

## SEA EUROPE MARITIME TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

### THE EU SHOULD FIGHT FOR ITS MARITIME TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

7 March 2017

On 2 March, SEA Europe held its first Maritime Technology Conference in Brussels. The conference marked the beginning of the European Maritime Technology Week: a week of various events and activities in EU Member States to raise awareness about the career opportunities in the maritime technology sector.

The Conference was a success with more than 200 participants, coming from the EU institutions, the EU agencies and various maritime and other stakeholders.

The Conference aimed at highlighting the fact that Europe still has a very active, innovative and successful maritime technology sector. European shipyards build, maintain, repair or convert very sophisticated commercial and navy ships, whilst European maritime equipment manufacturers and suppliers produce and export advanced and innovative technologies, systems and equipment for commercial and navy purposes.



The European maritime technology sector consists of more than 300 shipyards and more than 22,000 enterprises. Together they produce an annual turnover of € 91 billion, creates employment for more than 900,000 people and invest till 9% of their sales in Research, Development and Innovation (one of the highest RDI investments in Europe).

The Conference underlined the success story of the European maritime technology sector but warned against complacency in the light of the industry's following three main challenges:

- (1) Remaining constantly ahead of global competitors in terms of innovation, including with technologies that allow the maritime industry to meet the environmental agenda or to move towards enhanced digitalization, connectivity between shore and ship and automation.
- (2) Fighting for a global level playing field and fair competition, against a background of increased trade protectionism (Jones Act, local content requirements) or ongoing massive state aid support from Asian authorities for their local shipyards, resulting in distortion of competition, trade imbalances and overcapacity.
- (3) Finding the right skills and ensure proper education and training of workforce that allow the industry to build complex ship types or to produce advanced and innovative technologies, systems and equipment.

*"The Conference aimed at making policy-makers and maritime stakeholders aware that Europe still has a dynamic and innovative maritime technology sector, of which Europe should be proud of. At the same time, Europe and its policy-makers should realize that the success of today should not be taken for granted", said Christophe Tytgat, SEA Europe's Secretary General. "The many challenges that our industry is facing, not least the distortive practices from our global competitors should make the EU understand that there is a clear need to cooperate with the industry to keep the sector in Europe".*

*"What happened in the past with cargo ship building can happen again with the niche ship building segments or with the maritime equipment industry in Europe if EU policy-makers are not vigilant", he added. "In 15 years' time, Europe lost almost all orders for the newbuilding of tankers, bulkers and containerships to Asia as a result of the Asian massive state aid support that distorted the market. With the current overcapacity in the market and the growing trend towards trade protectionism or the increased geo-political and maritime ambitions of China, the European maritime technology sector is again facing tough times. If Europe lets us down again, it risks to lose an economically and strategically important industry. We cannot let that happen!", he concluded.*

Background Note:

*SEA Europe brings together CESA and EMEC and represents an industry which generates more than €91 billion turnover annually and offers employment in high profile jobs for more than 500 000 Europeans. The association represents close to 100% of the European shipbuilding industry in 18 nations, encompassing the production, maintenance, repair and conversion of all types of ships and floating structures, commercial as well as naval including the full supply chain with the various producers of maritime systems, equipment material, and services.*

For further information please visit [www.seaeurope.eu](http://www.seaeurope.eu) or contact:

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