FONASBA ECASBA

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EU Advocacy & Intelligence

EU Policy & Maritime Bulletin

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Welcome to the monthly EU policy briefing for FONASBA and ECASBA members. This update delivers targeted intelligence on European maritime legislation, port regulations, customs, decarbonisation, and key EU institutional milestones impacting ship agents.

Maritime decarbonisation & reporting rules

Leaked Council Compromise Text on the EU ETS Review

Magellan Circle Brussels obtained a confidential Council Presidency compromise text on the ETS Review (dated 30 October 2026), prepared for technical negotiations among Member States' attachés on 4 and 9 November. The draft text provides valuable early indicators of the Council's direction, featuring several elements of direct significance to FONASBA/ECASBA:

- **Avoiding Double Carbon Payments:** A mechanism would reduce EU ETS surrender duties for emissions already effectively priced under a future global IMO market-based measure, granting full relief if the IMO price meets or exceeds the EU allowance average.
- **Port Protection & Transhipment Relief:** The text maintains broader identification criteria for neighbouring non-EU transhipment ports and introduces targeted ETS relief until 2035 for eligible container traffic transhipped via EU ports.
- **Clean Shipping Allowance Reserve:** A dedicated reserve of up to 110 million allowances would support eligible zero-emission propulsion and sustainable fuels through 2040, with simplified access for smaller shipping companies.
- **Preserving Connectivity & Search and Rescue:** Island, outermost-region, ice-class, and public-service derogations are prolonged to 2035, while a new clause explicitly exempts additional emissions resulting from search and rescue diversions.
- **Vessel Scope:** The draft plans the gradual coverage of certain vessel categories between 400 and 4,999 GT starting in 2031, leaving small passenger/ro-pax vessels for separate assessment.

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

Delivered in advance to FONASBA and ECASBA leadership to support ongoing national member consultations and assist in defining common policy positions ahead of upcoming Council negotiations.

Environment Council Debates EU ETS Review: Member States Raise Maritime Leakage & Small Vessel Concerns

During the Environment Council on 12 October 2026, EU environment ministers debated the ongoing review of the EU ETS Directive. Several national delegations - including Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Greece, and Italy - voiced explicit concerns regarding the maritime transport sector, highlighting risks of port call diversion to non-EU neighbours and calling for the protection of peripheral maritime economies. Ministers also debated potential threshold expansions to vessels below 5,000 GT and the preservation of island connectivity derogations. In parallel, the European Commission's public consultation on the ETS Review formally concluded on 3 November 2026.

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

The Council's attention to carbon and port leakage reinforces ECASBA's advocacy for cargo-based safeguards, ensuring port agency call volumes in the EU are shielded from traffic diversion to third-country ports.

Watch Council Debate Recording → | **EC Public Consultation on ETS Review →**

Streamlining Monitoring & Reporting: Harmonisation of MRV, EU ETS, and FuelEU Maritime

The European Commission has progressed work to align and simplify reporting requirements across the EU MRV Regulation (EU 2015/757) and FuelEU Maritime (EU 2023/1805). By centralising vessel monitoring plans and annual emissions reporting within EMSA's THETIS-MRV platform, the initiative aims to cut administrative overlap and establish unified data verification procedures.

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

A converged reporting interface streamlines port-level documentation, making it significantly easier for ship agents to assist principals with Bunker Delivery Notes (BDNs) and annual compliance records without handling duplicate reporting workflows.

EC Decarbonising Maritime Guidelines →

ECSA & Maritime Coalition Urge EU to Triple SMAP Funding to 330 Million ETS Allowances

The European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA), alongside an industry-wide maritime coalition, published a study calling on the European Parliament and Council to increase the Innovation Fund's maritime allocation under the Simplified Maritime Application Procedure (SMAP) from 110 to 330 million allowances (approx. €33 billion). The coalition highlights that substantial capital subsidies are critical to bridge the cost gap between conventional bunkers and nascent e-fuels.

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

> Securing capital investment to expand alternative fuel supply in European ports helps agents plan for compliant bunkering operations and adapt local safety and licensing protocols.

Read ECSA Study on SMAP Allowances (PDF) → | **Stakeholder Joint Letter on SMAP →**

FuelEU Maritime Annual Verification Prep: Onshore Power Supply (OPS) Reporting Ahead of 2027

Ahead of the first mandatory verification cycle under FuelEU Maritime, classification societies and the Commission have published guidance reminding operators of upcoming deadlines. By 31 January 2027, companies must submit verified data on fuel GHG intensity and verify mandatory Onshore Power Supply (OPS) connections for passenger and container ships berthed in EU ports.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
>
> Ship agents are essential in securing formal OPS connection logs or technical exemption letters from port authorities, safeguarding shipowners from severe non-compliance fines.

