



The Federation of European Private Port Companies and Terminals



## *Newsletter – November 2024*

### **Threat or Opportunity for Europe?**



November has been a busy and febrile month. While the Brussels bubble has been very attentive to the hearings of the Commissioners-designate given the importance of the exercise, the shock waves of the US election is bringing further questions by the day.

Will the election of Donald Trump be an opportunity for the EU to carve out its own path and defend its values, or will we simply follow US policy agendas? Will we remain on the defensive, merely reacting to decisions and actions from the new occupant of the White House, or will we seize this moment to differentiate ourselves and assert our position? Mr. Trump's pledge to impose sweeping tariffs on several trading partners as part of his strategy to combat drugs and illegal immigration raises questions. Is it the right approach? Probably not.

The EU should remain a reliable partner and needs to develop policies that are not only responses to geopolitical tensions.

The fact that the EU is not autonomous today for certain products and solutions stems from choices made in the past, and this could be the moment to take stock, reflect, and act while avoiding stigmatization, haste, or excessive posturing.

We need to strengthen our rules to have robust frameworks that protect us but simultaneously allow us to remain an attractive market for investments including FDI.

What is needed is a vision and consistent policies backing critical sectors with meaningful support. Some might think that this is about State Aid, funding, or financing but actually it is not. It is also about a holistic approach that does not “rob Peter to pay Paul” as it has been the case in many sectors including strategic ones. It is also about adopting legislation after 360 impact assessments. Level playing field and equality of treatment between sectors has also not always been the rule. We need competition rules that take into account the new objectives of the EU and which serve its strategic autonomy and the competitiveness of its industries. And these policies should not support only EU Champions as this would be a mistake. SMEs are a fantastic asset of the EU and they are the ones creating the majority of EU jobs.

The protectionist temptation as a result of fear is a real risk but does it really constitute a strategy? We need the EU to remain stable and strong thanks to well thought-out balanced rules. We need to assess before producing new norms and we need measures and initiatives aiming at prioritising competitiveness. News norms that are not well thought-out i.e. not considering that the EU is surrounded by competitors or only motivated by fear or paranoia can be detrimental.

The EU port sector is strong, it is the fortress of the EU. All stakeholders in EU ports are serving the EU economy and making major efforts to ensure the smooth and efficient movement of goods. The objective of port stakeholders is to ensure the fast treatment of goods while enabling customs checks when needed.

EU port stakeholders are the allies of EU security. Yet, when it comes to the fight against drugs, it cannot be only for port stakeholders to act. The choice of words, names or titles is never neutral. The EU Commission should be more ambitious and fairer to ports and should rename the “European Port Alliance”: the “European Maritime Logistics Alliance against Drugs” or the “European Supply Chains Alliance against Drugs”. It will be a strong signal to the rest of the world and less stigmatizing for ports.

**FEPOR members congratulate all EU Commissioners after the vote in the European Parliament. They look forward to working with the EU Commissioners and their staffs who will be in charge of topics impacting ports and supply chains in general.**

**Commissioner Tzirikostas, warm congratulations from FEPOR members. Looking forward to starting a constructive dialogue.**

## SAVE THE DATE

**FEPORT Eighth Stakeholders' Conference: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Ports Ahead: Navigating the future EU Maritime Industrial Strategy**

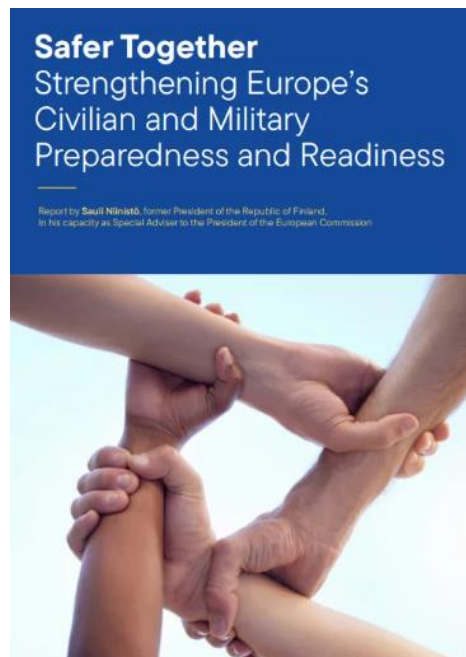


Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

Please **SAVE THE DATE** of FEPORT's 8<sup>th</sup> Stakeholders' Conference: 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 at the Residence Palace in Brussels.

Looking forward to welcoming you!

## 30.10.2024 - Enhancing EU Crisis Preparedness: Lessons from the Niinistö Report – Brussels



In the face of an evolving landscape defined by rising threats and heightened unpredictability, enhancing Europe's crisis response is now a crucial task. Over the past few years, the EU has encountered major disruptions, including an unprecedented global pandemic, significant conflict on European soil not seen since World War II, and record-breaking climate conditions.

At the request of President Ursula von der Leyen and in coordination with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), Sauli Niinistö, former President of Finland and Special Advisor to the European Commission's President, conducted an extensive analysis of the challenges facing the EU and its Member States. The resulting report delivers approximately 80 strategic recommendations aimed at enhancing both short-term and long-term civilian and military preparedness.

