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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report provides an overview of major regulatory and policy developments in the EU in 2025 in the fields of maritime safety, maritime security, climate & environment as well as digital technologies and cybersecurity. Besides summarising relevant initiatives, the report also aims to put them into their context by sketching overall policy trends. The last chapter of the report offers an outlook on the initiatives and trends to be expected in 2026.

When it comes to overall direction of EU legislation, the year 2025, which was the first full calendar year of the new European Commission's mandate, was characterised by a focus on simplification, competitiveness and security. This is a consequence of the political shift to the right in the European Parliament's election in 2024 and national elections in various Member States. Conservative and right-wing political parties tend to prioritise industrial, economic and security topics over environmental and climate ones. The shift of policy priorities in the EU from the Green Deal, which was very prominent during the last mandate, to competitiveness, simplification and security can also be explained by the geoeconomic and geopolitical framework conditions. In this context, the reports by former Italian prime ministers Mario Draghi¹ and Enrico Letta² published in 2024 emphasised that the European Union struggles to remain economically competitive compared to other global economic players, in particular the United States and China. Another landmark report³ drafted by former Finnish President Sauli Niinistö urged the EU to increase its resilience to a wide range of hybrid threats against the background of an increasingly hostile geopolitical environment. The European Union's reorientation of its priorities is an attempt to put the recommendations of these reports into practice.

In terms of concrete implementation of the new priorities, the European Commission's first approach is to put forward a variety of so-called "omnibus" proposals. These are proposals of horizontal nature that aim at simplifying and streamlining certain aspects of existing legislation that is deemed too cumbersome and complex. One prominent example is the omnibus package on sustainable corporate governance, which aimed to simplify the corporate sustainability report Directive and the corporate sustainability Due Diligence Directive. The legislative procedure of this simplification effort has recently concluded and the new, simplified rules (see [draft Directive⁴](#)) are expected to be published in the EU's Official Journal next year. The European Commission also recently proposed a [simplification initiative⁵](#) on environmental rules, mainly in relation to the circular economy.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en#paragraph_47059

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf>

³ https://commission.europa.eu/document/5bb2881f-9e29-42f2-8b77-8739b19d047c_en

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0324_EN.pdf

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2997

When it comes to the topics covered in this report, the trend of simplification can only be observed to a limited extent. In the domain of maritime safety, which will be covered by the first chapter, there are even more comprehensive regulations that will enter in force. The proposals for the new rules still date back to the last Commission's mandate. In the field of maritime security, which will be analysed in the second chapter, the European Commission made a major legislative proposal on military mobility, in line with its strengthened focus on security aspects. In the domain of climate and environment, the topic of the third chapter, the European Commission adopted a revised climate law, which introduces some flexibility and simplification aspects. Another topic of this chapter is the EU's reaction to the outcome of the last MEPC. In the field of the environment, which is also covered in the same chapter, developments were limited to reporting about and implementing currently applicable legislation. Finally, in the area of digital and cyber summarised in the fourth chapter, jamming and spoofing takes a prominent role.

2. Maritime safety

2.1 New mandate for EMSA

One major regulatory development on maritime safety in 2025 was that EMSA received a new mandate. The revised EMSA Regulation aims to match EMSA's tasks and competences with the current regulatory framework. It empowers EMSA to have an increased focus on decarbonisation and digitalisation, in order to enable its role in the twin green and digital transition.

The [text](#)⁶ of the revised Regulation, which is expected to be published in the EU's Official Journal imminently, reads that *"the main objectives of the Agency shall be to ensure a high, uniform and effective level of maritime safety aiming at a maximum reduction of accidents, maritime security, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships and the sustainability of the maritime sector as well as the prevention of and response to pollution caused by ships and the response to marine pollution caused by oil and gas installations"*.

EMSA will continue assisting the European Commission and Member States in the implementation of the relevant Union legislation (port state control, flag state control, maritime accidents, passenger ship safety, recognised organisations, marine equipment, etc). Notably, EMSA will also provide assistance for the implementation of the FuelEU Maritime and the extension of the EU ETS to maritime transport.

