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Geachte Voorzitter,

Op 17 en 18 juli 2025 vond de informele Raad voor Concurrentievermogen plaats in Kopenhagen. Deze Raad stond in het teken van de onderdelen onderzoek & innovatie en interne markt & industrie. Met deze brief stuur ik u het verslag van de Raad. Het verslag over het onderdeel onderzoek en innovatie stuur ik u mede namens de minister van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap.

Tevens maak ik graag van deze gelegenheid gebruik om het position paper ‘Call for a Resilient and Competitive European Maritime Industry’ met uw Kamer te delen. Dit gezamenlijke Nederlands-Duitse paper biedt concrete bouwstenen voor de totstandkoming van een Europese Maritieme Industriestrategie en wordt inmiddels door meerdere lidstaten gesteund. Dit paper is gedeeld met de Europese Commissie, zodat het als input kan dienen voor de *European Maritime Industry Strategy* waar de Commissie aan werkt.

Vincent Karremans
Minister van Economische Zaken

<u>Onderzoek en Innovatie (17 juli 2025)</u>

Dit deel van het verslag is mede namens de minister van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap en gaat enkel over het onderzoeks- en innovatiedeel van de Raad.

Een gezamenlijke Europese inspanning voor de ontwikkeling van strategische technologieën
Beleidsdebat

De Raad besprak op welke manier lidstaten beter kunnen samenwerken om sterke Europese onderzoeksecosystemen op het terrein van strategische technologieën te creëren.

Het voorzitterschap gaf aan dat onderzoek & innovatie belangrijk is voor de autonomie van de EU. Als de EU een leidende positie in kan nemen op strategische technologieën, versterken we ons concurrentievermogen. Hiervoor is het noodzakelijk dat lidstaten over grenzen heen samenwerken in sterke ecosystemen en hierin zowel publiek als privaat investeren. Deze samenwerking moet niet alleen resulteren in ontwikkeling van strategische technologieën maar deze technologieën moeten ook commercieel kunnen worden toegepast. Dit kan alleen als opschaling richting markt verbeterd wordt.

De lidstaten onderschreven dat om de positie van de EU te versterken, de samenwerking tussen ketenpartijen (o.a. kennisinstellingen en bedrijven) via ecosystemen versterkt moet worden. Hiertoe zijn ook talent en infrastructuren nodig. De beste partijen dienen in ecosystemen met elkaar te worden verbonden. Dit kan wel betekenen dat niet alle lidstaten een dergelijke partij binnen hun grenzen hebben. Dit vraagt om coördinatie op EU-niveau waarbij lidstaten nauw betrokken worden.

Lidstaten gaven verder aan dat er naast opschaling richting de markt ook maatschappelijke acceptatie nodig is voor technologische ontwikkelingen, anders zal implementatie lastig zijn.

Nederland onderschreef dat we in ecosystemen dienen samen te werken aan strategische technologieën om onze gezamenlijke uitdagingen aan te pakken. Om tot de beste oplossingen te komen moeten de activiteiten in de lidstaten complementair aan elkaar zijn. Er moet focus aangebracht worden en middelen dienen te worden gebundeld. Het is belangrijk dat we ecosystemen beter en gerichter benutten. Nederland verwelkomde in het bijzonder de focus op start-ups en scale-ups om het concurrentievermogen te versterken. Het is belangrijk dat er gerichte opschalingsmogelijkheden voor start-ups en scale-ups zijn.

De Europese Commissie stelde dat ze in het volgende Meerjarig Financieel Kader ecosystemen wil versterken en ook wil inzetten op de noodzakelijke infrastructuren om strategische technologieën te ontwikkelen. Dit vraagt om de juiste investeringen via Horizon Europe, maar zeker ook om de juiste regelgeving, zoals ingezet onder de start-up en scale-up strategie[1].

Onderzoeks- en innovatie-inspanningen in het volgende MFK
Beleidsdebat

Op 17 juli besprak de Raad het voorstel van de Europese Commissie voor een eigenstandig kaderprogramma voor onderzoek en innovatie welke een dag voor dit debat (16 juli) was gepubliceerd.

