



Agenda: European Maritime Safety Conference: Safety First

EMSA Conference Centre , 08 December 2025

Monday, 08 December 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Speakers
09:30 – 09:40	Opening speech by EMSA's Executive Director	Maja Markovčić Kostelac <i>Executive Director</i> EMSA
09:40 – 09:45	<i>Video message:</i> Safety as a driver of the EU's maritime competitiveness	Apostolos Tzitzikostas <i>European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism</i>
09:45 – 09:55	<i>Global spotlight:</i> The international dimension of maritime safety	Arsenio Dominguez Velasco <i>Secretary-General</i> International Maritime Organisation

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09:55 – 10:05	Maritime safety as a strategic asset: <i>the Portuguese perspective</i>	José Manuel Fernandes <i>Minister for Agriculture and Maritime Affairs</i> Portugal
10:05 – 10:10	Video Presentation: Key Insights from the Maritime Safety Report	
10:10– 10:30	EMSAFE: the scope, main findings, key figures, and research areas of the report	Santiago Encabo Head of the Safety Unit EMSA
10:30 – 10:35	Family picture	
10:35 – 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 – 11:45	Charting the course of the EU maritime sector: safety first Safety is at the heart of the EU’s maritime vision and outlook, helping to shape its policies and guide its evolution. Our safety philosophy is a key element of our maritime sector, which encompasses nearly a third of the world’s fleet by GT. But elsewhere, it can be less prioritised. How to bridge maritime safety gaps is therefore a pressing challenge both here in the EU and internationally. Key topics of this session include: • What are our most pressing maritime safety challenges in the EU today?	Moderator: Fotini Ioannidou, Director Waterborne, Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission Participants: Arkadiusz Marchewka, State Secretary for the Maritime Economy, Poland Eric Banel, Director General for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture, France Karin Orsel, President, ECSA Thomas A. Kazakos, Secretary General, ICS

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	- How does the EU foster maritime safety improvements at global level? - How can digitalisation and innovation contribute to the improvement of maritime safety? The session brings together industry leaders, policymakers, and regulators for a wide-ranging discussion on the EU maritime sector and its challenges and opportunities.	
11:45 – 12:30	Passenger ship safety - a European challenge Approximately 30% of the world's passenger ships, through ownership or flag, are EU Member State-based, and around 400 million passengers embark and disembark through EU ports each year. But although the EU passenger fleet is growing in numbers, and individual vessels are growing in size and capacity, it is also getting older. Key topics of this session include: - How can an aging fleet be compatible with modern safety and environmental regulations? - What specific safety challenges are posed by larger capacity passenger vessels? How do we begin to address them?	Moderator: Dr Ilias Bissias, Assistant Professor University of the Aegean Participants: Ana Núñez Velasco, Director General of Merchant Marine, Spanish Maritime Administration Nikos Mertzanidis, Executive Director CLIA Europe Elpi Petraki, Secretary General, Hellenic Shortsea Shipowners Association

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	To what extent, and in which direction, should the EU push for further harmonisation of domestic ship safety standards? How can the role of flag states be supported? The session engages industry and administration to debate the most pressing issues in passenger ship safety today.	
12:30 – 14:30	Lunch break	
14:30 – 15:15	Navigating change: future technology, future safety The EU's ambitious maritime decarbonisation targets are being implemented against a backdrop of profound technological change. The transition – both sustainable and digital –requires a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach to maritime safety, both at regulatory and industry level. Key topics of this session include: - From a regulatory perspective, how do we ensure that safety standards evolve in line with technological advancements? - As we transition to alternative fuels like ammonia and hydrogen, how does our approach to risk assessment and safety management need to evolve?	Moderator: Jan Fransen, Executive Director, Green Award Foundation Participants: Els Claeys, Head, Safety & Environment Shipping Policy, Belgium Sanna Sonninen, Maritime Director, Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Robert Ashdown, Secretary General, IACS Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General, SEA Europe

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	In this framework of change, what lessons can we integrate from other high-reliability sectors to further benefit maritime safety? The session brings together representatives of industry, regulators, and policymakers to explore the practical safety implications of the sustainable and technological shift within the maritime sector.	
15:15 – 16:00	A human-centred safety culture for Europe Over the years, the EU has built a strong and comprehensive maritime safety system that promotes quality shipping and cleaner, safer seas. To protect against both existing and emerging risks, this system must be continuously maintained and enhanced. And it must fully include the human element in shipping – the men and women who are the lifeblood of the sector. Key topics of this session include: - How can accident investigation activity contribute to an improvement of safety culture? - What can we learn from the real people behind the statistics? - In the context of the challenges posed by greater automation and decarbonisation, how can the current workforce be integrated into these changes? How can we attract a more diverse workforce?	Moderator: Katy Ware, Head of Regulatory Affairs at Zodiac Maritime Participants: Paul Meyers, Chair of Permanent Cooperation Framework for Accident Investigation, Luxembourg Stephen Cotton, Secretary General, International Transport Workers’ Federation Camille Jego, Clinical Psychologist & Doctor of Psychology, Centre Ressource d’Aide Psychologique En Mer et aux Marins (CRAPEM)

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	The session brings together voices from trade unions, investigators, and policymaking, together with a psychologist specialised in maritime accidents to engage with some of the key issues around current and emerging maritime safety risks.	
16:00 – 16:10	Closing Remarks: A Call to Action for Maritime Safety	Maja Markovčić Kostelac <i>Executive Director</i> EMSA