

# Annual Report

## 2022 – 2023

*European Sea Ports  
Organisation*



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# About ESPO

## THE FIRST PORT OF CALL FOR EUROPEAN POLICY MAKERS IN BRUSSELS

ESPO ensures that seaports have a clear voice in the European Union:

it represents the common interests and promotes the common views and values of its members to the European institutions and its policy makers.

ESPO represents the port authorities, port associations and port administrations of the seaports of 22 Member States of the European Union and Norway at EU political level. ESPO also has observer members in Albania, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

ESPO's mission is to influence public policy in the European Union in order to achieve a safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable European port sector, operating as a key element of a transport industry where free and undistorted market conditions prevail, as far as practicable.

# Foreword

*By ESPO Chair,  
Zeno D'Agostino*

This annual report is without doubt a good testimony of the large amount of legislative work that has been discussed during the last twelve months and the work this implies for the ESPO team in Brussels. Several legislative proposals have been finalised. This is the case for the different 'Fit for 55' proposals such as the Alternative Fuels legislation, the FuelEU Maritime and the legislation including shipping into the EU ETS system. Other proposals, such as the Review of the TEN-T guidelines, the Nature Restoration Law, and the Net Zero Industry Act are currently under discussion in the Parliament and Council and will probably be finalised under the Belgian presidency in the first months of 2024. On top of this, we have seen over the last year other important decisions taken such as the decision not to prolong the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation. Finally in July 2023, the Foreign Direct Subsidy Regulation came into force giving the Commission the competence to look into state aid and support given by foreign state-owned enterprises distorting the competition.

In ESPO, we have been working on all these proposals, trying to understand them, identifying concerns, and proposing changes to address those. Whereas we fully support the aims put forward by the Commission in the subsequent legislative packages we have identified several concerns when it comes to the concrete measures. Many of those have been recognised and addressed during the legislative process, and acceptable solutions have been found but some have not been entirely solved. Moreover, the amount of new legislative proposals, the interlinkages of the different measures and the speed with which these measures have been written out in final legislation, make it very

difficult to date to the full impact, and/ or to exactly know how best to implement those measures in the most cost-effective way in view of delivering the important goal of building a sustainable, net zero, socially responsible and resilient future for Europe.

Reaching the end of this legislative period, and looking ahead to the European elections in June of 2024, I believe that the first priority is now to focus on implementing what has been agreed, progressing on the goals put forward, clarify certain legislation and, if needed, adapt certain decisions, before launching new ideas, new packages.

The work that ESPO has been delivering on EU policy, and the views Europe's ports are taking in that respect, cannot be seen separate from the engagement and bottom-up initiatives ports and ESPO have been taking in the period 2022-2023. The EcoPorts network remains strong. The Annual conference in Bremen has again proven to be an excellent opportunity for learning, exchange and networking. After summer we have also started the work on an update of the 2018 ESPO Port Investment Study which aims at giving a full picture of the investments needs of Europe's ports, taking into account the main game changers of the last five years. Ports are taking up new roles, which will come with new infrastructure and more investment needs. We do hope that this study can help the Commission in the preparation of the new financing period and the CEF in particular.

Last but not least, this year ESPO celebrates its 30th anniversary. Next to a special edition of the ESPO award dinner in Brussels, we are happy to present you a book

gathering the vision for the future of 47 European port leaders. Visions differ, but optimism, responsibility and engagement for the future are a red line through all contributions.

Looking at all these achievements, and looking at the limited amount of people realising this work, I think we must be proud of this organisation. Looking at all the challenges ahead I can see that more and more we will need this port of call in Brussels to see our role explained and our interests represented. More than ever, we need to cooperate, both at policy and at operational level.

I would like to thank the secretariat, our members and my Vice Chairs, Daan and Ansis, as well as the Chairs of the different committees and networks for their engagement into the work of ESPO and look forward to the continued cooperation during the next year.

I also wish to thank the policy makers who aim at developing policies that bring us closer to the Europe we aim for: sustainable, social, resilient, and competitive.

# ESPO Committees and Networks



# ESPO Committees and Networks

Technical expertise and advisor input come from the Technical Committees and Networks on the following topics.

These specialised Committees and Networks are made up of experts from the member ports and are coordinated by the ESPO secretariat. The recommendations of the Technical Committees are submitted to ESPO's Executive Committee who then takes the final decision.

The following section gives an overview of the work of all ESPO Committees and Networks. This report presents ESPO's work for the period mid-October 2022 until end-October 2023.

## Port Governance and Management

*Chaired by Bernhard Zampolin (DE)*

## Intermodal, Logistics and Industry

*Chaired by Cédric Virциglio (FR)*

## Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security, and Marine Affairs

*Chaired by Lieselot Marinus (BE)*

## Sustainable Development

*Chaired by Heidi Neilson (NO)*

*Vice-Chair EcoPorts in Sustainable Development Committee Chryssanthi Kontogiorgi (GR)*

## Energy and Blue Growth

*Chaired by Mark Dijk (NL)*

## Economic Analysis and Statistics

*Chaired by Giannis Chaskis (GR)*

## Labour and Operations

*Chaired by Panagiotis Fevgas (GR)*

## Cruise and Ferry

*Chaired by Valeria Mangiarotti (IT)*

## Legal Advisory

*Chaired by Mārtiņš Ziemanis (LV)*

# Port Governance and Management

## European Parliament's call for a comprehensive EU Port Strategy

The Transport Committee in the European Parliament is developing an own-initiative report that calls for a comprehensive European Port Strategy. The decision to work on this report followed various parliamentary debates on the concern about the growing foreign influence in Europe's critical infrastructure, pointing particularly towards the increasing Chinese presence in Europe's ports. As such, the primary focus of the report is to call upon the Commission to present a strategy that ensures the resilience and competitiveness of European ports while preventing any foreign dependency in the sector. It will be up to the Commission to decide how to follow up on the Parliament's request and whether or not to present such a strategy.

The rapporteur on the file is Dutch MEP Tom Berendsen (European People's Party). In light of the rapporteur's preparations of the draft report, ESPO invited the rapporteur to the ESPO board meeting of 6 July to present the objectives of his report and exchange views with members on the different priorities. In his draft report, which was published on 21 September, the rapporteur calls upon the Commission to prepare "an EU strategic policy framework to reduce and limit influence and operational control by non-EU countries in the EU's ports and in their processes and hinterland operations."

The debates in the Parliament and the conversations that the secretariat has had with the key players on this file reveal that the Parliament aims to take a real

comprehensive approach to the report, not only focusing on foreign investments, geopolitical aspects and competitiveness, but also on other aspects such as environmental, social and labour issues, custom authorities and drugs trafficking. In light of the upcoming European elections in June next year, the Parliament aims to progress as much as possible on this report and to find an agreement on the final text in the coming weeks.

