, to provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support the vaccination of seafarers. This resolution also invites governments, international organizations and shipping companies to inform seafarers about the safety and possible benefits of the COVID-19 vaccination, while respecting the seafarer's personal decision on accepting or rejecting the vaccine.



The EU maritime cluster meets with Searica Intergroup MEPs for the first time

The main European maritime stakeholders together with the European maritime cluster meet up together for a first historic meeting with some MEPs from Searica Intergroup. Whereas the maritime stakeholders often liaise together this is the first time that a meeting was organized with MEPs where we all had the opportunity to present our associations and our priorities to the MEPs together and also answer their specific questions on the sector.

Questions ranged from competition within Europe to competition with the rest of the world,

green targets and reactions of the sector. Also there were questions about the life cycle of vessels and the preparedness of ports for the green deal. The meeting lasted just over an hour and a half and there was a general consensus to repeat such a historic meeting.

Searica is the he Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup of the European Parliament. It is composed of just over 100 MEPs and deals with maritime policy covering the Blue Economy, Climate, Maritime Transport, Fisheries, Research, Tourism and Biodiversity.