Eurocommissaris Zaharieva presenteerde het voorstel en benadrukte het belang van een eigenstandig en sterk Horizon Europe met een afgebakend budget. Het programma zal bijdragen aan een sterk en welvarend Europa, zowel voor bedrijven als samenleving waarbij fundamenteel en ongebonden onderzoek wordt gezien als de cruciale basis voor innovatie. Daarnaast wordt de samenwerking tussen publieke en private instellingen versterkt zodat er meer impact kan worden bereikt. Tevens is er in het voorstel meer aandacht voor opschaling van innovaties. Deze inzet levert een belangrijke bijdrage aan het verhogen van publieke en private investeringen in onderzoek en innovatie in de lidstaten en het bereiken van de doelstelling om minimaal 3% van het bruto binnenlands product (bbp) van de Unie aan onderzoek en ontwikkeling te besteden. Een grote wijziging ten opzichte van het huidige kaderprogramma is dat het voorgestelde programma niet langer enkel civiel zal zijn, maar ook inzet op dual-use onderzoek en innovatie. Om impact te vergroten is er een sterke koppeling tussen Horizon Europe en het Europese Concurrentievermogenfonds (ECF). Het is nu zaak om gezamenlijk de voorstellen verder uit te werken.

Lidstaten gaven aan niet vooruit te kunnen lopen op budgetten en standpuntbepaling met betrekking tot het Meerjarig Financieel Kader. In reactie op de presentatie van de Eurocommissaris deelden lidstaten wel eerste indrukken. Hierbij werd een eigenstandig kaderprogramma met een afgebakend budget verwelkomd, onder meer vanwege de belangrijke rol die onderzoek en innovatie hebben als fundament voor concurrentievermogen. Ook werd er positief gereageerd op voortzetting van de pijlerstructuur waarbij de hele kennisketen wordt ondersteund via het excellentiecriterium. Het voorstel sluit aan bij de adviezen van o.a. Mario Draghi. De openheid van het programma en de mogelijkheid tot deelname van niet-EU-landen werd breed verwelkomd. Er werd wel aangegeven dat de samenhang tussen het ECF en Horizon Europe nog niet duidelijk is en nadere uitwerking verdient, onder andere ten aanzien van de implementatie van dual-use. Ook stelden lidstaten dat de rol van nationale overheden en veldpartijen in de governance van Horizon Europe nog niet goed gedefinieerd is.

[1] Fiche 1 EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy | Publicatie | Rijksoverheid.nl

In navolging van de andere lidstaten verwelkomde Nederland het voorstel voor een eigenstandig Horizon Europe dat zowel aan het korte als aan het lange termijn concurrentievermogen bijdraagt en waarbij de hele kennisketen bediend wordt door middel van de voorgestelde pijlerstructuur. Ook verwelkomde Nederland de inzet vanuit de Europese Commissie om in te zetten op versimpeling voor deelnemers.

Uw Kamer wordt, via de BNC-procedure, nader meegenomen in de beoordeling van het voorstel voor het tiende kaderprogramma voor onderzoek en innovatie.

Interne markt en industrie (18 juli 2025)

Introductie

Het onderdeel interne markt & industrie stond in het teken van kritieke technologieën, in het bijzonder kwantum- en biotechnologie.

Het Deens voorzitterschap stelde in een plenaire sessie dat Europa kansen misloopt in de commercialisatie van academisch onderzoek. De boodschap was dan ook dat het Europees innovatiepotentieel drastisch omhoog moet om het EU-concurrentievermogen te versterken. Daarbij riepen de door het voorzitterschap uitgenodigde sprekers uit de biotechnologiesector op tot minder regelgeving, snellere vergunningenprocedures en meer investeringen.

De verschillende (niet besluitvormende) beleidsdiscussies vonden plaats in break-outsessies met vijf andere lidstaten. Nederland was ingedeeld met Cyprus, Hongarije, Kroatië, Spanje en Zweden. De standpunten van andere lidstaten zijn daarom niet in deze discussies besproken. Wel zijn er aan het einde plenaire conclusies gedeeld.

Versterking van het concurrentievermogen van de EU op biotechnologie

Beleidsdebat

De oorlog in Oekraïne, de assertieve opstelling van China, en toegenomen geopolitieke concurrentie op gebieden zoals energie, technologie, voedsel en gezondheid leiden tot druk op het wereldwijde economische systeem. Daarmee hebben deze geopolitieke ontwikkelingen de urgentie voor open strategische autonomie vergroot. De Raad besprak hoe schone technologieën zoals biotechnologie daarin een sleutelrol kunnen spelen.