A central theme of the report is the call for enhanced unity and swift collective action to improve Europe's capacity for crisis management. Key focus areas include strengthening response mechanisms to address a range of threats—whether natural or artificial—boosting cross-border collaboration and supporting technological innovation for crisis mitigation. Emphasis is placed on the need for investments in infrastructure resilience, cybersecurity, and robust emergency response frameworks.

The logistics and freight sectors, which ensure uninterrupted supply chains, are particularly impacted by these recommendations. Having already faced challenges due to geopolitical instability, environmental crises, and public health threats, the sector must incorporate strategic preparedness measures to fortify operations and maintain the flow of goods during crises, ensuring that Europe's logistics backbone remains functional and secure.

The report can be accessed [here](#).

*Source: The European Commission*

## 04.11.2024 - Transport Commissioner-designate Tzitzikostas Hearing at the European Parliament - Transport Committee – Brussels



On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the European Parliament’s Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) held a hearing with Mr. Apostolos Tzitzikostas, the Commissioner-designate for Sustainable Transport and Tourism. He outlined his commitment to balancing competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience across all transport modes. Key priorities included reducing transport emissions, supporting infrastructure resilience, enhancing cybersecurity, and integrating ports more fully into EU strategic infrastructure.

Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas emphasised that a comprehensive EU Ports Strategy will be one of his primary initiatives if confirmed. This strategy is essential to maintaining the economic independence, security, and sustainability of EU ports amid rising geopolitical tensions and environmental challenges. Key components of his proposal included.

**Economic Independence and Resilience:** Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas stressed the importance of reducing external dependencies, securing critical supply chains, and supporting economic resilience for ports. This aspect of the EU Ports Strategy aims to fortify ports against geopolitical pressures, such as disruptions in global trade caused by conflicts like the war in Ukraine.

**Sustainability Goals:** He committed to integrating EU ports into the climate transition. Ports, as central hubs of logistics, would be key areas for sustainable fuel usage and renewable energy integration. This aligns with the EU’s Green Deal goals and aims to make EU ports leaders in the adoption of climate-friendly practices.

**Security and Cybersecurity:** Recognising that ports are vulnerable to both physical and digital security threats, Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas highlighted cybersecurity as a central tenet of the EU Ports Strategy. Ensuring resilient and secure infrastructure in ports is paramount, particularly as EU ports serve as strategic entry points for goods and potential military assets.

**Labour Standards and Workforce Development:** Noting existing labour shortages in the maritime sector, he pledged to address workforce needs by promoting fair working conditions, training programs, and policies to attract and retain skilled workers.

Connectivity and Integration with TEN-T: Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas emphasised that the EU Ports Strategy will integrate ports into the broader Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), especially to connect with new and potential EU member states. His objective is to ensure that EU ports enhance connectivity not only within Europe but also with neighboring regions such as Ukraine and Moldova.

#### Responses to MEP Questions: EU Ports Strategy and Related Issues

During the hearing, MEPs asked targeted questions that allowed Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas to elaborate on his vision for the EU Ports Strategy and related initiatives.

MEP Berendsen asked Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas to clarify if he intended to make the EU Ports Strategy a legislative package with actionable impacts rather than merely a communication or policy outline.

Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas confirmed that the EU Ports Strategy would likely include both legislative measures and guidelines. The strategy will focus on securing EU sovereignty in ports by enhancing cybersecurity, labour protections, and sustainable financing options. He also mentioned introducing a screening mechanism to monitor foreign investments and safeguard EU ports from undue influence by non-EU actors.

MEP Giménez raised the issue of the negative competitiveness impacts of the EU ETS on EU ports and asked how Tzitzikostas would address these effects, particularly in relation to military mobility funding.

Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas acknowledged the EU ETS as a source of potential disadvantage for EU ports but underscored that he would advocate for adjustments to limit carbon leakage. Regarding military mobility, he agreed that the current budget allocation is insufficient and promised to push for increased funding in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to support both military mobility and port resilience.

MEP Zile inquired about funding priorities for military mobility within the CEF and the challenges of maintaining resilience amidst geopolitical threats.

Commissioner designate Tzitzikostas confirmed that military mobility is a high priority and noted that the current allocation of €1.7 billion is insufficient. He expressed a commitment to secure additional funding in future budget negotiations, with the intent to propose a new Military Mobility Action Plan early in his mandate. This plan will aim to enhance transport infrastructure that supports rapid troop and equipment movement, developed in close collaboration with NATO.

*Source: The European Parliament*

## 04.11.2024 – Commissioner Designate Šefčovič Outlines Vision for EU Trade Strategy and Institutional Reforms During Hearing – Brussels



Maroš Šefčovič, Slovakia's nominee for the position of Commissioner for Trade, Economic Security, and Interinstitutional Relations, faced questioning from the European Parliament's International Trade and Constitutional Affairs committees. In his initial remarks, Šefčovič stressed the strategic nature of trade amidst global competition for technological dominance and the use of economic dependencies as leverage. He emphasised the importance of maintaining a strong transatlantic relationship, pledging to engage in cooperation with the U.S., irrespective of the upcoming election results, and aimed to address existing disputes over issues like steel tariffs and aspects of the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act.

