

A HOLISTIC INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EUROPEAN MARITIME TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IS URGENTLY NEEDED, ACCORDING TO EU-SPONSORED STUDY

Brussels, 14 November 2017

The European (EU 28) maritime technology industry is the leading global region in terms of aggregated production value, with a calculated value of EUR 112.5 billion. The position is even stronger, if Norway and Turkey are added to the EU 28 group. This is one of the many interesting findings of a recently published ***“Study on New Trends in Globalisation in Shipbuilding and Marine Supplies – Consequences for European Industrial and Trade Policy”***, carried out on behalf of the European Commission by BALance Technology Consulting GmbH (available [here](#)).

Another important finding is the acknowledgement that individual shipbuilding nations in Europe seem too small and too weak to cope with competitive pressure from Asia, where countries have a targeted national shipbuilding strategy. Hence, only a clear targeted EU shipbuilding policy offering an integrated and unified approach towards international competition will help Europe to cope with its competitive and societal challenges.

Finally, the Study also recognises the strategic dimension of the European maritime technology sector by underlining the need to keep – in a changing geo-political world – the control of the maritime domain to guarantee the defence and security of Europe and its citizens.

According to the Study, the next 10 years will determine whether the European shipbuilding and marine supply chain industry can survive and grow or will decline and fail. Strategic moves of overseas countries towards their own shipbuilding and maritime equipment industries, characterised by more local content requirements, more protective national shipbuilding policies, more financial support and subsidies, and uneven implementation of environmental regulations will create even bigger challenges for the European maritime technology sector. Without a holistic industrial strategy specifically designed for the European maritime technology industry, aimed at supporting industrial growth by concrete measures, the future or even survival of the industry may be seriously at risk.

The Study contains many interesting recommendations, such as the need to create and integrate provisions catering for the specific interests of the European maritime technology industry into future negotiations of free trade agreements with third countries. Another important recommendation is the need for the European maritime technology industry to be better supported by means of continued financial support for investments in RDI, through existing and future European and regional instruments and Framework programme. Establishing a large PPP for maritime sector is indicated as a priority as well as the need for the upcoming FP9 to have a stronger strategic focus on the needs and requirements of the European maritime industry. The Study also recommends supporting regulation-driven innovative markets as well as emerging “Blue Growth” market access.

SEA Europe Secretary General Christophe Tytgat says: *This Study clearly demonstrates that notwithstanding the current good shape of the European orderbook in value terms, the maritime technology industry in Europe cannot feel safe or be complacent. The Study clearly acknowledges that European shipyards or European maritime equipment manufacturers will come under severe pressure over time, due to growing protectionist policies or with China preparing to enter the high-tech ships market sector as a political objective”.*

“Against this background, it is critical for Europe to protect and support the thriving and strategic European maritime technology industry with promising and indisputable long-term potentials. Considering the wide range of financial support measures deployed in the Far East, an urgent reflection on how the EU can best support its own maritime technology industry can no longer be avoided” added Mr. Tytgat.

“As also highlighted in a recent European Economic Social Committee’s hearing on the implementation of the LEADERSHIP 2020 initiative, an ambitious, forward looking and dedicated policy strategy for the European maritime technology sector is urgently needed. The Study carried out by BALance contains several interesting recommendations which we hope European policy makers will take forward. SEA Europe stands ready to contribute constructively to the adoption and implementation of a sound policy framework which will allow our sector to cope with the many challenges it is confronted with. A strong European maritime technology sector will continue to provide a vital contribution to the European economy, European employment and society at large and will also help to guarantee the defence and security of Europe and its citizens, Mr. Tytgat concluded.

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.*

For further information please visit www.seaeurope.eu or contact:

Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General, ct@seaeurope.eu
Tel: +32 (0)2.230.32.87