Een van de belangrijkste conclusies van de lidstaten tijdens deze break-outsessie was dat de EU in de ontwikkeling van biotechnologie zowel snelheid als veiligheid moet bieden, waarbij gezien de huidige geopolitieke situatie extra focus moet komen op snelheid. Daarbij is vereenvoudiging van de regelgeving cruciaal. EU-harmonisatie en *regulatory sandboxes* zijn effectieve manieren om de regelgeving te vereenvoudigen en innovatie te bevorderen. Nederland benadrukte het belang van een faciliterend regelgevend kader met oog voor veiligheid voor mens en milieu.

Verder is het voor het optimaliseren van innovatiepotentieel nuttig als de EU ervaringen uit de gezondheidssector gebruikt in andere biogebaseerde sectoren zoals voeding, landbouw en materialen. Voor schaalvergroting kan de EU inspiratie opdoen in andere regio's waar infrastructuur voor schaalvergroting en risicodragend kapitaal aanwezig is. Verder zal nauwe en vroegtijdige publiek-private samenwerking helpen bij het inspelen op de behoeften van de consument en de industrie en zo de marktvraag versterken.

Ondernemerschap en innovatie
Beleidsdebat

Tijdens deze break-outsessie besprak de Raad welke randvoorwaarden geschept moeten worden om concurrentievermogen te bevorderen en de innovatiekloof met andere marktblokken te dichten. Ook hier werden versnelde vergunningverleningsprocedures en eenvoudige regelgeving genoemd. Een concreet idee dat hierbij naar voren werd gebracht was het oprichten van een feitenbank en om belanghebbenden van elkaar te laten leren om zo flexibelere regelgeving en eenvoudigere procedures voor EU-marktgoedkeuring tot stand te brengen. Ook de aangekondigde voorstellen voor een 28ste regelgevend regime en een innovatieverordening werden hierbij genoemd.

Tot slot werd het belang genoemd van het vergroten van het bewustzijn van commercialisering in de instelling van onderzoekers en het bevorderen van nauwere samenwerking tussen onderzoek en bedrijven.

Concurrentievermogen van de schone energie-industrie
(Lunchdebat)

Tijdens het lunchdebat besprak de Raad welke Europese initiatieven bijdragen aan het adresseren van de knelpunten voor het concurrentievermogen van de schone energie-industrie. Vragen die opkwamen waren bijvoorbeeld hoe publiek-private samenwerking kan worden gestimuleerd en hoe de waardeketens voor deze sector kunnen worden versterkt.

Nederland heeft gepleit voor de ontwikkeling van Europese *lead markets* voor de versnelling en afname van schone energietechnologieën en voor een degelijke en samenhangende uitvoering van de Net Zero Industry Act. Daarnaast heeft Nederland het belang benadrukt van overkoepelende maatregelen die het gelijk speelveld versterken en die tegelijk bijdragen aan de verduurzaming van de Europese schone energie-industrie.

The Netherlands, Germany, France, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Belgium and Luxembourg Call for a Resilient and Competitive European Maritime Industry

The Netherlands, Germany, France, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Belgium and Luxembourg call for a Maritime Industry Strategy aimed at enhancing the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of Europe's maritime industry and welcome that it is part of the Competitiveness Compass of the European Commission. The strategy was requested by the Council in its conclusions on "A competitive European industry driving our green, digital and resilient future" adopted on 24 May 2024 in para. 7:

> "**CALLS ON** the Commission to develop a new strategy that supports the European maritime industry, which is vital for the EU's strategic interests, in the digital and clean transition and that encompasses all the dimensions of the sector's competitiveness;"

We also welcome the assignment of Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism, to develop this strategy, as outlined in his Mission Letter of 17 September 2024. Additionally, we welcome Mario Draghi's report on a competitive Europe and the exigencies of the clean and digital transitions, which also highlights the relevance of the maritime industry.

The new maritime industry strategy should achieve the following goals:

- Strengthening the competitiveness of the European industrial maritime sector on the basis of technological and decarbonization leadership.
- Incorporating a strategy for the recruitment and continuing education of skilled workers to ensure the match between skills and labour market demands and access to know-how that contributes to a dynamic and competitive maritime industry.
- Enabling the technological and clean transition in the maritime sector, by fostering innovation and facilitating long-term visibility for access to sustainable fuels for the industry. This includes among others things working on advanced materials, sustainable alternative fuels and its certification, clean technologies and marine renewable energy.
- Driving the digitalisation and (digital) technologies in the maritime sector, including artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, blockchain, quantum computing, advanced sensing and internet of things.
- Strengthening the maritime security and defence sector, e.g. to protect critical maritime and underwater infrastructures, in particular in the current geopolitical context.
- Seizing opportunities for the maritime industry that come with strengthening the offshore energy infrastructure, including offshore wind and the promotion of marine renewable energies to achieve EU green goals.