FuelEU Maritime Regulation (EU 2023/1805) →

EP TRAN Study Highlights Vessel Retrofitting & Decarbonisation Financing Mechanisms

A study prepared for the European Parliament's TRAN Committee evaluated financing mechanisms, green loans, and public grant architectures to accelerate the decarbonisation and retrofitting of commercial vessels. The research outlines practical investment models required to support fleet renewal across European maritime and inland waterways networks.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
>
> Provides ship agents and brokers with visibility into EU-supported retrofit funding programs, aiding commercial discussions with shipowners on fleet transition investments.

Read EP TRAN Committee Study →

Customs, security & digital single window

IMO PPR 14: EU Proposes Mandatory MARPOL Code for Plastic Pellets in Freight Containers

The European Commission transmitted a Staff Working Document containing the Union submission to the 14th session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 14). The proposal establishes the technical and regulatory framework for a dedicated, mandatory Code under MARPOL Annex III to govern the safe carriage of plastic pellets in freight containers, covering packaging durability, stowage requirements, and notification duties.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**

Ship agents handling container bookings and dangerous/polluting cargo notifications will need to ensure shippers provide certified declarations for pellet consignments to prevent port loading halts and customs queries.

Read Commission Staff Working Document (PDF) →

EMSWe Declarant Testing Phase Commences in National Maritime Single Windows

National maritime authorities across multiple EU Member States have initiated formal testing of external declarant interfaces under the European Maritime Single Window environment (EMSWe - Regulation EU 2019/1239). The tests focus on standardising reporting data sets, application programming interfaces (APIs), and crew/passenger manifests (FAL Form 5).

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

As statutory declarants, ship agents must participate in national testbeds to ensure software compatibility and verify that reporting burdens are genuinely streamlined rather than duplicated across Port Community Systems (PCS).

EMSWe Regulation (EU 2019/1239) →

Paris & Tokyo MoU Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on Cargo Securing Runs Through November

Port State Control (PSC) officers under the Paris and Tokyo MoUs are actively conducting their joint Concentrated Inspection Campaign on Cargo Securing and approved Cargo Securing Manuals (CSM), which remains active in all European ports until 30 November 2026. Inspections evaluate onboard lashing gear, cargo securing plans, and crew training.

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

Ship agents should proactively brief vessel masters prior to arrival, ensuring documentation is readily accessible to avoid inspection detentions that cause berth delays and laytime disputes.

Paris MoU Inspection Guidelines →

Schengen Information System Enhancements & Entry/Exit System (EES) Port Readiness

The European Commission launched upgraded alert capabilities under the Schengen Information System (SIS) to improve police and border control cooperation. In parallel, maritime and transport associations continue to engage with border authorities to address technical readiness and biometric registration procedures for non-EU crew and passengers under the upcoming Entry/Exit System (EES).

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

Ship agents handling crew changes and passenger turnarounds must coordinate closely with border police to prevent boarding gate bottlenecks and visa processing delays.

EC Schengen & Border Management Statement →

Transport Packaging Regulations (PPWR): Customs Verification Guidelines for Maritime Cargo

European customs authorities have issued practical guidance regarding the application of the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) to industrial transport packaging, including wooden pallets, crates, and dunnage. Customs officials are instructed to verify packaging material compliance and documentation on imported cargo consignments.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
>
> For breakbulk, project cargo, and container shipments, ship agents must verify that shippers have provided packaging compliance declarations to avoid customs holds at the quay.

EC Packaging Waste Guidance →

What FONASBA is doing

European Ports Alliance Technical Workshop: FONASBA Representation & Dedicated Flash Note

On 19 October 2026, the European Ports Alliance hosted a technical workshop in Brussels on "Going upstream - cooperation with source and transit countries of drug trafficking". Magellan Circle's team attended in person on behalf of FONASBA, representing ship agents in high-level discussions with port authorities, customs, and law enforcement. Following the event, Magellan Circle prepared and delivered a dedicated Flash Note summarizing operational insights directly to Eleonora and Raymond.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
>
> Ensures that the operational role of ship agents in managing vessel calls and cargo documentation is actively represented in EU port security and anti-smuggling strategies.

European Ports Alliance Overview →

2026 FONASBA Annual Meeting in Tokyo: Advancing Ship Agency Quality & Digital Advocacy

Delegates gathered in Tokyo, Japan, for the 2026 FONASBA Annual Meeting, hosted by the Japan Association of Foreign Steamship Agencies (JAFSA). Key discussions centered on EU policy developments, maritime cyber resilience, and expanding the FONASBA Quality Standard (FQS) as a trusted global mark of financial standing and operational integrity.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
>
> Reinforces the value of the FONASBA Quality Standard (FQS) and standardised agency agreements, supporting members facing complex digital and green reporting mandates.

FONASBA Tokyo 2026 Meeting Overview →

Regional strategies & port policy

European Council Calls for Enhanced Protection of Black Sea & Danube Port Infrastructure

In its formal conclusions, the European Council (EUCO) called for stepped-up security and resilience measures for critical maritime and river port infrastructure, with special focus on the Black Sea and the Danube corridor. The leaders highlighted the strategic necessity of protecting commercial navigation corridors, safeguarding grain and commodity export routes, and reinforcing physical and cyber resilience against hybrid threats.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
> Guarantees stronger political and military backing for trade lanes operating through Black Sea and Danube terminals, stabilizing insurance conditions and operational security for local ship agency companies.

