

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002457/26
to the Commission
David McAllister (PPE)
(15 June 2026)**

Subject: EU ports strategy: investments, priorities and role of Member States

The EU ports strategy provides a solid basis for the continued development of maritime ports in the German state of Lower Saxony. What matters now is backing the measures announced with adequate funding, providing effective support for investments, speeding up planning and permitting procedures and better coordinating the various infrastructure projects.

1. What does the Commission make of concerns that the broad and partly non-binding nature of the EU ports strategy and the large number of promised initiatives, alliances and support instruments harbour the risk of policy fragmentation, potentially making effective prioritisation more difficult?
2. How does it plan to meet the high investment needs of EU ports, particularly with regard to small and medium-sized enterprises, smaller shipyards and regional stakeholders, who are key to the strategy's implementation?
3. As the strategy is developed further and put into effect, how does the Commission intend to ensure that national and regional interests are duly considered and that the different starting points of EU ports are sufficiently taken into account?

Submitted: 15.6.2026

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(26 August 2026)**

The Commission refers to its reply to E-000595/2026. The EU Ports Strategy is conceived as a framework that establishes common priorities and brings together existing and new initiatives, funding principles and guidance to align transport, energy, security and cohesion policies affecting ports rather than create parallel, uncoordinated or fragmented strands of action.

On investment needs, the strategy identifies ports as a priority within the trans-European transport network and underlines the role of current and future EU funding programmes ⁽¹⁾.

It includes a specific roadmap for competitive small and medium-sized ports, which can benefit small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and smaller shipyards indirectly through improved infrastructure, innovation support and advisory services.

The European Investment Bank and national promotional banks, alongside private investors, will also have an important role in meeting the investment needs of ports.

The EU Ports Strategy does not set out a one-size-fits-all solution but reflects the diversity of EU ports, in full respect of subsidiarity. National and regional interests remain central, as port ownership, land-use planning, permitting fall within Member State and regional competences.

Through trans-European transport network governance, cohesion programming and the future national and regional partnership plans, Member States and regions participate in defining priorities and ensuring that different starting points of ports, including those in Lower Saxony, are reflected when designing and implementing projects consistent with the strategy.

⁽¹⁾ E.g. the Connecting Europe Facility, cohesion policy funds, Horizon Europe, the Innovation Fund and the instruments of the future Multiannual Financial Framework.