

ECSA fully welcomes the Ministerial Declaration on Waterborne Transport

ECSA welcomes the Declaration on Waterborne Transport issued yesterday at the High Level Maritime Ministerial Conference organised by the Croatian Presidency in Opatija.

Entitled "[Towards a carbon-neutral, zero accidents, automated and competitive EU Waterborne Transport Sector](#)," the declaration highlights the challenges lying ahead for the industry while at the same time, shows support and understanding in the realisation of the industry's ambitions.

"The declaration clearly shows that the ministers place a huge importance on the competitiveness of the European shipping sector, in view of the vital and strategic role it plays in the EU economy, global trade and the common market," commented Mr Martin Dorsman, ECSA Secretary-General.

"At this point of time, the industry is already making important progress towards reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions. To reach the IMO's 2050 GHG targets however, more efforts are needed by all stakeholders while at the same time safeguarding the competitive position of EU shipping. In this respect, ECSA highly appreciates the statements on the importance of the work of the IMO and the policy response to the Green Deal.

A crucial element for the competitiveness of EU shipping are the EU State Aid Guidelines to Maritime Transport. The Ministers recognise its value in creating the necessary conditions in which European shipping can increase its contributions to the EU economy. To combat unfair trade practices, the Ministers have likewise stressed the need for more coordinated action to safeguard EU maritime interests, through Free Trade Agreements and maritime transport agreements with third countries.

"Maritime security is vital for global trade and economic development. The increased numbers of piracy and armed robbery incidents in West Africa demonstrate the increased danger for seafarers. ECSA agrees with the Ministers' statement on the problematic situation caused by piracy and armed robbery, and reiterates its call for urgent and coordinated EU action to ensure that vessels and crew can operate in a safe and secure environment," added Mr Dorsman.

ECSCA is pleased to read Member States' commitment to a complete and timely implementation of the European Maritime Single Window Environment Regulation and

looks forward to learning more about the development of a "Waterborne Digital Roadmap", announced for 2021.

ECSA also very much welcomes that the Transport ministers have reaffirmed the importance of the European Social Dialogue and have reflected the same objectives in ECSA's proposed "*Maritime Growth Plan on Sustainable Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness*". ECSA strongly believes that important steps forward will already be seen in this legislature if all stakeholders work in partnership to enhance the training, competitiveness and employment opportunities of EU seafarers and work towards an attractive, smart, safe, social and sustainable quality shipping.

ECSA and all its members are keen to work more closely with Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament, together with its partners in the whole maritime cluster, to achieve the common goal of a "*carbon-neutral, zero accidents, automated and competitive EU Waterborne Transport Sector*".

"We cannot do it alone. We can only do it together. With this declaration, the industry is reassured that it has the full support of all the Member States," concluded Mr Dorsman.

[Click here to download the strategic priorities of the European shipping industry 2019-2024.](#)

[Click here to download the Ministerial Declaration.](#)

For more information, please contact: Harold Tor-Daenens, Harold.Tor@ecsa.eu

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The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) was founded in 1965 and represents the national shipowners' associations of the EU, the UK and Norway. The European shipowners control 39.5% of the global commercial fleet, contribute 149 billion to the EU GDP and provide 2 million Europeans with careers both on board and ashore. ECSA promotes the interests of European shipping so that the industry can best serve European and international trade in a competitive free business environment to the benefit of shippers and consumers.