Read European Council Conclusions (PDF) →

Commission Report on the Functioning & Effects of the Port Services Regulation (EU 2017/352)

The European Commission transmitted its official Report to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning and effect of the Port Services Regulation (EU 2017/352). The evaluation examines financial transparency, port infrastructure charges, and fair market access to port services (mooring, towage, pilotage, and waste handling) across TEN-T maritime ports, concluding on the regulation's overall contribution to legal certainty and fair competition.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
> Transparent, non-discriminatory port service tariffs give ship agents greater predictability when preparing Proforma Disbursement Accounts (PDAs) and auditing port expenses for shipowners.

Read Commission Report ST 14245 2026 (PDF) →

European Parliament TRAN Committee Evaluates Future European Port Strategy

The European Parliament's TRAN Committee reviewed comprehensive research on the upcoming European Port Strategy, examining terminal competitiveness, clean bunkering infrastructure, foreign investment scrutiny, and port resilience. In parallel, ESPO released its 2026 Environmental Report, showcasing concrete progress in port sustainability and onshore power investments.

> **Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:**
> Institutional focus on a comprehensive EU Port Strategy supports balanced policy measures that preserve European port connectivity while investing in port terminal modernisation.

EPRS European Port Strategy Study → | **ESPO 2026 Environmental Report →**

FEPORT Joins 38 Transport Associations Urging Reversal of Infrastructure Budget Cuts in Next MFF

FEPORT co-signed a joint statement with 38 leading European transport organisations calling on EU policymakers to protect and expand transport infrastructure funding - specifically under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) - in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The coalition warned that reducing transport funding threatens Single Market competitiveness and maritime decarbonisation targets.

Why it matters for FONASBA & ECASBA members:

Supports ship agency priorities for well-maintained port access channels, terminal infrastructure, and efficient multimodal hinterland connections.

Read FEPORT MFF Joint Press Release →

Institutional & maritime calendar

Key upcoming dates, deadlines, and European legislative milestones.

- **3 Nov.** — **EC Public Consultation Deadline:** Final day for feedback on the European Commission's EU ETS Review consultation.
- **4 Nov.** — **Council Working Party on Shipping:** Meeting of the Council's preparatory body on shipping files.
- **4 Nov.** — **European Commission Initiatives:** Commission presents the 2027 Commission Work Programme and the 2026 Annual Overview Report on simplification, implementation and enforcement.
- **4 & 9 Nov.** — **Council Technical Negotiations:** Member States' attachés meet to examine the Presidency compromise text on the EU ETS Review.
- **11-12 Nov.** — **EP Plenary Session:** European Parliament sits in Brussels (agenda).
- **13 Nov.** — **Council Working Party on Shipping:** Meeting of the Council's preparatory body on shipping files.
- **18 Nov.** — **European Commission Initiative:** Commission presents the Circular Economy Act.
- **20 Nov.** — **Council Working Party on Shipping:** Meeting of the Council's preparatory body on shipping files.

21 Nov.	**Application of the Waste Shipments Regulation (Reg. (EU) 2024/1157):** Partial application enters into force - new EU rules on transporting waste kick in, including tighter controls, digital procedures for shipments within the EU, and stricter conditions on exports, including a phase-out of plastic-waste exports to non-OECD countries (details).
23-26 Nov.	**EP Plenary Session:** European Parliament sits in Strasbourg (agenda).
26 Nov.	**Atlantic Macro-Regional Strategy:** Closing deadline for contributions to the EC Call for Evidence.
26-27 Nov.	**Special European Council:** EU Heads of State or Government convene in Brussels.
30 Nov.	**Paris & Tokyo MoU CIC Concludes:** Final day of the Concentrated Inspection Campaign on Cargo Securing.
3-4 Dec.	**Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE):** EU Transport Ministers meet in Brussels to address maritime transport files.
4 Dec.	**Council Working Party on Shipping:** Meeting of the Council's preparatory body on shipping files.
18 Dec.	**Environment Council:** EU Environment Ministers meet in Brussels aiming for a political compromise on the EU ETS Review.
31 Jan. 2027	**FuelEU Maritime Reporting Deadline:** Target deadline for shipping companies to submit verified 2026 monitoring and OPS data to accredited verifiers.

Official EU pages related to our topics

- EU ETS Portal →
- EU Maritime Transport Policy →
- EU Transport Decarbonisation: Shipping Sector →
- EU Ports & Strategies →
- EU Customs Policy & Regulations →

FONASBA / ECASBA European Advocacy Secretariat

Delivered in partnership with Magellan Circle Brussels.
Providing continuous monitoring, representation, and advocacy for ship agents.

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