Addressing China, Commissioner designate Šefčovič described it as the EU's most complex trading partner, advocating for a balanced relationship that tackles challenges such as market overcapacity and state subsidies. He acknowledged recent EU duties on Chinese electric vehicles and mentioned ongoing negotiations to establish fairer trading terms.

The hearing also touched on the EU's pursuit of trade agreements, with Šefčovič affirming his commitment to advancing deals with Mercosur nations and prioritising FTAs with Mexico, Australia, and increased presence in Southeast Asia. He highlighted agreements with Angola and Kenya as examples of innovative trade partnerships.

Discussions also covered interinstitutional reforms, with Commissioner designate Šefčovič supporting stronger cooperation with the European Parliament, enhancing transparency, and applying lessons from past EU institutional assessments. He indicated that working with the European Council and new leadership under Antonio Costa would be pivotal for advancing these reforms, including potential treaty changes and legislative adjustments for future EU enlargement.

*Source: The European Parliament*

## 05.11.2024 - Commissioner-Designate Magnus Brunner Outlines Plan for Enhanced Security and Migration Management at LIBE Committee Hearing – Brussels



Magnus Brunner, the Commissioner-Designate for Internal Affairs and Migration, outlined a comprehensive approach to internal security, migration management, and border protection during his hearing before the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). The Committee on Development (DEVE) also participated in the hearing, which highlighted Commissioner designate Brunner's commitment to a secure and cooperative European Union.

A notable part of Commissioner designate Brunner's vision included leveraging the European Port Alliance (EPA) as a central element in the fight against organized crime, particularly drug trafficking. Commissioner designate Brunner cited alarming statistics, noting that around 70% of drug seizures in the EU take place at ports, underscoring their pivotal role in preventing the influx of illegal substances into Europe.

Commissioner designate Brunner outlined a multi-pronged strategy that would place European ports at the forefront of the EU's action plan against organized crime. He stressed that the EPA would be instrumental in strengthening security measures across European ports, ensuring they act as effective barriers against criminal networks.

The Commissioner-Designate paid particular attention to smaller ports, which, despite their size, are significant entry points for illicit drugs. He announced that these ports would be subject to closer monitoring and enhanced security protocols as part of the new EU action plan on organized crime.

Commissioner designate Brunner highlighted that tackling organized crime requires robust international cooperation. Enhanced coordination among EU member states and partnerships with global law enforcement agencies will be essential to combat drug trafficking effectively. The proposed European Internal Security Strategy would strengthen collaboration between Europol, national authorities, and the EPA, forming a cohesive EU-wide response to evolving threats such as drug, arms, and cyber trafficking.



During the hearing, Commissioner designate Brunner engaged with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who raised pressing security concerns such as pointing out the rising threat of organised crime within the EU. In response, Commissioner designate Brunner detailed plans for a new European Internal Security Strategy focused on emerging threats and enhancing law enforcement collaboration. This strategy, he noted, would integrate the EPA as a crucial asset in coordinating anti-crime measures across European ports.

MEPs highlighted the growing challenge posed by synthetic opioids. Commissioner designate Brunner responded by reaffirming the EU's commitment to combat drug trafficking, with a particular emphasis on addressing synthetic opioids and online trafficking. He assured that the new action plan would prioritise these issues, utilising the EPA to bolster monitoring and security measures at smaller ports.

FEPORF welcomes Commissioner-designate Magnus Brunner's emphasis on the European Port Alliance (EPA) as a vital instrument in combating organized crime and enhancing port security. As representatives of private port operators and terminals, we are committed to supporting the implementation of robust measures that safeguard European ports against illicit activities while ensuring the efficient flow of goods. FEPORF looks forward to collaborating closely with the Commissioner-designate and EU institutions to advance these efforts, particularly in strengthening public-private partnerships and enhancing the security of smaller ports, which play a pivotal role in Europe's supply chains.

*Source: European Parliament*

## **06.11.2024 - FEPORF Attends ESPO Awards 2024 – Brussels**



On November 6th, FEPORF joined the European port community at the ESPO Awards 2024 ceremony, held at Brussels' Albert Hall. Representing FEPORF, Secretary General Lamia Kerdjoudj and Policy Advisor Lawrence Brenner attended the event, which brought together over 200 distinguished guests from the maritime and logistics sectors.

This year's ESPO Award was presented to the Port of Sevilla for its innovative project "Circular Economy for Valorising Maintenance Dredging Sediments," which exemplifies a forward-thinking approach to sustainability and local community engagement. The project highlights the potential

of circular economy initiatives in ports, reflecting a commitment to both environmental responsibility and urban development.

The award was presented by Ms Magda Kopczynska, Director General of DG MOVE at the European Commission, who commended the Port of Sevilla for its creativity and positive impact. FEPORT representatives congratulated the Port of Sevilla on its achievement, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in fostering stronger ties between ports, cities, and their communities.

## **06.11.2024 - FEPORT Participates in the 75th Meeting of the European Commission's Stakeholder Advisory Group on Maritime Security – Brussels**

On November 6th, FEPORT participated in the 75th meeting of the European Commission's Stakeholder Advisory Group on Maritime Security (SAGMaS). The meeting provided updates on recent trends and developments in maritime security, with a particular focus on global piracy incidents and attacks, including ongoing events in the North-West Indian Ocean. Additionally, the European External Action Service presented an update on the Red Sea crisis.

