

## SEA EUROPE 2025 ACTIVITIES REPORT

### 1. Engaging with the New European Commission

Following the inauguration of the new von der Leyen Commission in December 2024, SEA Europe has prioritized active engagement with key European Commissioners and European Commission services pertinent to the maritime manufacturing industry throughout 2025.

Meetings were conducted with Executive Vice Presidents RIBERA (Clean, Just and Competitive Transition), SÉJOURNÉ (Prosperity and Industrial Strategy), and MINZATU (Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness), as well as Commissioners HOEKSTRA (Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth), KUBILIUS (Defence and Space), KADIS (Fisheries and Oceans), and TZITZIKOSTAS (Sustainable Transport and Tourism).

As regards the European Commission services, SEA Europe held regular meetings with DG MOVE and DG GROW, and occasional meetings with DG MARE, DG DEFIS, DG EMPL, DG RTD, DG TRADE, and DG CLIMA. Meetings were also held with the EU agencies for maritime safety (EMSA) and defence (EDA).

By engaging promptly with the new European Commission, SEA Europe could communicate the maritime manufacturing industry's priorities on key initiatives (e.g., European Industrial Maritime Strategy, European Oceans Pact, EU funding priorities, and Defence Agenda) or lobby effectively on the Competitiveness Compass and Competitiveness Fund.

### 2. A legitimate interlocutor for the EU Institutions and stakeholders

In recent years, SEA Europe has built strong connections with EU policymakers and key stakeholders. The European Commission now views SEA Europe as an influential voice for the waterborne sector, along with ECSA (European shipowners) and ESPO (European Seaports), and acknowledges it as the sole legitimate representative of the maritime manufacturing industry. This recognized role has been reflected on numerous occasions, such as at high-level meetings with EVP Minzatu about the “Union of Skills” and “Quality Jobs”; EVP Séjourné regarding “The Implications of US Tariffs for EU Business”; Commissioner Kadis on the “European Oceans Pact”; and both EVP Séjourné and Commissioner Tzitzikostas on the jointly organized event on European Industrial Maritime Strategy.

SEA Europe is regularly invited to contribute to panel discussions within the European Parliament, including events such as the launch of the renewed SEArca Intergroup under the leadership of French MEP Christophe Clergeau. With the Polish EU Presidency during the first half of 2025, SEA Europe collaborated closely on the Szczecin Declaration on the European Industrial Maritime Strategy, which was endorsed by 20 EU Member States. Additionally, SEA Europe participated in a panel debate on this declaration at the high-level conference held in Szczecin.

Besides EU decision-makers, SEA Europe has also built close ties with stakeholders. It joined the European Industry Summit in Antwerp in presence of President von der Leyen, the Belgian Prime Minister and more than 400 industry leaders. It actively participated in the bi-annual European Shipping Summit led by ECSA, in CLIA's Cruise Week in Rotterdam and in SEA Trade in Hamburg. With CLIA, it also held a policy breakfast on the European Industrial Maritime Strategy, in presence of waterborne stakeholders and EU decisionmakers.

### **3. Enhancing internal outreach beyond regular meetings**

In 2025, SEA Europe held a series of events besides the regular committee meetings. In June, it hosted a workshop for SEA Europe members together with representatives from ten different European Commission services to present policy recommendations for the European Industrial Maritime Strategy and the new Market Intelligence Report. Additionally, SEA Europe introduced online webinars dedicated to topics relevant to the maritime manufacturing industry and prominent on the political agenda

During the annual General Assembly held in Bucharest (Romania), SEA Europe – in partnership with its Romanian member association ANCONAV – extended invitations to a broader audience, including EU policymakers, local sector representatives, and members of Euroyards, to foster dialogue on matters of common interests.

At national level, SEA Europe participated in various membership-related events, such as GICAN's workshop on the European Industrial Maritime Strategy, PYMAR's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, and Foro Maritimo Vasco's General Assembly.

