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Press release

SEA Europe urges the European Commission to uphold European added value condition for maritime decarbonisation funding in the European Innovation Fund

SEA Europe, representing European shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers, calls on the European Commission to maintain the European added value condition for the upcoming call of the European Innovation Fund dedicated to maritime decarbonisation. According to this requirement, first introduced in the 2023 funding call, financial support to shipyards for projects involving ship construction or refurbishment is only accessible to shipyards based in EU Member States, Norway, or Iceland.

The Innovation Fund plays a pivotal role in accelerating maritime decarbonisation efforts, supporting the development and scaling of cutting-edge technologies spearheaded by European shipyards and equipment manufacturers. With European taxpayers funding these initiatives, SEA Europe emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the full spectrum of Europe's maritime cluster – including shipowners, ports, alternative fuel suppliers, shipyards, and technology developers – to create synergies and develop viable business cases that benefit the entire ecosystem.
In line with the goals set out for the upcoming European Industrial Strategy announced by the European Commission, SEA Europe stresses the need for the Innovation Fund to enhance the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of Europe's maritime manufacturing sector.

Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General of SEA Europe, highlighted: "European public funding must deliver tangible benefits to Europe. Our shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers are essential to the decarbonisation of Europe's maritime sector. Yet, they face intense competition from Asia, where shipbuilding dominance is a strategic priority, linked to geopolitical influence. To keep pace, safeguard our technological expertise, and revitalize industrial capabilities, the European shipbuilding value chain requires robust EU backing. Turning the European Innovation Fund into an unintended windfall for Asian shipbuilders would be a grave strategic mistake."

SEA Europe strongly advocates for a balanced distribution of support across the maritime sector, reinforcing the strategic importance of retaining key technologies and industrial capabilities within Europe.

Background Note:

SEA Europe represents close to 100% of the European shipbuilding industry in 16 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. As an NGO observer at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), CESA represents the shipbuilding industry and its supply chain from EU Member States, Norway, and Turkey.

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