This was followed by a presentation from DG HOME on the European Ports Alliance. The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) also addressed the topic of information sharing and incident reporting within the EU cybersecurity regulatory framework, highlighting findings from its recently published 2024 Threat Landscape report. The report outlines a range of cybersecurity threats and trends affecting the transport sector, among others.

The meeting ended with a summary of discussions and key findings from the EMSA Cybersecurity Conference held on October 3rd, 2024.

## 07.11.2024 – Hearing of Commissioner-designate Wopke Hoekstra – Brussels



On Thursday November the 7<sup>th</sup>, Wopke Hoekstra, Commissioner-designate for Climate, Net-Zero and Clean Growth was questioned by the ECON, ENVI and ITRE committees of the European Parliament.

Before the start of the hearing, Commissioner designate Hoekstra and the Members of the Parliament commemorated the victims of the floods in Valencia, with the Commissioner-designate underlining the need to enhance the EU's ability to prepare and respond to climate-related risks.

During the hearing, Commissioner designate Hoekstra committed to update the EU's climate law to also include a 90% greenhouse gas reduction target for 2040, in addition to the EU's targets to reduce emissions by 55% in 2030 and become climate neutral in 2050, while also announcing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Focusing on taxation matters, Commissioner designate Hoekstra stressed he aims to conclude negotiations on the Energy Taxation Directive under his mandate.

After questions from MEPs raising concerns about the competitiveness of the maritime transport sector, the Commissioner-designate commented on the ETS report that is due by the end of this year, underscoring that the EU is on track and that unfair competition issues are not observed so far. Yet, he acknowledged that the ongoing Red Sea crisis might skew results.

Commissioner designate Hoekstra, replying to MEPs questions on how the EU could remain competitive during the green transition, Hoekstra committed to presenting an EU Clean Industrial Deal within 100 days to enable companies to reach EU climate goals. He also reiterated his support for CBAM, stressing that he would frontload the review to 2025.

FEPOR welcomes Commissioner designate Hoekstra's commitment to concluding negotiations on ETD as it is key to have a taxation framework which is conducive to the greening of ports and calling ships. In addition, initiatives such as the Clean Industrial Deal are key in order to provide financial support to companies seeking to green their operations.

FEPOR looks forward to working with the Commissioner and the European Parliament to achieve progress and monitor implementation on files such as CBAM, ETS Maritime, ETD and the

Clean Industrial Deal as it is of pivotal importance to ensure a legislative framework that enables companies' decarbonisation while maintaining and enhancing their competitiveness.

*Source: European Parliament and FEPORT*

## **12.11.2024 – Executive Vice President Stéphane Séjourné Outlines Vision for European Industrial Competitiveness Fund and Decarbonisation Initiatives – Brussels**



During his hearing, Executive Vice-President Stéphane Séjourné, the candidate for EU executive Vice-President for prosperity and industrial strategy, outlined his approach to enhancing European industrial competitiveness through a proposed European Competitiveness Fund. This fund aims to streamline support for technology-based companies, facilitating their journey from research to scale-up, while simplifying access to financing and fostering growth across the EU. Séjourné emphasised that the fund would complement existing programs rather than replace them, though he did not clarify which, if any, overlapping funds might be consolidated.

He also highlighted the importance of ensuring equal investment access across EU states and incorporating cohesion criteria into the Clean Industrial Deal. Executive Vice President Séjourné mentioned key priorities, including launching the Clean Industrial Deal within his first 100 days to accelerate decarbonization and green investments, and advancing the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act to foster leading clean technology markets.

*Source: The European Parliament*

## 12.11.2024 - Roxana Mînzatu, Candidate for Vice-President for the People, Skills and Preparedness – Brussels



During her confirmation hearing, the European Commissioner-designate for Employment and Social Rights, Mînzatu, outlined her priorities for the next mandate, focusing on creating a more inclusive and equitable European labor market. With a commitment to promoting fair and sustainable employment opportunities for all.

The European Union states it will prioritise inclusive employment policies that better support people with disabilities. As European Commissioner-designate for Employment and Social Rights, Vice President Mînzatu has outlined key initiatives to address the barriers faced by disabled workers, aiming to create a more equitable labour market for all.

One of her central goals is to adopt best practices from EU member states to support individuals with disabilities in the workforce. She emphasizes the importance of tax benefits and other targeted programs that incentivize both employers and workers. With over 100 million disabled individuals across Europe, many of whom want to work but face discrimination or accessibility issues, Vice-President Mînzatu is committed to addressing these challenges by improving workplace inclusivity and integrating disabled individuals into the labour market.

Vice President Mînzatu also highlighted the need for policies that ensure quality jobs for all, including people with disabilities, through a proposed “Quality Jobs Roadmap.” This roadmap will focus on fair labour standards, reducing social exclusion, and ensuring that people with disabilities have meaningful employment opportunities. The Commissioner designate also plans to ensure that technological advancements, like AI, respect workers' rights and contribute to a fairer labour market. Furthermore, she proposes the “EU Talent Pool,” designed to match skilled third-country nationals with job opportunities while protecting their rights.

