EuDA 2026

Annual Conference
Programme
Thursday 26 November 2026
Stanhope Hotel Brussels

"A Competitiveness Strategy for Europe: from Price-based to Value-based Competition"



Welcome & Moderation

starting at 10.00



"A Competitiveness Strategy for Europe: from Price-based to Value-based Competition"

until 12.00



Cocktail & Lunch

from 12.00 to 14.00

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According to the UK Office of Fair Trading: "***Competition*** *is a process of rivalry on price, quality, skills, … between suppliers seeking to win business*". A company's **Competitiveness** is determined by a set of the relative advantages that this company has over its rivals that allow it to win business, grow and thrive.

Competitiveness results from a corporate competitive **mindset** driving the company to make **decisions** on the most optimal and efficient way to use resources, such as capital and human resources as well as investments, raw materials and energy. These decisions are implementing the company's **business vision** within the framework of its industrial and legislative ecosystem.

There are traditionally two main types of competition: race to the top is where the companies' focus is on delivering novel products and services and of the highest quality, while the race to the bottom is where the companies' focus is on offering the lowest possible price for a basic product or service. Non-EU countries, like China, understood very quickly that before racing to the top, companies need to acquire knowledge, skill, know-how, … Therefore, their strategy was to subsidise State-owned companies in strategic sectors to build up their knowledge, skill, know-how to transform them into global champions. In the case of China, the strategy delivered significant overcapacities in many key sectors, which quickly saturated the domestic market and were then used for exports. The flooding of global export markets with subsidised cheap products and services has also proven effective in weakening or eliminating international competition.

Europe has major competitive advantages in strategic sectors such as dredging and should prioritise and promote competition on value. However, new approaches mitigating risks and sharing benefits are needed for large complex projects. With its Competitiveness Compass, Europe is rebalancing its approach towards long-term sustainability by taking into account the new geo-politics and geo-economics and by introducing measures aiming at cost reductions as well as at improving the competitive edge of the European companies. With its Global Gateway, Europe is promoting partnerships around the world. Such a collaborative business model allows for risk sharing and improved efficiency while fostering innovation.

At the EuDA 2026 Annual Conference, eminent speakers from the Academia, the Commission and the Dredging Industry will present on key elements of the competitiveness of the European Maritime Cluster, on the EU strategies to reinforce its competitiveness and discuss the situation of the European Dredging Industry.

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Welcome and Conference Opening

Mr Marc Van den Broeck
EuDA Chairman, Event Host

Mr Paris Sansoglou
EuDA Secretary General, Event Moderator
Short introduction of the conference theme

Setting the Scene: Competitiveness in the Maritime Cluster

Prof. Thierry Vanelslander
University of Antwerp, Head Department of Transport and Regional Economics

Key drivers of Competitiveness in the European Maritime Cluster

European Competitiveness Compass: a renewed Vision for a more competitive Europe

Mr Torsten Klimke
European Commission, DG MOVE, Unit D3 Head of Unit

EU Ports Strategy: EU's vision for multimodal transport infrastructure and energy hubs

Mr Mark Nicklas
European Commission, DG GROW, Unit I2 Head of Unit

Overview of the European Strategies for Security-resilient Waterborne Infrastructure

Mr Sergio Oliete Josa
European Commission, DG INTPA, Unit F4 Head of Unit

EU Global Gateway: EU's vision for partnerships around the world

Views from the Dredgers

Mr Marc Van den Broeck
EuDA Chairman

The Dredging Contractors' Vision on Competition

Open Floor Discussion