

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000221/25
to the Commission
Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez (PPE), Borja Giménez Larraz (PPE)
(20 January 2025)**

Subject: Suspension of shipping services in Spanish and European ports

On 13 January 2025, the Danish shipping company Maersk announced that its MECL service, which connects the Middle East and India with the United States, will stop calling at one of the main ports in southern Europe — the port of Algeciras in Spain — and will instead call at the Moroccan port of Tanger Med. Similarly, in February 2024 the German freight shipping company Hapag-Lloyd decided to suspend calls at the port of Valencia to relocate to the other side of the Mediterranean.

These relocations are two blatant cases of carbon leakage, as the shipping companies will be exempted from EU ETS charges which, since January 2024, apply a surcharge on shipping freight.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission:

1. Given that competitiveness is one of the pillars of the new Commission, what measures will it adopt to ensure that European ports such as Algeciras and Valencia remain attractive and relevant for the main international trade routes?
2. What measures will it take to stem this carbon leakage to other ports and maintain the competitiveness of the European Union?

Submitted: 20.1.2025

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(28 February 2025)**

European ports, as critical gateways for international trade and important hubs of activity, are essential for the success of EU industry and economy as a whole.

This has notably been recognised in the Commission's priorities through the planning of a new strategy that will highlight the role that European ports and maritime industry will play in the future EU economy.

All sectors, including maritime transport, need to contribute to the EU climate neutrality objective. While there may be many different economic and operational factors influencing shipping companies' routes decisions, the Commission takes the possible risks of evasive behaviour very seriously.

A specific preventive measure against such risks had already been agreed during co-decision: it consists in disregarding, for the purposes of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), stops by containerhips at certain neighbouring container transshipment ports that meet specific criteria. Tanger Med and East Port Said have been identified as such ports.

Furthermore, the EU ETS Directive ⁽¹⁾ includes a reporting and review clause that obliges the Commission to monitor and to report every two years on the implementation of the ETS extension to maritime transport, notably with the objective to detect evasive behaviours at an early stage and if appropriate, to propose measures to ensure the effective implementation of the directive.

The first report is expected in the coming weeks and the Commission will continue monitoring the situation very closely.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Union and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC (OJ L 275 25.10.2003, p. 32).