ESPO has been and will continue to engage with the key players to underline the ESPO priorities and try to generate a better understanding of the needs, challenges and ways of working of Europe's ports. For ESPO it is important to consider the existing instruments (such as the FDI screening framework, the Foreign Subsidies Regulation, the concession and/or lease contract tools) which need to be implemented properly. At the same time, Europe's ports strongly believe that safeguarding the future development, competitiveness and resilience of Europe's ports should be at the basis of any instrument.

## Awaiting the revision of the Foreign Direct Investment Screening Regulation

The Commission is currently preparing a revision of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Regulation, which it aims to publish by the end of 2023. The current FDI Regulation sets a framework for the Commission and the Member States to cooperate in the screening of foreign direct investment in selected sectors, including

the transport sector. Member States are however not obliged to have a national screening system in place and can choose to some extent the scope of application.

The Commission has already identified various "shortcomings" of the current Regulation and underlines the need for a more harmonised and mandatory framework for FDI screening. A stakeholder consultation was carried out in July this year, to which ESPO participated. Of high importance to ESPO is to ensure a level playing field across the EU when it comes to screening foreign investments. As such, ESPO has called for an introduction of a screening system in all the Member States and for further harmonising certain aspects, including the definitions, scope and procedural aspects. It is crucial that assessments on the basis of this Regulation take place within reasonable timeframes and respect confidentiality during the screening process, in view of ensuring legal certainty for potential investors.

# Port Governance and Management

## Distortive Foreign Subsidies Regulation in force since July 2023

Another new instrument addressing foreign influence in Europe concerns the Distortive Foreign Subsidies Regulation (FSR). This tool, applicable as of 12 July 2023, allows the European Commission to examine foreign subsidies granted to undertakings operating in the European internal market and, in case it finds such subsidies to be distortive, to take appropriate measures (such as prohibiting the award of a public procurement contract or the conclusion of a concentration). The Regulation covers all sectors, while particular emphasis is placed on those sectors of strategic interest to the European Union as well as critical infrastructure, including ports.

The new instrument is currently being implemented. ESPO has raised to the Commission several unclaritys of the current Regulation, including with regards to the exact criteria against which the Commission will assess a distortion of the internal market. The Commission has provided that only in a few years after some experience with the new instrument the Commission will issue guidelines further clarifying these aspects.

## The end of the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation

The European Commission recently decided to not extend the EU legal framework which exempts liner shipping consortia from EU antitrust rules – the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation (CBER). The Commission points towards the evidence collected from stakeholders underlining the low or limited effectiveness of the CBER throughout the 2020-2023 period and, as such, has decided to let the CBER expire

on 25 April 2024. In line with ESPO's call for concern, the Commission refers to the trend of vertical integration of carriers and states that such competitive structure would call for a case-by-case assessment of the market power of carriers on the relevant markets. Earlier this year, ESPO took a strengthened position with regards to the CBER, calling upon the Commission to ensure a European legislative framework that safeguards and allows for fair competition and a level playing field in the maritime and logistics sector. To this end, the Commission should not only effectively monitor horizontal but also vertical integration in the sector and should intervene when required to ensure a fair power balance.

## Other topics

Members recently decided to carry out an ESPO mapping exercise on port masterplans. This bottom-up initiative aims to generate a better understanding of the various practices when it comes to masterplans or equivalent long-term, strategic planning in the different ports and Member States. Furthermore, the secretariat is monitoring the Commission's process of writing an implementation report on the Port Services Regulation. The report was officially due on 24 March 2023, but DG MOVE confirmed its publication will be delayed with a minimum of 12 months. Members will be informed of any relevant developments.



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## POSITION PAPERS

**10 JULY 2023**

[ESPO contribution to the Commission's Call for Evidence on the FDI Regulation](#)

**11 JULY 2023**

[ESPO position on the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation \(CBER\)](#)



# Intermodal, Logistics and Industry

## Revision of the TEN-T guidelines

The revision process of the TEN-T network is still ongoing. The Parliament and the Council are currently negotiating in order to reach an agreement on the final text of the revision.

The secretariat is in ongoing contact with the key players on this file to underline the priority of Europe's ports for the new TEN-T network. One of the main ESPO priorities concerns an adequate recognition of the essential role of ports in building and strengthening the supply chains for the new energy landscape, in the criteria under Article 24. Up to now, ports' place in the TEN-T network is solely based on their throughput. ESPO believes it urgently needed to also take into account the crucial role ports play as hub in the green transition and Europe's security of energy supply. While the Council's position reflects this point, the Parliament up to now fails to give its support. Another ESPO priority concerns an adequate application of the TEN-T rail requirements until the rail handover point in ports.

In light of the upcoming European elections, the Parliament aims to reach an agreement with the Council and finalise the revision as soon as possible.

## Funding opportunities for ports

Over the last working year, the secretariat continued to inform and explain to the members the various funding opportunities for ports, including the Connecting

Europe Facility's (CEF) general Transport call for 2023 as well as its military mobility call and Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility calls. Members were also informed on opportunities under the other EU funding instruments, including the Innovation Fund.

## Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility

The Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility (AFIF) is one important funding opportunity for ports. It supports the deployment of alternative fuel supply infrastructure in European TEN-T ports. The next cut-off date for applications is 7 November 2023. Members are highly encouraged to apply, particularly in light of the lacking applications from maritime ports so far.

In light of the Commission's preparations of the new AFIF call(s) for next year, the secretariat has met with DG MOVE to discuss the challenges of ports when applying for AFIF and to underline the need for an instrument better catered to the needs of ports. ESPO has called for reconsidering the blending obligation under AFIF, requiring applicants to combine the grant with an obligatory loan (of at least 10% of the total cost). This obligation is problematic, particularly in the case of OPS projects for which a sound business case is often lacking.

## Innovation Fund

The European Commission has been in the process of revising the Innovation Fund in order to align the Fund with the recently revised EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) Directive. ESPO, as member of the Innovation Fund Expert Group, has been assisting DG CLIMA with this revision. While ports are already eligible to apply for funding under the existing Innovation Fund, new opportunities for ports are foreseen under the upcoming dedicated calls for the maritime sector under the new Fund.