*Source: The European Parliament*

## 12.11.2024 - Commissioner-Designate Ribera Commits to Climate Resilience and Economic Reforms – Brussels



In her hearing with members of the European Parliament, Teresa Ribera, Commissioner-designate for Climate Action and Competition, pledged to tackle Europe's climate challenges and economic competitiveness while maintaining the principles of the European Green Deal. Her remarks included a tribute to the victims of the recent floods in Valencia, Spain, which she described as a sobering reminder of the urgency of climate action.

Commissioner designate Ribera emphasised the need to bolster the EU's resilience to climate-related risks, including extreme weather events. She announced plans to introduce a European Climate Adaptation Plan to strengthen early warning systems and disaster response capacities, with a particular focus on water resilience.

Ribera reiterated her commitment to achieving the EU's 2030 climate and energy targets and proposed setting a 2040 goal to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% compared to 1990 levels, paving the way for the EU to achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century.

In response to questions from MEPs on global climate negotiations and biodiversity, Commissioner designate Ribera underlined the importance of EU leadership in advocating for sustainable solutions internationally.

On industrial decarbonisation, Commissioner designate Ribera stressed the need to ensure a just transition, creating quality jobs, improving housing, and leveraging the opportunities offered by the green and digital transitions. She expressed her willingness to collaborate with industry stakeholders to decarbonise the automotive sector, particularly addressing the challenges faced by subcontractors.

When asked about the role of nuclear energy, Ribera noted that decisions on energy mixes remain the responsibility of individual member states, while reaffirming her commitment to the EU's broader climate goals.

Commissioner designate Ribera proposed reforms to EU competition policy to streamline enforcement, simplify state aid rules, and curb anti-competitive acquisitions. She identified the

Digital Markets Act (DMA) as a priority, calling for enhanced enforcement powers to address abusive practices in digital markets.

MEPs also raised concerns about using competition policy to mitigate the rising cost of living and housing crises. Commissioner designate Ribera agreed that competition rules could help combat abusive pricing and support solutions to housing challenges. She emphasised the need to balance predictability in competition rule reforms with fostering European global champions and ensuring fair market practices.

*Source: The European Parliament*

## **12.11.2024 - Commissioner-Designate Henna Virkkunen Pledges Digital Sovereignty and Enhanced Security at Hearing – Brussels**



Henna Virkkunen, the Finnish Commissioner designate for Tech Sovereignty, Security, and Democracy, emphasised a robust commitment to strengthening the EU's technological independence and cybersecurity during her recent hearing before the Industry and Internal Market Committees. Virkkunen outlined an ambitious vision aimed at ensuring the EU's critical digital infrastructure is resilient, secure, and globally competitive.

Commissioner designate Virkkunen emphasised that achieving EU tech sovereignty would involve a comprehensive approach aimed at securing the technological backbone of key industries. A significant concern raised during the hearing was the EU's reliance on non-European cloud service providers, which, according to MEPs, creates vulnerabilities for data security.

In response, Commissioner designate Virkkunen pledged to advance the EU Cloud and AI Development Act to provide better access to secure, EU-based cloud services. This initiative is expected to strengthen operational resilience across sectors with critical security needs, ensuring safer handling of data and technological infrastructure.

Commissioner designate Virkkunen's proposals include ramping up investment in cyber-defence measures and securing infrastructure against hybrid threats. The Commissioner designate cited the risk of technology leakage and the need for trusted vendors for critical telecommunications equipment as fundamental components of EU security strategy.

MEPs questioned the Commissioner designate on the role of foreign technology providers, particularly from China. Commissioner designate Virkkunen stated that EU Member States must

prioritise reducing dependency on high-risk, non-European vendors in communications infrastructure. She pointed out that approximately 42% of current critical communications involve entities based in high-risk countries, urging Member States to take this threat seriously.

Beyond immediate security measures, Commissioner designate Virkkunen laid out plans for the EU to lead in artificial intelligence and quantum computing—both pivotal for automating and securing port operations. The Commissioner designate promised to implement the AI Act swiftly and pledged to propose an “AI factories” initiative within her first 100 days in office.

*Source: The European Parliament*

## 19.11.2024 CLECAT and ESC Conference - Logistics for Europe - Brussels



The third Logistics for Europe conference in Brussels brought together shippers, freight forwarders, logistics professionals, policymakers, and industry experts to address the challenges of resilience, sustainability, and competitiveness in European supply chains. Organised by CLECAT and the European Shippers' Council (ESC), the event featured keynotes and panel discussions on critical issues.

Fotini Ioannidou, Director of Waterborne Transport at DG MOVE, emphasised the importance of the Green Deal and the upcoming EU Ports Strategy in supporting resilient supply chains. She highlighted the need for adaptability and robustness to withstand various disruptions.

Klaus Dohrmann, VP and Global Head of Innovation & Trend Research at DHL, discussed the transformative impact of AI on supply chains. He stressed the importance of continuous innovation and collaboration to keep Europe competitive.