Of particular interest, the Regulation enables the Agency to take on new activities in emerging areas given the *"evolving nature of maritime safety"*. To monitor the progress on maritime safety in the Union, EMSA will present a report to the Commission every three years.

The review of the EMSA Regulation complements a package of maritime safety legislation which the European Commission had launched in 2023 and, besides the EMSA Regulation, consists of a revised [Port State Control](#)⁷ and [Flag State Control Directives](#),⁸ which were published in the EU's Official Journal at the end of 2024.

⁶ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-51-2025-INIT/en/pdf>

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32024L3099>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/3100/oi/eng>

2.2 Amendment to Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System Directive

A more technical, but yet relevant development is the adoption of a targeted [amendment⁹](#) of the Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System Directive ([VTMIS Directive¹⁰](#)), which was adopted in April. The targeted revision of this legislation requires ships sailing along the EU coastlines to provide proof of adequate insurance. The main aim is to address risks posed by Russia's shadow fleet.

More specifically, the amendment requires all ships entering areas of mandatory ship reporting systems (MRS), including those only sailing along the coasts of EU Member States (with no port calls) , to prove that they have adequate insurance cover. Such a measure is aimed at enhancing the monitoring and investigation of uninsured or unsafe vessels transiting in EU waters.

⁹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202500811

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32002L0059>

3. Maritime security

3.1 European Commission makes regulatory proposal on military mobility

A clear sign that security and defence policy aspects have gained prominence at EU level, in November the European Commission published the military mobility package, consisting of a (non-legislative) [Communication](#)¹¹ and a [proposal](#)¹² for a Regulation and its [annex](#)¹³.

The purpose of the package is to facilitate the transport of equipment, goods and personnel for military purposes across Europe, while minimising and mitigating the impact of such transport on civilian transport. In a [press-release](#)¹⁴, the European Commission explains it aims to complete a “*military Schengen*” area by 2027 where military troops and equipment can move across Europe faster, safer, and in a more coordinated manner. As part of the aim to increase the continent's resilience against threats, the European Commission in the Communication also explains it will promote increased production of sustainable aviation and maritime fuels, including in dispersed production capacities if possible, to improve resilience and energy security. Most elements of the proposal are directed at national authorities with the aim to make the transport of military personnel and material smoother. However, there may also be certain implications for operators along the maritime value chain.

The proposal for a Regulation will now start its way through the ordinary legislative procedure where it will be discussed, amended and voted upon by the European Parliament and Member States before entering into force.

3.2 IRINI and Aspides maritime security missions extended

Two of the EU's major maritime security missions saw their mandate extended in 2025, confirming the Union's commitment to maritime security globally.

¹¹ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a5b639aa-4d77-44b8-9f98-6bc0e54be984_en?filename=Joint%20communication%20on%20Military%20Mobility.pdf

¹² https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/0adeee10-af7a-4ac1-aa47-6a5e90cbe288_en?filename=Proposal-for-a-Regulation.pdf

¹³ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/cb57228c-b5a2-4287-bc38-150566f784f8_en?filename=Annex%20to%20the%20Proposal_0.pdf

¹⁴ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/commission-moves-towards-military-schengen-and-transformation-defence-industry-2025-11-19_en

EUNAVFOR MED IRINI¹⁵, the European Union maritime security and capacity building operation in the Mediterranean, has been extended by two more years, until 31 March 2027. The mandate has also been slightly changed: according to the related Council Decision¹⁶ that modifies the original mandate¹⁷, the operation will now also be in charge of "*gathering information useful for the protection of critical maritime infrastructure and for contingency planning*". So far, the operation's remit focused on collecting information about illegal arms and petroleum trafficking. Furthermore, according to the new mandate, "*capacity building and training should be extended, beyond the Libyan Coast Guards and Navy, to relevant Libyan institutions responsible for law enforcement and for search and rescue at sea*".

