

Press Release: "Net-Zero and Climate-Resilient Shipping: Can Greece Lead the Race?"

The conference titled "**Net-Zero and Climate-Resilient Shipping: Can Greece Lead the Race?**" held on May 31, 2024, within the framework of the **Posidonia Exhibition** in Greece, at the Goulandris Natural History Museum, with the primary goal of discussing the future of the maritime industry, specifically emphasizing sustainability and climate resilience. Organized under the auspices of the **Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy of Greece**, in collaboration with the [Goulandris Natural History Museum](#), the [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Global Climate Hub](#) and the [Alliance of Excellence for Research and Innovation on Aeiphoria](#) (AE4RIA) the event brought together a diverse array of stakeholders ranging from industry leaders to policymakers, researchers, and representatives from various organizations.

Discussions centered around identifying challenges and opportunities **for achieving net-zero emissions in shipping operations**, examining strategies to bolster **climate resilience** within the maritime sector, and assessing **Greece's potential** to spearhead sustainable shipping practices on a global scale. Panel discussions delved deeply into the integration of **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** criteria within the **Greek business sector**, emphasizing the significance of aligning economic activities with environmental and social objectives. Technological advancements geared towards **green shipping** were highlighted, with experts discussing the latest **innovations** and their potential to foster sustainability within the maritime industry. Furthermore, the conference underscored the critical importance of skills development in facilitating the transition towards a more **sustainable maritime sector**.

The event was also supported by several **EU-funded projects** focused on promoting sustainable pathways for the maritime sector, climate neutrality, climate resilience, and ecosystem-based management. These projects included [HORIZON EU' MariTech Talent Project](#), [HORIZON EU DiverSea](#), [NAVgreen: Green Maritime Industry](#), H2020 ARSINOE Project, [H2020 SEAwisE](#), and two **accelerators**: [MENA Maritime Accelerator](#) and the [Black Sea Accelerator](#) facilitated by H2020 BRIDGE-BS and DOORS Black Sea projects. Specifically, The MariTech Talent Project has issued a call for action for a survey topic **on mapping the current state of the regional maritime industry's twin skills requirements**. [Link to the survey](#).

In summary, the conference represented a significant initiative for promoting **cooperation and innovation in the field of shipping**. This not only fostered discussion on sustainability in the sector but also provided impetus for further research and innovation that will contribute to the transition towards a **more sustainable future in shipping**.

The event kicked off with the opening speech by **Mr. Christos Stylianides**, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy of Greece, who emphasized the need for safe, affordable low-carbon fuels and highlighted Greece's commitments to enhancing port infrastructure. The Minister also outlined recent ministry commitments, including equipping at least 12 Greek ports with shore power services by 2030, conducting a study for the gradual renewal of the entire passenger fleet in Greece by 2025, and renewing the fleet with low-emission ships in coastal public interest connections.



Then, **Mrs. Fali Vogiatzaki**, President of the Goulandris Natural History Museum, welcomed the audience to the museum, emphasizing Greece's historical reverence for nature, the museum's role in environmental education, and its current focus on climate change.

Prof. Phoebe Koundouri, Athens University of Economics and Business & Technical University of Denmark, Chair of the UN SDSN Global Climate Hub & AE4RIA, highlighted Greece's potential to pioneer sustainable shipping through collaborations. She emphasized the importance of leveraging technology and finance for this transition.



Prof. Jeffrey Sachs, President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and professor at Columbia University, stressed the importance of global collaboration in achieving sustainable shipping. He outlined the complexity of the challenge, urging rapid transformation of

the fossil fuel-based shipping industry and praised Greece's leadership and expertise, advocating for multilateral cooperation to address global challenges.

Mr. Massamba Thioye, Project Executive at the UNFCCC Global Innovation Hub, emphasized leadership in sustainability innovation and progress based on necessity, stressing the need for a multifaceted approach, including technological advancements and financial instruments.



Following the panel discussion on “**The Integration of ESG Criteria in the Greek Business Sector,**” which emphasized the importance of sustainable finance, regulatory compliance, tailored strategies, and innovative frameworks in driving sustainability across various sectors, including finance, shipping, and research.



Prof. Koundouri, who moderated the panel, introduced the AE4RIA network. She highlighted its pivotal role as the largest global research team in sustainable research and innovation, its extensive network, and focus on key areas like sustainable finance and ESG measurement. She also highlighted AE4RIA’s work in areas such as the food-energy-biodiversity nexus and blue growth projects, showcasing its commitment to fostering sustainable transitions.

Mrs. Marianna Nathanail, European Investment Bank (EIB) Institutional Affairs Officer for Greece and Cyprus, outlined the bank's substantial commitment to climate action and sustainable investments. She emphasized the EIB's pivotal role as the "climate bank" of the European Union and its extensive investments aligned with the Paris Agreement. Marianna also highlighted the EIB's support for Greece's sustainability efforts and initiatives like the Women Climate Leaders Network.