One of the key priorities of ESPO has been to ensure funding opportunities for innovative port projects, including onshore power supply (OPS) projects. ESPO has underlined the importance of making OPS eligible under the new Innovation Fund, particularly in light of the fact that OPS installations not only reduce GHG emissions, but also facilitate the electrification of transport and address multiple environmental aspects - two priorities for the new Innovation Fund as stipulated by the revised ETS Directive. ESPO has emphasised that a sole focus on breakthrough or highly disruptive projects would undermine the Innovation Fund's potential to support those projects that are proven highly effective in terms of emission reduction. The scaling up of OPS as required by the new AFIF Regulation is to be considered innovative since no port in Europe has experience with the development and operational challenges of having OPS at such a big scale.

# Intermodal, Logistics and Industry

## The Rail Capacity Regulation proposal

The European Commission recently adopted the proposal for the Rail Capacity Regulation. The proposal is part of the Commission's Greening Freight Package presented in July 2023. The draft Rail Capacity Regulation proposes measures to improve the management and coordination of rail traffic in Europe and establishes the general responsibilities of rail infrastructure managers. The European Parliament and Council are currently looking into the Commission's proposal, with a draft report in TRAN foreseen by the end of November 2023.

In October's meeting, the secretariat and members discussed the Commission's proposed measures. For Europe's ports, it is of high importance to be adequately involved in the proposed European Network of Infrastructure Managers (ENIM) and to be structurally consulted and have a say on port-related matters.

## The review of the 2018 ESPO Port Investment Study

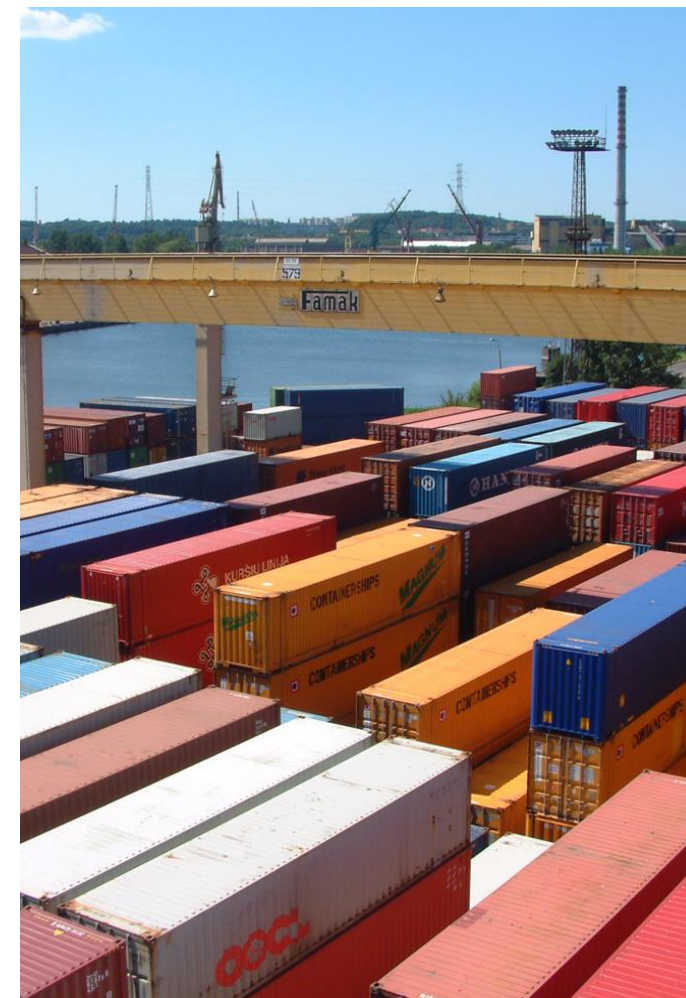
In light of DG MOVE's preparations of the next Connecting Europe Facility instrument, ESPO has decided to update the ESPO Port Investment Study of 2018. It is expected that the investment needs of ports will have considerably changed since 2018 - in particular as a consequence of the Green Deal, Fit for 55, the war in Ukraine and the further development of ports as hubs of energy. The aim is to finalise the

study in March next year, well before the Connecting Europe Days of 2 to 5 April 2024.

In parallel, ESPO took the initiative to relaunch the joint CEF Campaign "More EU budget for transport" (similar to the one of 2018). The secretariat has invited all transport organisations and associations to join forces and already more than 50 organisations are on board to re-activate the campaign.

## Other topics

The secretariat informed members on developments regarding the EU Taxonomy and the revised technical screening criteria for determining when economic activities qualify as contributing substantially to climate change mitigation or adaptation. In talks with the relevant Commission DGs, ESPO has been highly critical of the exclusion of dredging of waterways, which is an indispensable activity enabling basic operations of a port. Furthermore, the secretariat is monitoring the upcoming Commission's proposal for a revised Combined Transport Directive, whose publication has been postponed numerous times this year. As soon as the proposal is published, the secretariat will revert back to the members to develop an ESPO response.



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## PRESS RELEASE

**12 APRIL 2023**  
[TEN-T Revision – European Parliament must recognise essential role of ports in new energy supply chains](#)

# Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security, and Marine Affairs

## Russian invasion in Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine remained high on ESPO's agenda. In the context of this war the EU introduced 11 sanction packages, with some affecting directly the maritime and port sector (prohibitions on import and export of certain goods from and to Russia, a ban on Russian vessels entering EU ports). The EU sanctions imposed in 2023 were targeted at the import of Russian oil and its products (including an introduction of oil price cap in cooperation with G7 countries), as well as closing the loopholes in the existing sanction regime. In the context of the security of supply of oil to the EU, in December 2022 ESPO was invited to join the Oil Coordination Group which serves as a platform for exchanges of views between the European Commission and key stakeholders, including ESPO. In addition, ESPO's Trade Facilitation, Customs, Security and Marine Affairs regularly discusses the sanctions impact on ports. Last, but not least, ESPO continues to closely monitor the EU Solidarity Lanes initiative and the involvement of EU ports, aimed at providing alternative export routes to Ukrainian goods, in particular grains.

## Maritime Security

On 16 January 2023, the Directive on the resilience of critical infrastructure (CER Directive), together with the revised Directive on the security of network and information systems (NIS2), entered into force. The CER Directive is designed to harmonise rules on combating threats other than cyber risks, whereas the NIS2 Directive is intended to better harmonise cybersecurity rules across the EU. Both exemplify the change in the EU approach from

protection to resilience, by significantly enhancing, and to certain extent, unifying enforcement and reporting rules. EU ports are subject to the application of the legislation. Member States will have time until 17 October 2024 to transpose the revised directives into their laws, including an obligation to establish a comprehensive list of entities subject to new provisions (for NIS2 until 17 April 2025, for CER until 17 July 2026). ESPO will further monitor the implementation of both directives, assisting, where possible, ESPO members in their implementation efforts.