The mandate¹⁸ of EUNAVFOR Operation ASPIDES¹⁹, the EU's maritime security mission that was launched in February 2024 to protect ships under attack in the Red Sea and to reinforce maritime situational awareness, has been updated and extended until 28 February 2026. An addition to Article 1 of the original mandate²⁰ states that "*EUNAVFOR ASPIDES shall collect information, in addition to data necessary to protect vessels, on arms trafficking and on shadow fleets, with a view to sharing that information with Member States, the Commission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), as appropriate.*"

¹⁵ <https://www.operationirini.eu/about-us/>

¹⁶ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202500488

¹⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020D0472>

¹⁸ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202500334

¹⁹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eunavfor-aspides_en?s=410381

²⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/583/oj>

4. Climate and environment

4.1 EU adopts 2040 climate target

In December, the European Commission, Parliament and the Council of the EU agreed on a revised EU [climate law](#)²¹, setting a GHG emission reduction target. While the revised climate law does not directly refer to maritime transport, it is of relevance as it sets the trajectory in terms of climate emissions for the European economy as a whole.

The revised climate law includes a nominal 90% GHG reduction target by 2040 compared to 1990, out of which a maximum of 5 percentage points can be covered through international climate credits, which means that the domestic reduction target is at least 85%. The ETS 2 (for road transport and buildings) is postponed by 1 year to 2028. There is a review clause that allows potential adaptations every two years.

With the flexibilities introduced into the law, it is less ambitious than what the European Commission had intended in its climate [communication](#)²² from February 2024 and thus reflects the trend towards a stronger prioritisation of economic competitiveness.

4.2 Reaction to MEPC outcome

As regards maritime-related climate policy, it is interesting to briefly report on the European Commission's reaction to the failure of IMO to adopt its Net-Zero Framework.

The European Commission's stance leading up to the MEPC was clear. As stated in an official [press release](#)²³ published on 12 October, "*the EU views the Net-Zero Framework as a significant milestone and calls for its adoption at IMO next week.*" It furthermore repeated, as written into the review clauses of the EU ETS Directive and the FuelEU Maritime Regulation, that "*after the adoption, the European Commission will review the relevant EU regulations in place.*" In the aftermath of the postponement of the decision, no official press release was published by the European Commission. The Commission, represented by DG MOVE Director for Waterborne - Fotini Ioannidou, did however appear in front of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in the Transport (TRAN) and Environment (ENVI) Committees of the Parliament to report back about the negotiations. The Commission was also asked to explain the impact of the postponement on the EU's own regional rules on GHG (i.e. the EU ETS and FuelEU Maritime). The

²¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-17086-2025-INIT/en/pdf>

²² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2024:63:FIN>

²³ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/statement-ahead-imos-marine-environment-protection-committee-mepc-meeting-2025-10-12_en

essence of the Commission feedback from MEPC given to the European Parliament, but also repeated at various events since, is that the EU still wants to wait for a global agreement before backing away from its regional rules. Focus in the months ahead will be put on trying to find common ground with those who do not agree with the NZF, with the aim to build bridges and have an international solution adopted in 2026. At an event in Brussels at the beginning of December, Commission officials underlined the need for a positive vote at the IMO next year, including as many willing countries as possible. *“It needs to be simple enough and nuanced enough”*, said DG MOVE Head of Unit Annika Kroon.

In a parallel - but linked - development, a number of Member States including Italy, Greece and Malta raised concerns at the [meeting²⁴](#) of the EU transport Ministers on 4 December about the negative impacts of the EU ETS on the maritime sector. Italy called for a temporary suspension of the EU ETS until an international agreement has been reached and Greece added that the FuelEU Maritime Regulation should also be suspended. Malta raised concerns about business lost (“carbon leakage”) to Northern Africa and called for a maritime “Stop the clock” initiative.

4.2 European Commission adopts sustainable transport investment plan

Even though it is not legally binding, the Sustainable Transport Investment [Plan²⁵](#) (STIP) is an important publication made by the European Commission in 2025 that aims to contribute to the decarbonisation of the shipping sector. The plan’s objective is to stimulate the production and consumption of sustainable maritime fuels and to bridge the price gap between conventional and sustainable fuels.