Mr. Markus H.-P. Müller, Managing Director, Chief Investment Officer ESG & Global Head of Chief Investment Office Private Bank at Deutsche Bank, emphasized the bank's robust commitment to sustainability and its ambitious goals in green finance. He stressed the importance of redirecting global financial flows towards sustainable investments and the need for a unified European capital market.

Mr. Dimitris Sakipis, Director of ESG, Sustainability and Climate Change Services at PwC Greece, discussed the impact of compliance requirements and value creation in the shipping sector, highlighting the sector's stringent regulations and the need for tailored decarbonization strategies. He emphasized the importance of sustainability in asset valuation and advocated for interim onboard technologies to reduce carbon footprints while alternative solutions develop.

Dr. Conrad Landis, Post-Doc Researcher at the ReSEES Laboratory AUEB & SDU Athena Research Center, AE4RIA, presented AE4RIA Metrix – a Spin-Off of AUEB, showcasing its innovative approach to accelerating companies' transition towards sustainability. He highlighted their dynamic framework integrating ESG KPIs and SDGs, providing ratings on SDG implementation.

The discussions continued with the panel discussion on “**Technological Innovations for Green Shipping**,” emphasizing the importance of collaboration, scientific research, technological innovation, and regulatory measures in driving sustainability in the shipping industry and ensuring the health of marine ecosystems. The panel was moderated by **Prof. Alexandros Charalambides**, Cyprus University of Technology.



Mr. Claus Graugaard, Chief Technology Officer at the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller Center for Zero Carbon Shipping, emphasized collaborative efforts to drive systemic change in the shipping industry. He highlighted alliances with key stakeholders and deep, science-based research to develop sustainable shipping technologies and regulatory frameworks.

Prof. Dimitrios Lyridis, National Technical University of Athens, School of Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering, and Director of the Laboratory for Maritime Transport, emphasized Greek shipping's unique passion and discussed their involvement in various sustainability projects. He detailed initiatives aimed at greening shipping and their role in port energy upgrade projects.

Prof. Marie Münster, Technical University of Denmark shared insights from a study on maritime transition aligned with the Paris Agreement, emphasizing the need for technological solutions and regulation. She highlighted scenarios with different carbon tax levels and proposed measures such as wind turbines for green ammonia production.

Prof. Baris Salihoglu, Director of the Institute of Marine Sciences at Middle East Technical University, discussed how marine and climate science can support Greece's shipping activities, focusing on blue economy and smart shipping projects. He outlined the benefits of marine spatial planning and the development of digital twins of the ocean.

Prof. Eva Krasakopoulou, Chemical Oceanographer at the Department of Marine Sciences, University of the Aegean, shared insights from a research project focusing on the environmental impacts of shipping emissions. She highlighted concerns about scrubber discharge and discussed modeling work analyzing pollutant fluxes.

The keynote speech was given by **Mr. Panos Zachariadis**, Technical Director of Atlantic Bulk Carriers Management Ltd, who emphasized the importance of including regulators in discussions regarding sustainability in Greek shipping. He highlighted his extensive experience in the industry and raised concerns about the assumptions regarding the viability of green fuels without addressing scientific uncertainties. He urged thorough scrutiny and regulatory caution in transitioning to green fuels.



The last panel discussion focused on **“Greece's Leadership in Sustainable Shipping”** with speakers highlighting the importance of regulatory caution, collaboration, innovation, and investment in driving sustainability transitions in the maritime sector. The panel was moderated by **Prof. Phoebe Koundouri**.



Maria Christantoni, Head of Sustainability, ESG, and Climate Change at the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund, discussed HRADF's efforts in promoting the green transition of the

maritime sector in Greece. She outlined the fund's role in promoting sustainable blue growth, supporting port infrastructure development, and collaborating with local actors to produce clean energy.

Andrei Geica, Founder & Partner of Impact & Policy at Sporos Platform, emphasized Sporos' focus on impact investing and the circular economy. He stressed the importance of rapid innovation, collaboration, and partnership with startups and venture capital firms in driving towards a more sustainable future.

Dimitris Spyrou, Consultant of Strategic Planning and Marketing at Piraeus Port Authority S.A., highlighted efforts by Greek ports to align with EU directives on climate change and alternative fuels. He discussed obstacles such as funding and legal issues for implementing infrastructure changes in ports.

Panos Zachariadis, Technical Director of Atlantic Bulk Carriers Management Ltd, highlighted potential solutions to reduce fuel consumption and emissions in the shipping sector. He suggested energy-saving devices, wind assistance, and the concept of virtual arrival for ships to reduce emissions.

In her closing remarks, **Prof. Phoebe Koundouri** emphasized the importance of having the necessary skills and occupations to implement the green transition effectively. She announced the launch of the report titled **"The Twin Transition for the Blue Economy"** which will be presented during the **UN Summit of the Future in September in New York and at COP29 in November in Baku**. The report identifies the top Green and Digital Skills required for the Blue Transition and features a data-driven ML Model to identify the occupations with the highest demand in the "Blue Economy" (Shipping, Ports, Maritime Logistics, and Maritime Technology).



The video recording of the event is available on YouTube. Watch it [here](#).