## European Maritime Single Window Environment (EMSWe)

Over the last year, ESPO continued to participate in the work of the European Maritime Single Window Expert Group. ESPO was represented in this group by Miguel Llop Cabrera (Port of Valencia), who reports to the ESPO Committee. The establishment of the common data set and common functionalities have finally been completed by the European Commission, whereas the development of EMSWe IT components to be integrated into national windows is progressing steadily. In total, the EMSWe national implementation, including testing, is expected to last at least 18 months, keeping the date of application set in the EMSWe Regulation (15 August 2025) valid. ESPO will keep a close eye on the implementation of the EMSWe, when needed, facilitating the exchange between members on the EMSWe implementation aspects.

## Maritime Safety

On 1 June 2023, the European Commission presented the long-awaited EU Maritime Safety Package, revising the

existing EU maritime safety legislation. The package includes the review of the Directive on flag state requirements, the Directive on port state control, the Directive on maritime transport accident investigation, the Directive on ship-source pollution, the Regulation on the European Maritime Safety Agency, EMSA. The package updates the existing EU rules on maritime safety and prevention of water pollution from ships, by aligning with the international obligations (IMO), taking also into account the EU green and digital transition. ESPO supports in essence the different Commission proposals and will continue to monitor the discussions in the Parliament and Council on these. While it was expected that all proposals would be adopted before the end of this legislative period (spring 2024) it is not clear if this will be the case for the EMSA Regulation.

# Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security, and Marine Affairs

## Brexit: ESPO member of the EU advisory Group on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

ESPO followed closely the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, more specifically focusing on the impact on EU ports. ESPO regularly attends the meetings of the EU Domestic Advisory Group on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (the so-called “EU DAG”), tasked with monitoring and providing advice of business and social partners on the implementation of the Agreement. In the recent months the introduction of border checks by the UK government on goods imported from the EU (sanitary and phytosanitary controls, submission of security declarations) has been identified a main source of concern for many economic operators trading with the UK. The latest timeframe sets out a gradual introduction of controls, starting from 31 January 2024. ESPO will further engage in the work of EU DAG, looking closer on the border checks issues, as well as level playing field aspects (operations of the so-called freeports).

## Customs

ESPO, via its representative from the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, Kristin van Kesteren-Stefan, continued its participation in the work of the Trade Contact Group, a Commission platform for regular consultations at the EU level on the development and implementation of customs related issues and developments of customs policy. The ESPO involvement in the work of group proved to be particularly important in the context of a comprehensive EU customs reform announced by the European Commission in mid-May 2023. The reform package includes a new Union Customs Code (UCC) Regulation, built on the existing UCC, simplifying its structure, reducing administrative burden, streamlining customs processes, among others, by establishing the European Customs Data Hub, managed by a newly created EU Customs Authority. The EU Customs Reform is currently at an initial stage of the legislative process. ESPO will further monitor the file, among others, via its involvement in the TCG work, ensuring that a “maritime angle” is adequately reflected.

## Tackling Drug trafficking

ESPO regularly attends meetings of the Stakeholders Advisory Group on Maritime Security (SAGMAS), which deals with maritime security questions. In recent months the issue of countering drug trafficking was brought to the attention of the group, focusing on the risks linked with crime organisation, infiltrating ports. Since the problem only escalates across the EU, the Commission has come up with the initiative to establish a European Ports Alliance, a new forum bringing together private (ports and logistic hubs, shipping industry) and public actors (law enforcement, customs, and local authorities). The objective is to ensure better coordination, effective exchange of information between members of the alliance. In the coming months ESPO will engage with the Commission on how to translate the initiative into concrete, tangible results.

## Global Gateway

ESPO keeps monitoring developments around the Commission’s Global Gateway

Initiative, aimed at creating strategic and sustainable cooperation with third partner countries, EU’s response to China’s Belt and Road Initiative. To streamline Union’s efforts in the initiative implementation, the Commission has set up an expert group – GG Business Advisory Group. In September the ESPO Secretary General was selected to become a member of the group. This should provide ESPO with a better insight, helping in presenting the EU port perspective.

# Sustainable Development

## Conclusion of negotiations on maritime proposals in the Fit for 55-package

Since the publication of the Fit for 55-package in 2021, the work of the Sustainable Development Committee has focused on the port-relevant files in the package. Specifically, this concerns the extension of EU Emission Trading System (ETS) to cover shipping emissions, the introduction of new requirements for alternative fuels and onshore power supply (OPS) applicable to both ships and ports (Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation – AFIR, and FuelEU Maritime), and proposals on the taxation of OPS and marine fuels (Energy Taxation Directive).

EU ETS maritime, AFIR and FuelEU Maritime have been agreed and formally adopted by Parliament and Member States. Negotiations on the Energy Taxation Directive are moving slowly, with little appetite amongst Member States to agree on increased taxation on energy in the current geopolitical context. European Parliament has halted its work on an opinion, calling for a comprehensive impact assessment of the Fit for 55-package to be carried out before reaching an agreement on a revised Directive.

ESPO has closely monitored the legislative negotiations during the past year, continuously promoting the views and interests of members in the final stages of discussions between European Parliament and Council. The secretariat has been sharing the ports' concerns with the relevant policymakers, provided technical input, and shared insights on the feasibility of the proposed legislative framework. The secretariat has also published several press releases on EU ETS, AFIR, and FuelEU, calling for developing OPS where it makes sense

and signalling the risk of carbon and business leakage following the limited regional scope of the EU ETS maritime.

ESPO has successfully pushed for dedicated funding for maritime and ports foreseen in the Innovation Fund. As for the obligations regarding OPS, ESPO succeeded to see some level of prioritisation of OPS deployment in key locations in ports possible under AFIR and FuelEU Maritime. The risk of evasion and rerouting has been recognised in the final EU ETS texts but the anti-evasion measures put forward by the co-legislators are not sufficient to address the risks associated with ships rerouting their voyages and changing their operations ahead of the entry into force of the agreed legislation.

The implementation of the agreed legislation will therefore be key, with legislation starting to enter into force in 2024 (EU ETS), with FuelEU Maritime requirements for emission reductions and LNG requirements in ports set for 2025. The deadline for ports to provide OPS for passenger and container ships is 2030, and is mirrored by a requirement for ships to connect. ESPO will therefore continue to monitor the implementation of these various requirements, contributing to the development of implementing legislation through the European Sustainable Shipping Forum (ESSF). As regards the EU ETS legislation, ESPO has been continuing its campaign alerting policymakers about the risk of carbon and business leakage already taking form ahead of the implementation date.