The STIP points out that renewable and low-carbon fuels are particularly critical for the aviation and maritime sectors, since they can only marginally benefit from electrification. The plan also makes clear that there are major challenges in terms of price, production capacity and investment needs. To overcome these, the European Commission suggests a combination of old and new recipes. While recalling the support offered by the EU’s well-established funding programmes such as the Innovation Fund, the Connecting Europe Facility or Horizon Europe, the STIP emphasises these are not enough to cover all investment needs. Therefore, the European Commission also suggests more innovative tools - some of which are already used in the energy sector - like double-sided auctions and Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), to reduce risks for investors and create predictable demand and supply. The Commission also invites Member States to reinvest ETS revenues into the transition of the maritime sector.

In addition, the European Commission promises it will facilitate reporting under the FuelEU Maritime Regulation, the ETS Directive and the MRV Regulation by creating one single reporting framework.

²⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2025/12/04/>

²⁵ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/document/download/73447373-de2a-4ba4-9371-36d1186035d4_en?filename=COM_2025_664_STIP.pdf

4.3 European Commission adopts various reports on the implementation of rules related to the marine environment

In the field of marine environment, developments focused on the implementation and reporting about legislation already in place. The following evaluation reports are worth highlighting:

EMSA and the European Environment Agency (EEA) published the latest version of the [European Maritime Transport Environmental Report](#)²⁶. The report among others highlights that marine litter from shipping and fishing has halved in past decades, but a critical issue remains as regards micro-plastics, coming from ship hull cleaning, marine paint wear, cargo mishandling, pellet loss and lost containers. Also, open loop scrubbers release harmful substances into the sea, contributing to acidification, and discharges from these types of scrubbers have been rising fast. The report also emphasises that more monitoring is needed on issues such as collisions with mammals, and marine litter, including with drones and satellites.

An [evaluation](#)²⁷ of the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#)²⁸ (MSFD) by the European Commission looks at the overall effect of the Directive and whether the objectives set in it have been achieved. This is done by assessing to what extent the goal of Good Environmental Status ('GES') was achieved by 2020 (as prescribed in the Directive) across its 11 descriptors (such as biodiversity, contaminants and litter). The report finds that the main goal of achieving "Good Environmental Status" (GES) by 2020 in all EU marine waters and for all descriptors has not been achieved. Reasons for this failure include the lack of clearly enforceable provisions, as well as weak governance and limited capacity in the Member States.

As part of the implementation of the [EU Offshore Safety Directive](#)²⁹ the European Commission published its latest yearly [report](#)³⁰ on the safety of offshore oil and gas installations and operations. According to the report, which covers the year 2023, no major accidents were reported, though the number of smaller incidents slightly increased compared to the year before. In its conclusion, the European Commission finds that "*due to the obligatory inspections and actions taken, as stipulated by the Offshore Safety Directive, the work of Member State authorities has once more resulted in safe offshore oil and gas operations.*"

In February 2025, the European Commission published its [report](#)³¹ on the evaluation of the [Ship Recycling Regulation](#)³²(SRR). The assessment spells out that the SRR has largely achieved its objectives and, through the establishment of a dedicated European List of ship recycling facilities, has contributed to higher environmental and social standards in ship recycling practices. The Commission's evaluation report also comments on the interplay of the SRR with other legal instruments and states that this needs clarification to avoid there being an unnecessary administrative burden once the Hong Kong Convention enters into

²⁶ <https://www.emsa.europa.eu/emter.html>

²⁷ [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD\(2025\)50&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2025)50&lang=en)

²⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0056>

²⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2013/30/oj/eng>

³⁰ [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM\(2025\)409&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)409&lang=en)

³¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0a346549-eeb2-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

³² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02013R1257-20240520>

force in June 2025. The report adds that consideration should be given to how to streamline reporting or certification requirements arising from the co-existence of the SRR and Hong Kong Convention, the report. The Commission plans to assess how this Convention will be implemented and possibly improved towards stricter global standards.

5. Technology, digital and cyber

In the field of technology, domain and cyber, no particular legislative developments of direct relevance to maritime activities are to report. However, while not leading to concrete legislative action yet, the topic of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) jamming and spoofing was quite high on the EU policy agenda.