The conference featured three panels. The second panel, "Innovation and Collaboration for Secure and Agile Supply Chains," highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships and innovation in enhancing security and efficiency. The discussion focused on digital tracking



systems and advanced data analytics to combat organized crime, particularly drug trafficking. Effective collaboration and innovation can streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve agility.

FEPOR Secretary General Ms. Lamia Kerdjoudj contributed as a distinguished panelist, underscoring the imperative of adopting a comprehensive supply chain approach in the battle against drug trafficking. She further articulated that port security transcends the mere fight against drugs, encompassing the broader objective of fortifying supply chains against disruptions and climate-related events, thereby enhancing their overall resilience.

The first panel, "Future-Proofing EU Policy," emphasised the Draghi report as a wake-up call for EU leadership to enhance resilience against crises. The discussion recommended policies focusing on long-term stability and crisis management.

The third panel, "Rethinking Supply Chains to Support EU Business," discussed balancing EU sustainability regulations with operational flexibility. The panel emphasised the need for clear regulations and simplified frameworks to support SMEs.

In conclusion, participants underscored the importance of collaboration, digital transformation, and pragmatic EU regulations for sustainable growth and resilience. CLECAT and ESC reaffirmed their commitment to advocating for policies that support European supply chains.

## **19.11.2024 - Negotiations Underway for Rail Capacity Regulation – Brussels**

Interinstitutional negotiations on the Rail Capacity Regulation commenced on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, bringing together representatives from the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. Part of the Greening Freight Package introduced in July 2023, the proposal seeks to optimise rail capacity, improve cross-border coordination, enhance punctuality and reliability, and encourage a modal shift towards rail freight.

During the first trilogue, discussions centered on four primary themes:

- Responsibilities and competences
- Performance, penalties, and funding
- Governance
- Digitisation and implementation timetable

Meetings are expected to take place in December, while the next trilogue is yet to be scheduled.

## 19.11.2024 - ITF Releases Report on GHG Accounting and Reporting in Transport – Paris



### GHG Emissions Accounting and Reporting for Transport



The International Transport Forum (ITF) has published a [report](#) assessing current practices in greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting and reporting within the transport sector. The report highlights challenges to achieving greater transparency and consistency in emissions reporting and offers recommendations to enhance these efforts.

Acknowledging significant advancements in the freight sector, the report credits the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including companies, industry associations, governments, standard-setting bodies, and NGOs. Their joint initiatives have resulted in the development and implementation of global methodologies and frameworks, such

as the ISO 14.083 standard. Despite this progress, the report notes the need for greater alignment among existing standards, regulations, and methodologies to reduce inefficiencies and economic burdens.

The report advocates for the widespread adoption of ISO 14.083 as the primary standard for GHG emissions data collection, calculation, and reporting in global transport supply chains. It emphasizes that new national regulations, industry standards, and practices should align with ISO 14083 to ensure coherence in international transport services.

Further recommendations include fostering collaboration between standard-setting organisations and reporting frameworks to create a unified approach to emissions accounting. This would involve harmonising validation processes for emission factors, establishing robust data quality and sharing standards, and maintaining confidentiality. Additionally, the report underscores the importance of raising awareness and providing training to promote the adoption of best practices already in place across the logistics sector.

*Source: International Transport Forum*

## 19 - 20.11.2024 - Hydrogen Week – Brussels



On November 19-20, FEPORT attended this year's edition of the Hydrogen Week, organized by Hydrogen Europe. The event, co-organized with the European Commission and the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, gathered industry stakeholders and investors around the latest industry developments and trends. It also provided a forum to inform potential investors of the latest funding opportunities in the context of the incoming 2nd auction of funding to incentivize and facilitate the European transition to a net-zero economy by 2050. The conference echoed urgent calls to EU authorities and regulators for pragmatism and facilitating and incentivizing the creation of a competitive regulatory framework.

The November 19th High-Level Policy Conference on the Hydrogen Bank allowed panelists to discuss this financing instrument and the opportunities and challenges that it presents for European and global renewable hydrogen production investments. MEP Bart Groothuis (Netherlands, Renew Europe) highlighted the importance of safeguarding EU electrolysers and their cybersecurity, which was in line with calls to promote EU-made electrolysers to avoid dependence and potential vulnerabilities out of non-EU-made ones. Panelists further emphasised the need to cut red tape, establish clearer standards and targets, and work towards issues such as skills in the sector.

The next day saw the "Hydrogen for Mobility and synergies with end-use sectors" panel at the HW's Innovation Forum. Richard Ferrer, Head of Sector at CINEA noted that an important obstacle is the low offtake of hydrogen and, accordingly, the need for more clients/users, which will optimize the use of the infrastructure. Finally, Torsten Klimke, Deputy Head of DG MOVE reiterated the availability of funding programs like CEF, AFIF and other programs, even if EU and public funding will never be enough, but seed capital is always an option. Overall, he expressed his belief that the framework conditions are present and that they only need to be implemented.

*Source: FEPORT & Hydrogen Europe*

## **21.11.2024 – FEPOR Attends EuDA Annual Conference – Brussels**

On the 21st of November, FEPOR attended the European Dredging Association EuDA s Annual Conference entitled “*Making Waterborne Transport Projects Sustainable*” in the Stanhope Hotel.