To help members with the implementation of the ambitious OPS requirements for ports, two dedicated workshops have been organised to build knowledge and expertise amongst members. During these two sessions

ports discussed what they have already planned in terms of OPS, the repartition of roles and responsibilities, and the business models for OPS. The insights generated through these meetings help ESPO in informing the Commission and relevant policymakers about the challenges ahead, in particular as concerns the financing of these investments.

## Proposal for a Nature Restoration Law: ESPO's plea for a workable approach

In 2022, the European Commission published a legislative proposal for a Nature Restoration Law that is intended to restore damaged ecosystems and bring nature back across Europe. The proposal will have implications for the work done by ports to protect and restore natural areas, and ESPO has been following the discussions in the Parliament and Council closely. The proposal is currently being discussed by European Parliament and Council during dialogues.

### POSITION PAPERS

**30 MARCH 2023**

[ESPO position on the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law](#)

**18 SEPTEMBER 2023**

[ESPO position on EU ETS implementing regulation identifying neighbouring container transshipment](#)

# Sustainable Development

An ESPO position has been developed and subsequently endorsed by the Sustainable Development Committee in March. The priority for ESPO is to ensure that the restoration targets and exceptions set out in the proposal for terrestrial and coastal areas and rivers are aligned with existing EU legislation, specifically the Water Framework Directive. The Commission proposal moves away from the processes and criteria for restoration set out in existing legislation, creating undue administrative burden and legislative uncertainty.

In late March, ahead of the vote in the European Parliament and the agreement (general approach) in the Council, ESPO publicly called for a more pragmatic approach to nature restoration. ESPO has met with policymakers and other maritime stakeholders in order to ensure that the Nature Restoration Law remains workable for ports at a time when they have increasing spatial needs to respond to the requirement to play a leading role in the deployment of renewable energy and the overall energy transition.

## **CountEmissions EU: a new framework to calculate GHG emissions of transport services**

In July 2023, the European Commission proposed a common framework to calculate and report transport-related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), the so-called 'CountEmissions EU', as part of the Greening of Freight package.

The CountEmissions EU tool itself will be voluntary and can be applied by both the passenger and freight sector. While voluntary in itself, other EU, national or regional legislation could refer to it, giving it indirectly a mandatory character. The methodology draws on a new international standard ISO 14083:2023, covering GHG emissions from all modes of transport including emissions from transshipment activities and short-sea shipping. However, it does not explicitly account for other externalities such as congestion and noise.

ESPO will monitor legislative developments and assess the potential impact of accounting for only the GHG emissions in the broader context of transport modal shift.

## **EcoPorts Network: Update of the Self-Diagnosis Method (SDM) and the ESPO Environmental Report**

The EcoPorts Network is the main environmental initiative of the European port sector. It was initiated by a number of proactive ports in 1997 and has been fully integrated into the European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) since 2011. Since its foundation, the Network has continued to grow with a large number of members and a growing share of ports using the tools offered as part of EcoPorts.

The Network is going strong, and the last five years have seen important increases in the recognition of the Network, with 91 ports from 26 countries currently counting themselves as part of the EcoPorts Network, and 34 ports

holding PERS certification. PERS (Port Environmental Review System) is the only port-specific environmental standard.

The ESPO secretariat and the EcoPorts science coordinators have been reviewing the Self-Diagnosis Method (SDM). The SDM is a checklist that allows the port to identify and reflect on environmental risks, providing a snapshot of the environmental management efforts in the port. It includes all key indicators relevant to port environmental work, and a completed SDM is valid for a period of two years.

The reviewed SDM will ensure that the EcoPorts Network maintains its position as the foremost environmental management tool developed by ports, for ports. It maintains the setup of the previous version, and remains in line with the international scope of EcoPorts. It was approved by members of the Sustainable Development Committee at a meeting in Brussels in spring 2023.

Key new indicators include whether the port has a roadmap for greening, whether the port monitors ambient and underwater noise, the possibility to allow battery charging and battery swapping in the port, agreements on the use of onshore power supply in ports, demand for alternative fuels, and the operational resilience of ports. In October 2023, the ESPO Environmental Report 2023 was presented at the GreenPort Congress hosted by Port of Lisbon.

## **Top 10 environmental priorities of the port sector in 2023**

1. Climate change
2. Air quality
3. Energy efficiency
4. Noise
5. Water quality
6. Ship waste
7. Relationship with the local community
8. Port development (land related)
9. Garbage/port waste
10. Port development (water related)

# Energy and Blue Growth

## Merging the Energy and Blue Growth Networks

ESPO merged the Energy and Blue Growth Networks into one Committee, having worked closely together over the last two years on a number of issues, including the REPowerEU plan, the offshore renewable energy sector, and the development of the European Blue Economy Strategy. Merging the two Networks allows to develop a more integrated approach to policy development.

## REPowerEU

The impact of the Russian invasion in Ukraine and the sanctions against Russia as well as their impact on the provision of energy have been a topic of discussion in the Energy and Blue Growth Committee since 2022. Last year, the Commission presented a REPowerEU plan to help Europe's through the energy crisis by reforming the EU's energy system and ramping up the production of renewable energies, as well as giving some short-term support for conventional energies.

The revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED) sets a new 2030 target of having a 42.5% share of renewables in the EU's final energy consumption, aiming to reach a 45% target. It enables easier permitting for renewable energy projects through the introduction of dedicated acceleration areas for renewables. The agreement also reinforces the regulatory framework for renewable energy use in transport (14.5% greenhouse gas intensity reduction or 29% share of renewable energy in final energy consumption), including a combined sub-target of 5.5% for advanced biofuels and

renewable fuels of non-biological origin, including a minimum level of 1% for renewable fuels of non-biological origin.

The final agreement was adopted by the European Parliament in September 2023 and received very recently the Council formal approval to enter into force.

Europe's seaports welcomed the REPowerEU proposals aiming at facilitating the permitting process for energy related projects and investments. In response to a Commission proposal to dedicate certain areas for faster permitting, ESPO stressed the complexity of port areas consisting of multi-layered zones and overlapping activities. This was addressed in the concept of multiple uses of the areas, also to be compatible with their pre-existing uses.

## Net-Zero Industry Act

The Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA) is a new legislative proposal that aims to support the EU's industry in its transition to net-zero technologies. It includes measures to simplify permit procedures for some net-zero technologies (batteries, windmills, electrolysers, CCS technologies, etc).