### **4. Preparing for the European Industrial Maritime Strategy**

Ahead of the European Industrial Maritime Strategy set for February 2026, SEA Europe carried out several strategic initiatives in 2025:

- It held a workshop with representatives from ten European Commission services to present its new Market Intelligence Report on Europe's leading markets and policy recommendations for the Strategy.
- It facilitated both the participation of its own members and other waterborne stakeholders at the high-level meeting on the European Industrial Maritime Strategy, jointly held by EVP Séjourné and Commissioner Tzitzikostas.
- It was the first stakeholder to respond to the European Commission's Call for Evidence on the European Industrial Maritime Strategy, providing comprehensive input that included 22 policy recommendations and a market intelligence report identifying Europe's leading markets. This submission strengthened SEA Europe as a credible interlocutor for the maritime manufacturing industry.

### **5. Advocacy at EU and International Level**

In 2025, SEA Europe monitored, analyzed and supported the implementation of numerous EU policy and legislative initiatives impacting the maritime manufacturing industry, including the Competitiveness Compass, Sustainable Transport Investment Plan, Oceans Pact, Military Mobility, FuelEU Maritime, and others. It also participated in numerous public consultations and offered evidence on many relevant industry topics. Additionally, SEA Europe was active beyond the EU, participating in international meetings such as the OECD Shipbuilding Committee in Paris and – via CESA – the International Maritime Organisation. Through these actions, SEA Europe strengthened its position as the main advocate for Europe's maritime manufacturing industry, promoting favorable conditions and recognition for European shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers in Brussels and worldwide.

## 6. A new Presidency

In 2025, SEA Europe appointed a new Chairman and Vice Chairs for a two-year term during its General Assembly held in Bucharest (Romania). Alberto Maestrini (Vard/Fincantieri) succeeded René Berkvens (Damen), who had served the association as Chairman for nearly four years.

## 7. An intensive year for Defence and SEA Naval

In 2025, as EU defence gained more political focus, SEA Naval advanced its lobbying on naval issues like EDIP, Military Mobility, and the Defence Readiness White Paper. It met with Commissioner Kubilius's Cabinet and remained active in European Defence Fund initiatives—completing the EDINAF and dTHOR projects, reaching the midpoint of SWAT-SHOAL, finishing the first year of CALISPO and E=MCM, and launching NEREUS. SEA Naval also joined multiple EDF 2025 proposals, with outcomes expected in Q2 2026. Its partnership with the European Defence Agency continued into a third year as Industry Rapporteur for Maritime CapTech. It, furthermore, updated the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda and secured a framework contract for studies for implementing Capability Development Priorities in the maritime sector. Lastly, in partnership with the European Policy Center, it hosted conferences in La Spezia (Italy) and Brussels (Belgium), concluding with a year-end reception for the Brussels maritime community.

## 8. CESA activities

In the first half of 2025, CESA took part in various International Maritime Organization (IMO) meetings and working groups. These involved topics such as ship design and construction, emergency towing plans, updates to SOLAS chapters, and reducing underwater noise from ships. CESA also joined discussions about pollution control, chemical safety, changes to MARPOL Annex II, and ways to limit Black Carbon emissions that affect the Arctic. The organization paid close attention to ship systems and equipment, including lifeboat release mechanisms and fire detection on container ships. Additionally, CESA contributed significantly to IMO initiatives aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions from ships by participating in several Intersessional Working Group meetings.

In the second half of 2025, CESA participated in the Extraordinary Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), which focused on the Net Zero Framework for mandatory emissions limits and greenhouse gas pricing on large vessels. Adoption was postponed for a year due to political pressure. CESA also joined SEA Europe and over 70 delegates from 13 countries at the annual Tripartite Forum held in Busan (South Korea), where participants discussed, amongst others, decarbonisation, onboard carbon capture, autonomous ships, biofouling, and the delay of the IMO's Net Zero Framework.