
FONASBA-ECASBA's Perspective on the Clean Industrial Deal

As the global representative of ship agents and shipbrokers, FONASBA-ECASBA recognizes the Clean Industrial Deal as a significant initiative aimed at balancing competitiveness and decarbonization within the European Union's industrial landscape. However, while the Deal presents an ambitious roadmap, its impact on the maritime sector, port operations, and the broader shipping industry must be carefully assessed.

Key Considerations for Ship Agents and Brokers

1. Shipping's Critical Role in Industrial Decarbonization

* The recognition of shipping as a priority sector in the Clean Industrial Deal is a positive step. The inclusion of sustainable maritime fuels and industrial decarbonization investments is vital to meeting emission reduction targets.

* However, achieving this transition requires significant funding and regulatory alignment at both EU and IMO levels to ensure a level playing field for global shipping.

2. Energy Costs and Competitive Pressures

* High energy costs remain a challenge for European industries, including maritime logistics.

* The Deal's focus on affordable energy, including investments in renewable energy infrastructure, is critical. However, FONASBA emphasizes the need for clear implementation strategies that also consider the realities of maritime fuel availability and cost parity between conventional and alternative fuels.

3. Reducing Administrative Burdens for Maritime Stakeholders

* The commitment to reducing reporting requirements by 25-35% is welcomed.

* Ship agents, brokers, and port stakeholders face increasing compliance complexities, and excessive bureaucracy could hinder operational efficiency.

* The simplification of EU regulations must align with IMO frameworks to avoid duplication and inefficiencies in regulatory reporting.

* The Clean Industrial Deal must facilitate efficient, cost-effective energy transitions within ports, ensuring for all stakeholders, including port agents and all players involved in the port call, minimal disruption to supply chains.

4. Financing the Transition & Supporting the Maritime Ecosystem

* Mobilizing over €100 billion is an important commitment, but the mechanisms for fund allocation must be clear.

* Ship agents and brokers, as integral parts of the maritime supply chain, should have access to financial incentives that support digitalization, efficiency improvements, and alternative fuel adoption in port operations and ship services.

* The European Hydrogen Bank initiative is a step in the right direction, but shipping must have prioritized access to funding for sustainable fuel research and distribution infrastructure.

5. Circular Economy and Sustainable Supply Chains

* The push for circularity and resource efficiency aligns with maritime industry efforts to reduce waste and optimize logistics.

* However, dependency on third-country suppliers for raw materials and essential ship components remains a risk. A balanced approach that ensures a secure supply of maritime materials is crucial.

FONASBA's Call to Action & Recommendations

✓ Engage with policymakers to ensure that the role of ship agents and brokers is recognized in decarbonization policies and related initiatives.

✓ Advocate for alignment between EU and IMO regulations to prevent fragmented compliance burdens.

✓ Ensure that ship agents and brokers have access to skills and tools for operational digitalization and sustainable service models.

✓ Monitor the implementation of the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act to ensure that maritime services are not negatively impacted by new procurement or sustainability mandates.

Conclusion

The Clean Industrial Deal is a welcome step toward decarbonization and industrial resilience, but its success depends on effective implementation and realistic policy frameworks. For ship agents and brokers, the priority remains ensuring a competitive, efficient, and sustainable maritime sector that supports both global trade and environmental goals.

+++

London, 27th February 2025