A central theme throughout the conference was the topic of green labelling of projects and investments, such as through the EU Taxonomy.

Mr. Edwin Lau, Head of the OECD Blue Dot Network Secretariat, did a presentation about the OECD Blue Dot Network which proposes a voluntary framework to promote quality infrastructure projects around the world. Through its certification, which is based on companies self-assessment, projects are graded based on their performance in fields related to environment, sustainability, resilience and transparency. Yet, assessment by an independent verifier is needed for companies to be able to obtain to the certificate, which is renewed based on re-assessment every 5 years.

The conference programme pursued with a keynote presentation of Ms. Olazabal, Head of Unit of DG ENVI C1, provided a keynote speech on the EU Taxonomy, explaining its key underlining principles i.e. that the Taxonomy features a description of green economic activities, which does not mean that those activities that are not in are “brown”.

The conference also provided room to EuDA members to provide their views regarding the EU Taxonomy, such as Ms. Jiske Verhulst, Sustainability Director of DEME, which highlighted three key messages:

- All dredging projects that are enabling other green economic activities, should be recognised as enabling activities under the EU Taxonomy.
- There is a need for tangible financial incentives to encourage companies to become taxonomy aligned.
- Stakeholder consultation and involvement is key, the dredging sector should be able to provide input and collaborate further with the Commission.

## **21.11.2024 - Port of Rotterdam Labour Market Survey Highlights Urgent Staffing Challenges – Rotterdam**

A recent labour market survey has underlined the urgent need for greater collaboration to address a growing shortage of workers in the Port of Rotterdam. With 6,000 vacancies already reported, the demand for skilled labour is set to rise further due to factors such as an aging workforce, the energy transition, and ongoing digitization. These challenges, if left unchecked, could significantly strain port operations and growth.

The survey reveals both positive developments and pressing challenges. Companies in the port are offering competitive wages, above-average pay rates, and an increasing number of permanent contracts. Efforts to create more inclusive workplaces are also showing progress. However, the sector faces difficulties recruiting technical talent.

To address these issues, the Human Capital Coalition Energy Transition (HCCE) is spearheading collaborative solutions. This initiative, involving port companies, the Municipality of Rotterdam, and educational institutions such as Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences and the Shipping and Transport College (STC), aims to attract new talent and enhance knowledge-sharing among stakeholders. Campaigns like “Working in the Port of Rotterdam” are being promoted to increase visibility and inspire young people to consider careers in the port.

The survey also highlights the need to align labour practices with modern demands. Companies are encouraged to adopt smarter technologies, empower employees with greater control over their work, foster inclusive working environments, and support transitions between roles. Collaborative action remains essential to securing a sustainable workforce and ensuring the port's resilience in the face of future challenges.

*Source: Deltalinqs*

## **22.11.2024 - European Maritime Space Forum – Brussels**



On 22 November 2024, the first European Maritime Space Forum took place in Brussels, hosted by the newly appointed European Coordinator for the European Maritime Space, Mrs. Gesine Meissner. The event provided a platform to discuss the latest developments in maritime policies, strategies, and innovations, focusing on critical themes such as environmental sustainability, energy transition, infrastructure and connectivity, and digitalisation and resilience.

The forum featured a series of expert presentations, thematic sessions, and roundtable discussions. Highlights included updates on the European Maritime Space by Martin Seidel from DG MOVE, the Sea Basins Strategy presented by Igljka Yakova from DG MARE, and an engaging session on port resilience that addressed climate change impacts, cybersecurity, and supply chain adaptation.

The event also spotlighted the CEF Transport Call 2024 and showcased advancements in short sea shipping, port incentives, and digital innovation in the maritime sector, such as mobility data spaces and quantum internet pilots.

*Source: European Maritime Space Forum*

## **22.11.2024 – FEPORT Participates to the TIC 4.0 General Assembly – Duisburg**

The TIC 4.0 General Assembly, held on November 21-22, 2024, focused on advancing digitalization and collaboration in the port and terminal sector. FEPORT Policy Advisor Lawrence Brenner updated the attendees about the latest developments in Brussels and the discussions regarding the port sector.

The assembly reviewed the strategic roadmap, highlighted progress in terminal automation, and launched new task forces addressing carrier visits, intermodal trucking, yard inventory, and battery-electric equipment management.

## **25.11.2024 – FEPORT Attends the Sectoral Social Committee Plenary Meeting – Brussels**



**FEPORT members warmly thank the outgoing Chair of the SSDC Mr Guy Vankrunkelsven (Director at Cepa) for his leading and wise role these last years. He has facilitated good discussions even when opinions were diverging and always build compromise among social partners. We have been lucky to benefit from Guy's 30 years' port experience and we wish him good retirement and all the best.**

On November 25, 2024, FEPORT, ESPO, ETF, IDC, and EDC convened for the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC) plenary meeting, where critical issues affecting the port sector were addressed. The agenda of the meeting chaired by the SSDC Chair Mr Guy Vankrunkelsven (Director at Cepa) included discussions on the future of social dialogue for ports, the European Port and Industrial Maritime Strategies, the impact of the Emissions Trading System (ETS) on ports, an update on the Eurofound Study on representativeness, and the future work program of the SSDC.