If the NZIA is expected to help the EU maintain its global leadership in clean technology, then it should also be seen as an opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of Europe's ports towards non-European ports. Consequently, ESPO stressed, in its position paper of June 2023, that support for net-zero

technologies must be accompanied by adapting and upgrading of the supply chain infrastructure, hinterland connections and maritime access. Reaching the goals set in the NZIA affects not only the production and the projects taking place in the port, but also projects happening in the hinterland, which would require adapted hinterland infrastructure and connectivity to and from the port. This point was fully addressed by the TRAN committee's opinion, but has only indirectly been reflected in the report of the leading ITRE committee. It is unclear if the Parliament and Council will come to a final agreement on this proposal before the end of this legislative period.

## POSITION PAPERS

**14 JUNE 2023**

[Position paper on the Commission proposal for a Green Deal Industrial Plan for New-Zero Age](#)

**6 SEPTEMBER 2023**

[Contribution to the call for the evidence for repowering the EU with hydrogen valleys \(roadmap\)](#)

# Energy and Blue Growth

## Hydrogen

Ever since the Commission published its Hydrogen Strategy on 8 July 2020, the Energy and Blue Growth Committee has consistently been following up all relevant policy developments regarding hydrogen. The revision of the existing Gas Directive and Regulation stands out among them as the missing pieces of a solid regulatory framework for hydrogen. Moreover, to guarantee the purchase of hydrogen and to bridge the investment gap, the Commission announced the creation of an EU Hydrogen Bank that will support the development and deployment of renewable hydrogen in the EU. It will be funded by €3 billion from the Innovation Fund. A first auction to support the production of renewable hydrogen will start at the end of November 2023.

## Clean Hydrogen Partnership - Deloitte study on hydrogen in ports and industrial coastal areas

Clean Hydrogen Partnership commissioned a study on hydrogen for ports and industrial coastal areas to Deloitte. Since its start, ESPO has been part of the Advisory Board for the study. The study aims at enabling the creation of a European Hydrogen Ports Roadmap. It will also feature economic forecasts based on a variety of business models for the transition to renewable hydrogen in ports, while presenting new case studies and project concepts. ESPO is in close contact with the consultants to discuss the ongoing work on the study. Two reports have already been published, whereas the last one will soon present case studies.

## Offshore renewable energy sector

The offshore renewable energy sector (ORES) is a rapidly growing sector in the EU. As part of the Green Deal, the EU has set a target of 60 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030, and this is expected to grow significantly in the coming decades.

This Committee followed up closely all relevant EU policy developments regarding offshore renewable energy. ESPO is part of the working group on ORES created by the Commission, composed of 20 representatives from the whole supply chain. The

objective of this working group is to identify the challenges which the ORES faces, as well as to develop recommendations to the Commission and Member States to overcome these barriers. Concretely, a report is being drafted and will be presented at the next ministerial meeting of the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC). ESPO took the lead on the chapter on 'Ports' to give political visibility at some of the current concerns.

On 19 June 2023, the third meeting of the European Ports Forum's sub-group on Ports as Hubs for a Sustainable Blue Economy, of which ESPO is a member, took place. This sub-group was established by DG MARE to discuss issues surrounding the evolving role of ports in a changing industrial landscape and to see how ports can become dynamic nodes for blue economy clusters and blue innovation ecosystems. The Commission is in the process of creating a Blue Forum in order to have a pan-European platform to define common goals.



# Economic Analysis and Statistics



## PortinSights

ESPO continued to develop its data platform PortinSights. About 100 European ports are regularly contributing their quarterly throughput data, together accounting for more than 70% of European maritime throughput. The Committee has been instrumental in gathering and analysing the ports' throughput data.

ESPO is intending to involve an external consultant to perform an additional analysis of the ESPO throughput data results. The Economic Analysis and Statistics Committee continued to reflect upon what such additional analysis could focus on and what throughput data results would be of interest to analyse in more detail.

## Development of performance indicators

In 2023, the Economic Analysis and Statistics Committee continued to explore areas to expand port performance measurement beyond port throughput. The Committee started the work on developing performance indicators for energy-related activities of ports. The aim is to agree on energy indicators and to advance the ESPO energy data collection, including to be able to quantify and communicate the role of ports as energy hubs adequately, including to (European) policy makers.

ESPO continues its efforts to collect port modal split data, however difficulties remain as European ports often rely on external parties for data on modal share, meaning that port managing bodies cannot always provide exact data. In view of the European Green Deal and the EU's climate ambitions, ESPO will continue its efforts to establish a representative modal split data collection.

## Macro – economic outlooks

The Economic Analysis and Statistics Committee introduced a structural exchange on the macro-economic outlooks of Europe's ports, going into the prospects from different regional perspectives. These prospects include reflections regarding Europe's economic slowdown, the imbalance of energy markets, inflation, and recent trade developments. The committee meeting in May kicked-off with prospects from three different members from different regions in Europe, after which the floor was opened to everyone to share views from their respective regions.

## ESPO – Eurostat cooperation

The Economic Analysis and Statistics Committee also continued its exchange and cooperation with Eurostat. Eurostat's maritime statistics unit participated in a meeting of the Economic Analysis and Statistics Committee to present Eurostat data on Europe's trade flows, focusing particularly on maritime transport data with non-EU Member States. The presentation included trade flows by major regions and by commodities, including to and from Russia, China and the US.

# Labour and Operations

In 2023, work in the Labour and Operations Network resumed following the relaunch of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC). In February, ESPO and several members of the Network attended the first meeting of the SSDC in over a year, and the first physical meeting since 2020. Another dialogue meeting took place on 3 July. The SSD Committee had previously been unable to meet due to disagreements between dock worker representatives regarding who would attend the meetings on their behalf.

During the two meetings, the Network discussed several issues related to the social dialogue, including the work programme of the SSDC, the possible renewal of the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation (CBER) and the impact of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) on the competitiveness of ports in the EU.

In 2023, work also started in the Network on the new representativeness study to be presented by the European Commission and the EU agency Eurofound in 2025. The sectoral representativeness study for ports is intended to aid sectoral social dialogue in the ports sector. The aim is to identify the relevant national and supranational social partner organisations in the field of industrial relations in ports, to make sure that they are adequately represented in the social dialogue.

## Women's employment in the port sector

One of the standing topics on the agenda of the social dialogue concerns women's employment in ports and how to increase this. During the last social dialogue meeting of 3 July, the social partners agreed to intensify the dialogue's work on this topic. It was decided to carry

out a study on the actual state of play when it comes to women working in Europe's ports. To prepare this study, a dedicated working group has been established that is tasked with developing a comprehensive set of survey questions to gather the required data. Once finalised, this survey will be sent to all Europe's ports, who will be asked to participate.

On the side of ESPO, ESPO has been monitoring the gender balance since 2018, through measuring the effective attendance of port professionals to the different meetings of the organisation. The results of this monitoring are published each year on the occasion of the International Women's Day. ESPO is also one of the founding members of the European Commission's initiative "[Women in Transport – EU Platform for change](#)" launched in 2017.