The maritime sector works as an interconnected value chain. The focus of the strategy should be on the strengthening of the whole interconnecting value chain of the maritime or waterborne industry which includes, among others, knowledge institutes, suppliers, shipbuilders including ship repair and conversion and shipowners as demand drivers – as it has been also defined in the Transition pathways for the EU Mobility Industrial Ecosystem[1]. Therefore, we are looking for measures that are related to the whole value chain from the perspective of strengthening the maritime industry. Other subsectors of the maritime industry that already have a dedicated strategy, such as ports which are addressed in the EU Port Strategy, should not be the main focus. The strategy should take into account dependencies with and impacts on subsectors, especially the shipping sector, security and defence, and marine renewable energies sectors, to best benefit from available synergies

Key issues and the call upon the Commission

1 *The strategic importance of the maritime industry*

The European shipbuilding industry has developed impressive high-end technology capabilities, which were unrivalled until recently allowing it to build the most complex and demanding ships in the world. More than 300 shipyards in Europe produce an annual production value of about 43 billion EUR. European shipyards build and export the most complex and technologically advanced civil and naval vessels worldwide. More than 22,000 big, small or medium-sized maritime equipment suppliers generate an annual production value of about 70 billion EUR.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/57674

The shipbuilding industry is highly strategic for the prosperity and resilience of the European economy, defence and autonomy insofar as:

- Shipbuilding is essential for global trade. 90% of the world's goods are transported by ship. The EU's exports of goods accounts for 15% of global exports of goods and the EU's imports of goods accounts for 14% of global imports of goods.
- Shipping and shipbuilding are essential for the worldwide transition to renewable and low-carbon energies, which constitute a great opportunity for growth in European industry. The European shipbuilding and marine equipment industry together with the shipping industry play an important role as facilitators for the energy transition.
- The industry provides for critical enablers to build and maintain energy infrastructures at sea, such as specialized vessels, converter platforms, floating platforms, foundation structures for building offshore-wind energy or for hydrogen and hydrogen-based derivate infrastructures.
- Shipbuilding is an essential part of security, as well as underwater and defence. Geopolitical tensions cause increasing risks which are affecting both the world economy and international as well as national security. Effective defence requires a strong and resilient European security and defence industry that can operate efficiently and deliver high-end capabilities, adequate to protect national interests and sovereignty, including critical infrastructure in the maritime domain, which facilitates the continuous delivery of basic services such as energy and communication. This also applies to naval shipbuilding, including arctic capabilities. A resilient and innovative, strategically independent, European naval shipbuilding industry is a prerequisite for ensuring maritime security but also for a resilient and innovative commercial shipbuilding industry, and vice versa.
- The maritime industry plays a crucial role in climate adaptation and flood protection, both from rising sea levels and river flooding. The development of advanced dredging vessels is essential for climate resilience, enabling effective river and delta dredging, as well as the construction and maintenance of dikes and coastal defences.

We ask the Commission to:

- Incorporate an analysis of the strategic importance of the European maritime industry for safeguarding vital European interests, such as security, defence, sovereignty and autonomy, and estimate the strategic elements in the interconnected maritime value chain in the new European Maritime Industry Strategy with a view to increasing its resilience. This should also include a mapping of the projected global demand and the competitive advantages and disadvantages of the European maritime industry within different segments.
- Consider the maritime industry as an important pillar in security and defence policies, essential in the current geopolitical context characterised by growing international tension, given the synergies and strengths for security, defense and military capability arising from a maritime industry at the technological forefront.

2 *Ensuring a Level Playing Field*

While being world market leaders with regard to complex high-end ships including underwater solutions, the European shipbuilding and marine equipment industry have been facing a fierce competition in the volume markets including all cargo-carrying ship types over recent decades. As a result, Europe's market share has dropped from 45% in terms of ship volume in gross tonnage in the eighties to less than 4% nowadays.

This seriously threatens the continued existence of a robust shipbuilding and marine equipment industry which, in turn, contributes to strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy, economic security, climate mitigation and adaptation capability, energy transition, military security and defence, vital infrastructure at sea and underwater, and prosperity. This negative trend must be reversed to retain and strengthen our maritime know-how, innovative capabilities and technologically advanced industry in the entire maritime value chain.

