



European Tugowners Association

Strategic ports, sustainable industry: Charting Europe's maritime course **11th November 2025, BIP Center, Brussels**

The conference will explore the future role of Europe's ports and port services in the context of the upcoming European Maritime Industrial Strategy and European Port Strategy, which will set the course for the EU's maritime policy in the years ahead. The event will provide a space to discuss how ports can become essential hubs for clean energy, innovation, resilience and trade while remaining competitive and how the port services industry can remain a strategic asset within the port ecosystem. Furthermore, these strategies could be the cornerstone of a EU industrial policy that may help the shipbuilding and equipment industries recover their competitiveness in a period of geopolitical tension and rising global competition.

Programme:

10.00 – 10.30 Registration

10.30 – 10.40 Conference opening by the ETA Deputy Chairman Holger Schwesig

10.40 – 10.45 Introduction by the moderator Anna Maria Darmanin (ETA Secretary General)

10.45 – 11.15 Navigating the Future: The EU Port Strategy and Sustainable Maritime Transport - Torsten Klimke (Head of the Unit – Ports and Inland Navigation, DG MOVE)

11.15 – 11.45 Europe's Maritime Industrial Strategy: Building Resilience and Competitiveness - Dario Bazargan (Policy Officer, DG GROW)

11.45 – 12.15 SEA Europe's perspective on the European Industrial Maritime Strategy - Christophe Tytgat (Secretary General SeaEurope)

12.15 – 12.45 Ports at the Heart of Europe: Private Sector Insights on the EU Port Strategy - Lamia Kerdjoudj (Secretary General FEPORT)

12.45 – 13.00 Empowering People: Human Capital as the Strategic Asset in Port Services - Aileen Van Raemdonck (Secretary General EMPA)

13.00 – 13.05 Wrap up and closing by the moderator

13.05 Networking lunch

Speakers' profile

Holger Schwesig is the Managing Director of Fairplay Towage Group, and serves as Deputy Chairman of the European Tugowners Association. With a career spanning several decades in the shipping and towage industry, Holger has held senior leadership roles across multiple regions, including Switzerland, Africa, and Italy, notably as Country Managing Director for Hapag-Lloyd AG before joining Fairplay in 2018. Renowned for his strategic vision and operational expertise, Holger has overseen complex market expansions, developed innovative sales strategies, and fostered strong client relationships throughout his career. Holger has been elected ETA Deputy Chairman in June of 2025.

Torsten Klimke is the Head of Unit for Ports and Inland Navigation at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE). In this role, he oversees EU policy on ports, inland waterways, and their integration into sustainable and smart transport systems. Klimke has been a key figure in shaping the EU Port Strategy and implementing regulations such as FuelEU Maritime and the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation, which mandate onshore power supply for ships by 2030. His career spans leadership in transport innovation, sustainable shipping, and shipbuilding competitiveness within the Commission, as well as earlier work in air traffic management and the Single European Sky initiative.

Dario Bazargan is a Policy Officer at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), where he plays a pivotal role in shaping Europe's maritime industrial strategy. With a background in European Union law and extensive experience in maritime policy, Dario is known for his expertise in fostering collaboration between EU institutions and industry stakeholders. He has previously held advisory roles with leading maritime organisations, and is deeply involved in advancing the competitiveness and resilience of Europe's shipbuilding and shipping sectors.

Christophe Tytgat is Secretary General of SEA Europe – the Shipyards' and Maritime Equipment Association of Europe – and CESA. Since 2021, he has been a member of the "Consultative Commission on Industrial Change" of the European Economic and Social Committee. Prior to that, Christophe was a board member of the research association "VESSELS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION" and the "WaterborneTP Technology Platform". Before joining SEA Europe/CESA, Christophe held various positions at the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA) and worked for the Belgian federal administration (Foreign Affairs Office and Maritime Transport Administration).

Lamia Kerdjoudj is the Secretary General of FEPORT, the Federation of European Private Port Companies and Terminals since March 2014. She has a professional experience of more than 27 years during which she held different positions within the maritime and logistics sector. Among others, she has been for more than seven years the Public Affairs manager of the French Shipowners' Organization. She has also worked for private companies and corporations and has been in charge of consulting and business development assignments for large multinational companies.

Aileen van Raemdonck has led the European Maritime Pilots Association since 2018, following her role as European Policy Advisor for Brabo Harbour Pilots in Antwerp. Prior to joining Brabo, she spent five years working in various capacities within the European Parliament, including as a Researcher, Accredited Parliamentary Assistant, and Assistant to the Policy Advisor of the Legal Affairs Committee. Ms. van Raemdonck holds a Master's degree in Law, specializing in European and International Law, from the University of Antwerp.