In the past year, the ESPO secretariat has continued monitoring the share of female participation in ESPO's work, finding that in 2023, the overall number of women participating in the ESPO Committee and Network meetings remained at a relatively high level, albeit not yet reaching gender parity. In 2023, taking all technical committees together, women represented 43,08% of the port professionals who attended ESPO meetings. This is higher than the share of women participating in 2022, which was 38%.

## Maritime Safety Package

A new topic on the agenda of the social dialogue concerns the measures under the recently proposed Maritime Safety Package. The package involves five legislative proposals and contains cross-cutting issues, including

alignment with international instruments, digitalisation, and an increased role for the support of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) (in ESPO Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security, and Marine Affairs).

During the meeting of 3 July, a representative of the Maritime Safety Unit at DG MOVE presented the main elements of the package, focusing particularly on the proposed Maritime Accident Investigation Directive. The Commission has identified a number of issues of the latter Directive, including the overall differentiated approach across Member States how to treat maritime accidents, a lack of comparable and accurate statistics as well as a lack of safety recommendations to the responsible authorities in the Member States. The Labour and Operations Network will reflect on the port priorities when it comes to the proposed Maritime Safety Package and engage with the Commission and the social partners in this regard.

## PRESS RELEASE

8 MARCH 2023

[Female participation in ESPO](#)

# Cruise and Ferry

After several years of dealing with the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic, 2023 was the year when the cruise and ferry sectors saw the return of business to more usual volumes/patterns. Whilst the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 is having far-reaching consequences for the ports in the Black Sea, it has also affected the business models and routes of some carriers in the Baltic Sea. However, the overall picture remains optimistic with passenger volumes across Europe coming steadily towards pre-pandemic levels.

## The Entry-Exit System: further postponement and uncertainty continues

Since 2020, ESPO has been closely involved in EU legislation for checks of third-country nationals entering the EU Schengen area as part of the Entry-Exit System Regulation (EES) entry into operation. The EES is a large-scale IT system for the automatic monitoring of the border-crossing of third-country nationals, which aims to reinforce border check procedures for non-EU nationals travelling to the EU.

As part of EES, Member States must carry out registrations and checks of third-country nationals close to the national borders, which in practice entails checks of passengers in the port. This raises several practical concerns, especially for passengers and families travelling in vehicles, altering the current operational model of certain busy passenger ports. It also proves to be challenging when it requires new infrastructures in crowded port areas.

The Cruise and Ferry Port Network has been

responsible for following the ongoing EU discussions on the entry into operation of the system and has been voicing its concerns at several occasions. In early June, ESPO published a press release calling for the EES to take into account the readiness of EU Member States and its ports to safely and sustainably carry out the registrations and checks required by EES before a new date for entry into operation is set.

The EES's entry into operation has been delayed. According to the recently announced roadmap endorsed by the October Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council, the EES should be delivered between third and fourth quarter of 2024. A precise entry into operation's date is yet to be determined in a Commission's delegated decision not earlier than in summer 2024. The interim operational steps are still to be communicated. To date, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the possibility of a transitional period for introduction of first registrations under the EES.

## Fit for 55-package and its impact on cruise and ferry ports

Alongside the work done in the Sustainable Development Committee, the Cruise and Ferry Port Network has also been closely involved in the ESPO work related to the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55-package. The Network has been actively contributing to the development of ESPO positions on key files in this package, and has provided specific input on the key aspects for passenger ports in the ongoing lobbying efforts of ESPO.

The passenger port perspective is especially important

in relation to the use of onshore power supply (OPS), where the Network is currently seeking to find an agreement on a common engagement with the cruise lines on the use of OPS when available, ahead of the 2030 deadline.

## Waste management

The Network has also been following the implementation of the Port Reception Facilities (PRF) Directive closely. Under the directive, ports must provide discounts on the waste fee for ships engaged in sustainable waste management practices. However, the size of the reduction is left to individual ports. Also on that point, the cruise sector is facing specific challenges, in particular when it comes to the segregation of the different waste categories.

ESPO is a member of the Commission-led expert subgroup on Waste from Ships as part of the European Sustainable Shipping Forum (ESSF), which is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of maritime waste management in the EU. During the Network meeting in March, it was decided that ESPO would circulate a survey on waste management in ports. The survey proved to be helpful in giving an overview of the level of implementation across ports in the EU, providing insights regarding the challenges associated with the PRF Directive (e.g., high administrative burden for some ports when it comes to establishing a reduced fee for waste).

### PRESS RELEASE

14 JUNE 2023

[Entry into operation of the EES](#)

# Year in Review



# ESPO Award 2022

## *Role of ports in the recovery of the city and the local community*



Out of seven submissions and four shortlisted projects, the Port of Barcelona was the winner of the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the ESPO Award, in recognition of the role of maritime passenger transport in enhancing the city connectivity and bringing added value to the local community. The ESPO Award was handed out by Magda Kopczynska, Director for Innovative and Sustainable Mobility in the European Commission's department for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), during the traditional ceremony and dinner at the Bozar in Brussels.

The Port's project "Your Port Opens Up Again" – involving the deeper integration of the old port of Barcelona and the city through the completion of the reorganization of passenger traffic. This project includes transferring one ferry and two cruise terminals from the old port area to a wharf located in the commercial port exclusively dedicated to passengers and relocating a multipurpose terminal in the commercial port.

# ESPO Conference 2023

*1 – 2 June | Bremen*

The 19th edition of the annual ESPO Conference took place on 1-2 June 2023 in Bremen, kindly hosted by bremenports, around the theme "Europe's ports as partners in the race to net-zero".

During the ESPO Conference 2023 we asked the experts which attended this event to draw the current economic, energy and geopolitical landscape in which ports and their stakeholders operate, with the aim of moving towards achieving the ambitions of becoming net-zero and remaining competitive. This was followed by a series of interesting sessions in which we addressed the main questions that every port manager and stakeholder is asking at the time.

The overarching topic of discussion was the new opportunities for business and industry in Europe to become net-zero as well as the green transition, new energies and policies that the EU is working on in this framework, such as the Fit for 55 package, the Green Deal or REPowerEU. The conference gathered around 200 participants.

The presentations given during the conference can be found [here](#).

The next ESPO Conference will take place in Paris on 24-26 April 2024.