European maritime companies are experiencing increasing global competition. The current situation is one in which many European shipowners choose non-European shipbuilders over European shipyards – due to price differences of more than 30% – and European shipbuilders choose to build (partly and sometimes fully) ships at non-European shipyards. These choices are, at least partly, driven by non-market forces and non-market interventions in non-European countries, through policies that have at times been characterised by unfair competition and protectionism, with the potential to distort trade and encourage offshoring and disinvestment decisions.

Due to specificities of the shipbuilding sector, WTO rules that tackle unfair competition (anti-dumping and anti-subsidy) do not apply. Meanwhile, the EU Foreign Subsidy Regulation ("FRS") may bring only limited relief. The complex nature of the shipbuilding market, including long lead times and customized orders, makes it difficult to apply standard injurious pricing and anti-dumping measures. Furthermore, ships are often not directly imported into the EU and many European companies are part of an international supply chain and might source components from non-EU countries.

In 2016, the Commission issued a recasted version of regulation on "the protection against injurious pricing of vessels" to safeguard the European Union's shipbuilding industry from practices that could harm competition, specifically targeting unfair pricing by non-EU shipbuilders. The regulation relies on the principles outlined in the Shipbuilding Agreement negotiated under the OECD and will apply from the date of entry into force of the Shipbuilding Agreement. However, as this agreement has never been ratified by the U.S., it has not entered into force and the regulation is not applied. Thus, a new framework should be sought.

We ask the Commission to:

- Adopt a coordinated response to protect the European maritime sector and particularly industry from competition-distorting practices with aligned European and national policies.
- Develop and implement additional measures aimed at protecting core European maritime technologies and know-how. Such models should include measures to slow down or prevent the transfer of strategic innovations to non-EU countries, especially in Asia. This could involve incentives to implement at national level, such as export control mechanisms, intellectual property safeguards, and tighter screening of foreign investments in sensitive maritime technologies critical for national security.
- Coordinate with Member States in order to jointly reinforce their efforts for carbon pricing globally and to solicit support for the adoption and effective implementation of the IMO Net Zero Framework,
- Pursue sector-specific solutions within the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework that ensure a level playing field and seek amendments that better address the unique nature of the maritime industry. As for the OECD Shipbuilding Agreement, the Commission should continue to engage with U.S. administration; and, in the meantime, propose as soon as possible a "quick fix" of the (EU) 2016/1035 Regulation to have it applied before the ratification of the OECD agreement by all its signatory parties.
- Continue to support the work of the OECD Informal Expert Group (IEG) on the Sector Understanding on Export Credits for Ships to define criteria for green ships
- At the same time explore the possibility for agreements with likeminded third countries that also face unfair competition.

3 *Creating a modern, innovative and competitive maritime industry*

The goal of strengthening the competitiveness of the European maritime industry requires a multifaceted approach. Other than positioning the industry to rise to the above-mentioned challenges, it is important to strengthen the industry and modernise our shipbuilding industry together with its suppliers, with structural changes that support the development of a philosophy based on innovation and cutting-edge technological progress. Green and digital solutions are important drivers for the flourishment of the maritime industry and have the potential to create benefits for the whole value chain of the maritime sector including shipping companies, seafarers and maritime administrations, in terms of efficiency and reduction of administrative burdens. The shipbuilding industry needs modernisation through a focus on clean and automated production technologies to sustain and enhance competitiveness. To achieve leadership ambitions, it is essential that private investments scale in an effective manner. European cooperation can be a means to this end as international partnerships are increasingly important for accessing critical technologies and markets, balancing economic opportunities with safety and sectoral needs. In driving digitalization forward in the maritime industry, emerging technologies and innovations will be important.

In addition, it is important for the EU member states to work together within the sector to compete on a global scale, where further decarbonisation and digitisation of the entire maritime industry could contribute to a more competitive sector in the long run. The scale of the EU market and with that the EU maritime industry should be sufficiently sizeable to compete internationally.

The competitiveness of European shipyards cannot be considered in isolation. It needs to reflect the interests of the rest of the supply chain as well, including that of European shipowners who are fiercely competing with Asian shipowners. To reflect the importance of this industry for European economic security, the European Commission should analyse – in consultation and coordination with EU Member States and the maritime stakeholders – whether additional non-pricing criteria are justified in balancing market distortions in third countries; if so, they could benefit European shipyards, maritime equipment manufacturers and shipowners. Exploring the possibilities to access existing funds for innovation might also in this regard be helpful.

