Sensitive Strategic Infrastructures: EU Industrial Maritime and Port Strategies and Competitiveness

Festival della Diplomazia, 26 October 2026

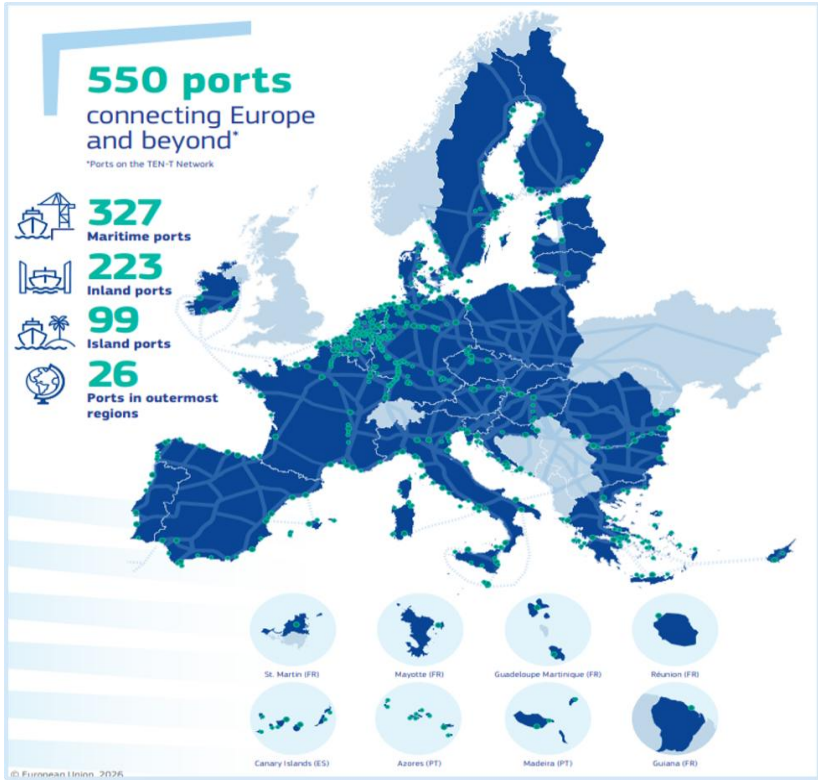
European Commission

The strategic role of EU ports

Ports are **critical infrastructure** at the heart of Europe's economy, security and sustainability.



- **Gateways to global trade:** EU ports handle over **3.4 billion tonnes of goods (74% of EU external trade)** and nearly **400m passengers annually.**
- **Drivers of competitiveness and industrial strength:** Ports underpin the EU's export capacity, supply chains and logistics networks, supporting around **423.000 direct jobs** and generating approximately **€90 billion turnover**.
- **Energy and climate transition hubs:** Around **40% of cargo handled is energy-related**, positioning ports as key platforms for electrification, offshore wind deployment, hydrogen imports and alternative fuels infrastructure.
- **Anchors of the blue economy and coastal cohesion:** Ports sustain **coastal, island & OR communities**, fisheries, maritime clusters and regional economies, contributing to territorial cohesion and sustainable blue growth.
- **Pillars of resilience, economic security and defence:** Ports are strategic **dual-use infrastructure**, critical for supply chain resilience, **military mobility** and protection against cyber, hybrid and organised crime threats.



EU Industrial Maritime & Ports Strategies



TWO STRATEGIES,
ONE COMMON GOAL:

A competitive, resilient and sustainable European waterborne ecosystem including ports, maritime manufacturing, and shipping industries.

ECOSYSTEM
INTEGRATED APPROACH





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EU Industrial Maritime and Ports Strategies



The EU Industrial Maritime Strategy
will strengthen Europe's shipping and shipbuilding industries
in order to safeguard the EU's economic security and strategic autonomy.

The Strategy outlines **three key pillars** to support this ambition:

Strengthen the EU's maritime manufacturing capabilities

The Commission will

- Launch an EU Industrial Maritime Value Chain Alliance
- Support the digital & circular transformation of shipyards

Enhance competitiveness & sustainability of shipping

The Commission will

- Establish a dialogue with Member States to promote EU flags on vessels
- Streamline administrative formalities

Boost naval & dual-use capabilities

The Commission will

- Pursue a dual-use ferry construction support mechanism
- Enhance EU-level maritime domain awareness

Improve access to

Innovation & technological leadership

Finance & investment

Skills & quality jobs



The Strategy supports EU ports by

Strengthening competitiveness, innovation and digitalisation.

Establishing **guiding principles for EU funding & investments in third-country ports**, developing **guidance on foreign ownership of EU ports**, and promoting **innovation**.

Advancing the energy transition, sustainability and clean industries.

Taking measures to promote **electrification** & **improved grid connection**. Setting out a **new roadmap for competitive small and medium-sized ports**.



Protecting and securing ports.

Combatting **drug trafficking** & **emerging threats**, port worker **background checks** & third-country **port assessments**, sharing **cybersecurity best practices**, & conducting an EU-wide security risk assessment.

Promoting social cohesion, skills and quality jobs.

Supporting **small & medium-sized ports** by promoting innovation, clean energy, security & connectivity, developing a **skilled workforce** & providing guidance on **maritime safety** & alternative fuels.

Facilitating access to finance and investment.

Clearer & more **coordinated funding principles** while facilitating access to advisory services & de-risking tools, with particular attention to the needs of small & medium-sized ports.

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Process & Next Steps

Delivering the Strategies together



Cooperation between all parties

Successful implementation will be based on cooperation with:

- Member States and regional authorities
- Industry and social partners
- Civil society and all interested stakeholders.

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