# Events organised, co-organised or supported

- ESPO Award 2022 Ceremony, 7 November 2022, Brussels, Belgium
- ESPO Conference 2023, 1-2 June 2023, Bremen, Germany
- Baltic Ports Conference, 6-8 September 2023, Ystad, Sweden
- GreenPort Congress & Cruise, 18-20 October 2023, Lisbon, Portugal

# Publications

- ESPO Award 2022 Booklet with Summary of Applications
- ESPO Environmental Report 2023
- Top 10 Environmental Priorities 2023

**Information on the above events and publications can be found on the ESPO website: [www.espo.be](http://www.espo.be), in particular under the sections 'Our events', 'Our publications', and 'Our news'.**

# Port pro of the month

*Each month, ESPO interviews a CEO or Port Director from one of its member ports to understand the diversity of Europe's ports and to know what it means to lead a European port. Below you will find a selection of quotes from interviews of the last twelve months. Read the full interviews by clicking on the pictures below.*



© Port of Rotterdam – the Netherlands



**José Alberto Carbonell**  
*(Port of Barcelona, November 2022)*

*Maritime transport and port operations are a constant source of challenges. These challenges require innovative solutions. The Port's strategy for the coming years includes the electrification of the wharves, boosting the efficient and sustainable intermodal solutions (based on a greater use of the railway) to connect with our hinterland and rethinking the relationship between the Port and the city.*



**Gunnar Tryggvason**  
*(Ports of Iceland, December 2022)*

*Our main challenge today is mitigation of environmental impacts of the port operation, both related to air quality, greenhouse gas emission and last but not least noise pollution. The city is growing, and residential areas are getting closer to the port operation. We must find ways for both to live together.*



**Magdalena Bosson**  
*(Ports of Stockholm, January 2023)*

*Right now, there is major work being done to provide automooring and onshore power supply connections for Finnlines at Kapellskär, and we are constructing onshore power supply facilities for cruise ships in Stockholm.*





**Mike Sellers**  
*(Portsmouth International,  
February 2023)*

*Our mantra has long been, the port's success is the city's success and everyone who works here is proud of the significant contribution the port makes to the council's budget to help provide essential services that helps the city thrive.*



**Minas Papadakis**  
*(Port of Heraklion, March 2023)*

*We are working on a project called "Hupiness", to use wave energy to produce electricity by installing wave generators on the armouring of windward breakwaters. This system will produce a power of approximately 1 Megawatt (MW) and the energy produced will be used for the needs of the onshore power supply system, so as to integrate our green transition activities.*



**Thomas Bergman**  
*(Port of Inkoo, April 2023)*

*The port is just 4 km from one of the main roads leading to the metropolitan area of Helsinki about 50 km away. There are plans to improve the road from the port, and the railway discussion has started again, since Inkoo is being suggested to become part of the TEN-T network – railway has been a topic of discussion since the sixties.*



**Robert Howe**  
*(Ports of Bremen, May 2023)*

*We are planning the development of an EnergyPort in Bremerhaven on a huge site that can accommodate ocean-going vessels. The government has already adopted the necessary legislation and has commissioned Bremen ports with the project planning.*



**Vice Mihanović**  
*(Port of Split, June 2023)*

*While we focus on the remaining infrastructural round-up of the Port, we have been increasingly working towards port digitalisation to make the Port of Split a smart port. We have mainly done that through EU-funded projects, especially cross-border cooperation ones.*



**João Neves**  
*(Ports of Douro, Leixões and Viana do Castelo, September 2023)*

*Connecting to an onshore power supply installation (OPS) cuts emissions in the port but is only truly energy-efficient if the power source is renewable. It is also designed for cruise lines and ports needing to invest in parallel. Space limitations often encountered by cruise ports, render the implementation of OPS a challenge.*

# Year in pictures







# How ESPO works



# ESPO's Structure



Zeno D'Agostino



Daan Schalck



Ansis Zeltiņš

ESPO's membership consists of port authorities, port administrations and port associations of the seaports of the European Union and Norway.

Furthermore, the organisation has observer members from the following European countries adjacent to the EU: Albania, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The membership structure of ESPO is organised on a national level. This finds its reflection in the General Assembly of the organisation, where each ESPO member EU member state has three official delegates with voting rights. Observer members have one delegate each. The General Assembly sets the

overall policy of the organisation and meets twice a year. It elects the Chairman and two Vice-Chairs. For the period 2023-2024, ESPO is chaired by Zeno D'Agostino (Italy), assisted by Vice-Chairs Daan Schalck (Belgium) and Ansis Zeltiņš (Latvia). The General Assembly mandates the daily policy-making of the organisation to the Executive Committee, which consists of one representative per member state and, upon invitation, representatives of observer countries. The Executive Committee meets about five times a year.

# Members and observers

The following national port associations are members of ESPO: Bulgarian Ports Infrastructure Company, Croatian Ports Authorities Association, Cyprus Ports Authority, Danish Ports, Finnish Port Association, Union des Ports de France (UPF), Hellenic Ports Association (ELIME), Irish Ports Association, Italian Ports Association (Assoporti), Ports of Norway, Association Ports of Portugal (APP), Ports of Sweden.

The following port administrations are members of ESPO: Puertos del Estado, Administrația Porturilor Maritime S.A. Constanța, National Company Maritime Danube Ports Administration Galati, Transport Malta.

The following member countries are represented by their ports directly: Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia

The following port associations are observers in ESPO: Associated Icelandic Ports, Israel Ports Company, British Ports Association / UK Major Ports Group.

The following port administrations are observers in ESPO: the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority (USPA), Montenegro Maritime Administration.

The following observer member country is represented by its port directly: Albania.

The full list of ESPO members can be found on ESPO's website: [www.espo.be/membership-overview](http://www.espo.be/membership-overview)

# ESPO Secretariat



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Secretary General



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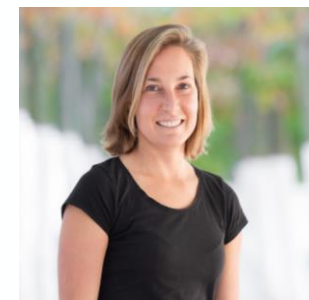
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**Pernelle Picat**  
Communication, Administration and  
Event Assistant



**Anne-Rieke Stuhlmann**  
PortinSights



# Trends in ESPO

All technical committees together, women represent **43,08%** of the port professionals who attended ESPO meetings in 2023

In 2023, **246** port professionals participated to ESPO committee meetings

Over the last year, ESPO published **9** position papers

Since November 2022, ESPO organised **20** editions of the 'Morning Coffee' with its members, debriefing on relevant news happening in Brussels each week

The EcoPorts Network numbers **90** members in **26** countries, with **34** PERS-certified ports

Since 2009, **217** projects have been submitted for the ESPO Award on Social Integration of Ports

In the last year, ESPO published **29** press releases

ESPO actively participated in around **130** events in the last year

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