We ask the Commission to:

- Analyse whether there are single market barriers and regulatory burdens in the EU that hinder the growth of the maritime sector, simplifying and speeding up the regulatory environment, reducing the administrative burden on companies in the European maritime industry and favouring a flexible regulatory environment that supports investment and technological progress. To this end it may be necessary to analyse the possibility of improving and simplifying the procedures faced by the European maritime sector when applying for and obtaining public funding.
- Analyse whether additional non-pricing criteria in public procurement policy, including for offshore wind energy, dredging and naval shipbuilding, are justified in order to balance unfair competition from third countries and to guarantee strategic autonomy, whilst ensuring that measures are in line with the EU's international obligations, including the WTO and bilateral trade agreements.
- Facilitate and strengthen collaboration between, knowledge institutes, engineering firms, technology providers, shipowners and shipbuilders across the entire chain, to optimize the strategic important elements of the maritime sector. As an example, in the context of research, development, innovation and the deployment of innovations, anchoring a partnership instrument in the future EU Research Framework Programme without prejudice to the next Multiannual Financial Framework, could be considered.
- Adopt mechanisms that allow the use of technological advances developed in defence and security in the civil maritime industry.
- Explore the possibilities and appropriateness to access funds for investment in research, development and innovation accelerating technological advantages and their early implementation in the market, including automation.
- Explore the possibilities and appropriateness to access funds for investment in decarbonisation and clean technologies manufactured in the EU, including those for the production of marine renewable energy, that promote demand and market development, whilst taking into account the sectors' specificity.
- Explore the potential and need for a European initiative for standardization of inland waterway vessels, offshore infrastructure such as converter platforms and seagoing coasters, as series construction can reduce construction costs by a significant double-digit percentage.
- Explore the possibilities in education and training of workers, ensuring a match between skills and labour market demands and promoting a cutting-edge industry

4. Ensuring access to and exploring possibilities for financing

The maritime sector heavily relies on capital-intensive investments, the required and envisioned greening of shipping will add to that. Environmentally friendly shipping requires significant investments in innovative, clean, and safe fuels and propulsion technologies as well as in training for new skills. Although fossil fuels today are still less costly, shipowners are already investing in the transition to alternative fuels to align with the broader IMO- and European goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving environmental sustainability in the shipping sector.

However, the costs that come with greener ships and fuels due to risks across the maritime industry remain significant.

The shipbuilding sector faces severe challenges as the initial costs are high and the construction phase is long. Moreover, there is a high default risk given the substantial sums involved and the cyclical nature of the industry and the complex nature of shipbuilding contracts including risk-sharing mechanisms that complicate financing arrangements.

It has become challenging for yards and shipowners to obtain the extra capital needed to produce, buy, retrofit or operate innovative and environment-friendly ships. As alternative fuels are still not available nor easily usable (in quantities and distribution due to some infrastructural bottlenecks) in all ports, and pricing of the fuels is not only higher but due to the developing market still unstable, shipowners must invest in expensive sustainable technologies which elevate the commercial risk of investing at scale. At the same time, various Asian countries continue to expand their market share through favourable financing for newbuilding orders and retrofits. Moreover, Chinese, Japanese and Korean banks offer very attractive ship finance and favourable financial incentives to shipowners, whilst keeping the ownership of the vessels, which they lease to shipowners (including European shipowners).

We acknowledge that the discussion on the future European funding will be held within the negotiations on the upcoming MFF post 2027. Current programs must respect the ceilings and existing financial means of the current MFF. Additionally, a possible role of the European Investment Bank in addressing the financial challenges of the maritime industry could be explored while safeguarding EIB's financial sustainability.

We ask the Commission to:

- Use existing (public-private) financial programmes within the limits set by a reviewed EU and WTO framework, and by setting incentives for shipowners for projects to build and retrofit vessels in Europe with green and environment-friendly ambition and as an important stimulus for shipbuilding in Europe. Explore ways to incentivise the demand for and the production of sustainable alternative fuels to reinforce the demand for green shipbuilding projects in Europe. Continue exploring additional regulatory measures and measures that increase private investments aimed at mitigating the price difference between fossil fuels and sustainable alternative fuels to support the market ramp-up of alternative fuels and to help shipowners in the clean transition.
- Without prejudice to the next Multiannual Financial Framework, explore ways to develop a defence programme that brings together military mobility and the various aspects of strengthening the European defence industry (R&D, procurement, production capacity, and resilience). Explore financial instruments within the existing financial means that provide competitive financing options for European shipbuilders where justified due to market distortions.
- Without prejudice to the next Multiannual Financial Framework, explore ways to provide adequate support R&D in shipbuilding technologies.