The European Commission presented key updates on maritime regulations, including the Directive on Maritime Accident Investigation (2009/18/EC). While the safety of dock workers on board ships was acknowledged as an ongoing concern, the Commission noted that the safety topic remains under consideration in the broader context of maritime accident investigations.

The Commission also stressed the need for a cohesive standalone European Port Strategy to boost the competitiveness of EU ports. Much of the discussion focused on the challenges posed by the ETS, including concerns about increased costs for EU ports, the potential for cargo evasion, and the risk of competition from non-EU ports.

Regarding the Eurofound Study on representativeness, the social partners were briefed on the interim feedback, with the final report expected by mid-2025.

The meeting also included discussions on improving the SSDC's functioning, with calls for a more streamlined agenda and better coordination to ensure that discussions focus on the most pressing concerns of the sector. Looking ahead, the social partners agreed to focus on a reduced set of high-priority items in future plenaries, including the European Port Strategy, the impact of ETS. The SSDC will also work on improving its structure and functioning to ensure that social dialogue remains effective and responsive to the needs of the port sector.

## **25.11.2024 – Global Gateway Green Corridors Workshop – Rixensaert**



On the 25th of November, FEPOR Secretariat and members attended a workshop on the Global Gateway Green Shipping Corridors which was held at the Chateau du Lac in Rixensaert, close to Brussels. The Green Shipping Corridors aim to ensure the availability of green refueling and recharging options for shipping lines performing services between ports in the EU and third countries.

The workshop provided the opportunity to both Member States and industry representatives (mainly shipping lines and port authorities) to provide feedback regarding the set up of the Corridors i.e. which ports should be included on the basis of which criteria.

Questions that surged during the meeting for example related to the inclusion of non-EU Southern Mediterranean ports in the initiative, as funding for those ports might distort competition with their EU counterparts that apply stricter environmental and climate legislation such as EU ETS and FuelEU Maritime.

Participants also discussed how non-containerised traffic can be included in the initiative, as bulk ships that do not perform regular services between fixed ports are more difficult to cover in a Corridor approach.

*Source: FEPORT*

## **27.11.2024 - European Parliament Approves New College of Commissioners – Strasbourg**



The European Parliament has voted to approve Ursula von der Leyen's proposed College of Commissioners. In a roll-call vote, 370 MEPs supported the new Commission, 282 opposed it, and 36 abstained. The majority required for confirmation was achieved, as stipulated under rule 129.7 of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

Addressing MEPs before the vote, von der Leyen outlined her team's priorities and confirmed portfolio adjustments requested during the Parliament's evaluation process. She announced the Commission's first initiative would be a "competitiveness compass" aimed at bridging the innovation gap with global rivals, enhancing Europe's security and independence, and advancing decarbonisation efforts.

Reaffirming her commitment to the European Green Deal, von der Leyen highlighted plans to introduce a clean industrial deal, launch a strategic dialogue on the future of the car industry, and strengthen efforts towards a competitive circular economy.

Von der Leyen also stressed the need for Europe to play a stronger role in global conflicts, particularly in Ukraine, the Middle East, and parts of Africa. She called for increased defence spending and reiterated that security would remain a priority under her Commission.

*Source: European Parliament*



## Member's Corner

### **11.11.2024 - Rotterdam Port Tariffs to Prioritise Sustainability and Efficiency from 2025 – Rotterdam**

The Port of Rotterdam has announced new tariff structures for the next three years, following discussions with Deltalinqs and the Association of Rotterdam Shipbrokers (VRC). Starting January 1, 2025, the calculation of sea and inland port dues will undergo significant changes, placing greater emphasis on sustainability and operational efficiency.

The revised system introduces a sustainability factor, adding to the traditional metrics of ship size, cargo type, and volume. This adjustment aims to incentivise greener practices and enhance loading efficiency while simplifying the tariff framework.

This marks the first tariff update since 2022. According to Matthijs van Doorn, Director of Commerce at the Port of Rotterdam Authority, the changes align with the port's ambition to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 while maintaining its competitive edge.

*Source: Deltalinqs*

### **21.11.2024 - HHLA Advances Modernisation at Container Terminal Burchardkai - Hamburg**

Two new container gantry cranes have arrived at Hamburger Hafen und Logistik AG's (HHLA) Container Terminal Burchardkai (CTB) to enhance its handling capacity and efficiency. Delivered aboard the "Zhen Hua 27" on 20 November, the cranes will be installed at Berths 1 and 2 by the end of the month, with commissioning set for early 2025.

Designed for handling ships with capacities of up to 24,000 TEU, the cranes stand 80 meters tall and span 26 container rows. These additions are part of a broader effort to modernise CTB, which includes expanding storage capacity and introducing automated guided vehicles (AGVs) by 2026.

Sustainability remains central to HHLA's upgrades. The cranes, AGVs, and other terminal equipment will operate on renewable energy, supporting the company's aim for climate-neutral operations across Europe by 2040. CTB continues to play a vital role in European supply chains while advancing efficiency and sustainability goals.

*Source: HHLA*

## FEPOR Meetings

**03.12.2024**            FEPOR General Assembly Dinner – Brussels

**04.12.2024**            General Assembly Meeting – Brussels