5.1 Jamming and spoofing discussed at ministerial level

In June, EU Transport Ministers discussed a [call for action](#)³³ to address the issue. The call was initiated by Lithuania and supported by Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Romania, and Spain. With this call Member States are pushing for coordinated action at EU level to address the increasing threats posed by GNSS interference as it can have severe consequences for transport. The call was initially focused on aviation but has been extended to also include the maritime sector. During the meeting of Transport Ministers, the call for action was welcomed by many Member States, stressing that GNSS interference is a critical issue requiring urgent action. Transport Commissioner, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, was also present and expressed full support for the initiative taken by the Member States in proposing the development of an EU action plan on this issue. He underlined that such a plan should include specific actions for each transport mode (aviation, maritime and road), and mentioned that the Commission is already contributing to the preparation of a concrete action plan in cooperation with the European Aviation Safety Agency, EUROCONTROL, Member States and the industry stakeholders.

At a [Council meeting](#)³⁴ in December the item was on the agenda again. Furthermore, the topic has received increased attention in the European Parliament as evidenced by a written [question](#)³⁵ by MEP Sérgio Gonçalves, a Portuguese MEP from the centre-left S&D group.

³³ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9188-2025-REV-1/en/pdf>

³⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2025/12/05/>

³⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003811_EN.html

6. Evaluation and outlook

The overview of regulatory developments in 2025 shows that the general trend of simplification is only partly visible in legislation covered in this report. The domain of maritime safety even saw the introduction of new comprehensive rules. This however goes back to initiatives taken in previous years. The year to come is expected to be rather calm in terms of new initiatives related to maritime safety. The European Commission is likely to focus on the implementation of the new EMSA Regulation as well as the revised Port and Flag State control Regulations adopted in 2024. Potential safety risks of the shadow fleet will also remain on the agenda.

The field of maritime security and security in general is likely to remain a priority. The European Commission's proposal on military mobility will continue to be debated and co-legislators will aim to reach an agreement on it. Moreover, the European Commission is expected to make a proposal for a revised border and coast guard Regulation.³⁶ The European Commission also plans to present a Port Strategy in February 2026. While it will not be legally binding, it may include some elements on the exposure of ports to drug-related crimes.

In the domain of climate and marine environment, quite a few relevant developments are expected. The European Commission will propose a revised ETS Directive. Closely connected to this, the EU will also have to position itself again on the plans for a Net-Zero Framework at IMO level. A few Member States are calling for a stop-the-clock, that is a temporary cancellation of the ETS for maritime transport until a global framework is in place. On a more technical level, the European Commission promised to simplify the reporting rules under ETS and FuelEU by creating one single reporting system. It can be expected that the simplification drive observed in other domains will also reach EU climate policies in the maritime field. Concerning the marine environment, after a year that focused on implementation, the European Commission is expected to propose an Ocean Act in 2026, though it may be delayed to 2027. While expected to focus on maritime spatial planning, the legislative proposal may also touch upon other topics related to the marine environment. The European Commission furthermore plans to revise the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. A proposal is expected in the fourth quarter of 2026, but experience shows this may be delayed to 2027.

In the field of digital and cyber-technology, the topic of cyber-resilience, including jamming and spoofing is likely to remain high on the agenda. Furthermore, the Commission is expected to table a proposal on a revised Cybersecurity Act, which lays down the mandate of ENISA, the European Union's Agency for Cybersecurity, and rules for EU cybersecurity certification schemes. While this is not directly affecting the maritime domain, there will surely be cybersecurity provisions of more horizontal relevance. On 20

³⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14640-European-Border-and-Coast-Guard-update-of-EU-rules_en

January the Commission plans to release the Digital Networks Act, which is expected to primarily touch upon spectrum harmonisation, 5G equipment, suppliers and network cost distribution, but may also include provisions on submarine cable infrastructure and its security and resilience.

Finally, an initiative of horizontal nature is also worth mentioning. In February, the European Commission is expected to publish a Maritime Industrial Strategy, which in the European Commission's [plans](#)³⁷ is aimed to *"to strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability and resilience of the EU's maritime manufacturing sector and the related value chain"*.

³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14745-EU-industrial-maritime-strategy_en