

Press release

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IndustriAll Europe and SEA Europe agree on joint priorities ahead of the 2024 EU elections

SEA Europe and industriAll Europe - the social partners for shipbuilding and ship repair - jointly call upon the next European Commission to issue a robust EU maritime industrial strategy. This call, echoing the Antwerp Declaration for a European Industrial Deal - emphasises the urgent need to fortify strategic European industrial sectors amid geopolitical dynamics.

The proposed European maritime industrial strategy will enable European shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers, as well as their employees, who have first-class expertise, to maintain Europe's position as global technology leader whilst regaining strategic markets and tapping into emerging markets. To that end, the EU must not only safeguard but also reinforce its industrial production capacity.

The key pillars of a future European maritime industrial strategy are four-fold: reinforce Europe's industrial sovereignty and competitiveness; a supportive regulatory framework; reinforce Europe's technological leadership; and attract a skilled workforce. Policy recommendations are the introduction of "Made in Europe" requirements in strategic public procurement markets; the introduction of financial incentives to narrow the price gap between European and Asian shipyards; and conditionalities in EU financial instruments to prevent investments outside Europe.

To attract a skilled workforce, the social partners propose, amongst others, to better promote the maritime technology industry as an attractive sector, to develop a Just Transition policy framework to anticipate and manage changes in the maritime industries, with access to quality training for all workers at its core, or to support companies' efforts to upskill and reskill workers.

Besides calling for a maritime industrial strategy, the social partners also re-emphasise the importance of the Shipbuilding Pact for Skills and reiterate the need to set up a Maritime Expert Group to discuss and elaborate the proposed policy recommendations. SEA Europe and industriAll Europe furthermore stress the significant role of social dialogue and workers' participation in building a sustainable and resilient maritime technology industry.

Isabelle Barthès, Deputy General Secretary of industriAll Europe: "The maritime technology industry can have a green and prosperous future, and there is a real opportunity for Europe to lead in this important field. European workers have a vital role to play in this respect. We urge policymakers to support the sector and its workers. Our call is for a sectoral industrial strategy for the maritime sector with a dedicated investment plan, subject to social conditionalities which ensure quality jobs and strong social dialogue."

Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General of SEA Europe: "Now is the time for action; the EU must issue as a matter of urgency a sectoral strategy for the maritime technology industry against the background of growing geopolitical tensions and uncertainties. By taking this urgent initiative, EU policymakers will safeguard and reinforce Europe's industrial capabilities, strategic autonomy, defence, and technological leadership whilst tapping into the business opportunities offered by the twin green and digital transition and emerging markets. A resilient and well-supported industry will also foster job stability, empower Europe's workforce, and drive economic growth and prosperity."

[Link to the joint position](#)