

POSITION PAPER

Emissions Trading System (ETS) review – Implications for Aviation and Maritime Transport

On 17 July 2026, the European Commission published its [proposal](#) to revise the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), with a view to aligning the system with the EU's 2040 climate target whilst strengthening its contribution to industrial competitiveness and decarbonisation.

CLECAT, representing freight forwarders, logistics service providers, and customs agents across Europe, calls on the European Parliament and the Council to ensure that the revised EU ETS supports the decarbonisation of transport whilst safeguarding the competitiveness and resilience of European supply chains. In particular, the revised framework should avoid carbon leakage and cargo diversion, ensure coherence with international carbon-pricing mechanisms, and support investment in sustainable fuels and technologies without creating unnecessary costs and administrative complexity.

For freight forwarders and logistics service providers, these considerations are important given the international nature of transport and supply chains. The review directly affects the interaction of the EU ETS with the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the emerging International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) greenhouse gas pricing framework, the risk of cargo being redirected through non-EU hubs and ports, and the costs and availability of lower-emission transport solutions.

CLECAT therefore calls for a targeted approach to the transport-related provisions of the proposal. CLECAT is opposed to extending the geographical scope of the EU ETS to additional international flights and supports addressing international aviation emissions through the globally coordinated CORSIA. Regarding maritime transport, priority should be given to effective anti-evasion measures, continued monitoring of cargo diversion, and a clear interaction with the future IMO framework to avoid double carbon pricing. EU ETS should equally strengthen practical support for the uptake of sustainable aviation and maritime fuels.

ETS Aviation

i) Expansion of the geographical scope (Article 28a)

The Commission proposes to extend the EU ETS from 2029 to flights departing from the European Economic Area (EEA) to third-country airports within a 5,000 km radius of Frankfurt Airport. According to the Commission, this would bring around 80% of emissions associated with flights departing the EEA within the scope of the system. Certain routes, including those to Least Developed Countries, certain Small Island Developing States, and Gibraltar, would remain exempt. The existing treatment of flights between the EEA, the UK and Switzerland would remain unchanged.

CLECAT opposes the proposed extension of the EU ETS beyond its current geographical scope. International aviation is inherently global and requires a coordinated international approach. Extending the EU ETS to additional international flights risks increasing costs for European operators,

potentially undermining work at ICAO level at a critical point when the mandatory phase of CORSIA will start in 2027.

CLECAT therefore calls on the European Parliament and the Council to amend Article 28a to retain the current geographical scope of the EU ETS for aviation, i.e. the intra-EEA scope, while international aviation emissions should continue to be addressed through the globally agreed CORSIA.

ii) Interaction with CORSIA (Articles 25a and 28b)

The Commission proposes to extend the existing CORSIA derogations until 31 December 2035 and provides mechanisms to avoid double carbon pricing. By 01 July 2032, the Commission would assess CORSIA's environmental ambition and international coverage. If CORSIA is considered sufficiently ambitious and participating States represent more than 70% of international aviation emissions, the Commission would likely revert the EU ETS to its current geographical scope. Otherwise, the expanded scope proposed under Article 28a would remain in place.

CLECAT considers that international aviation emissions should primarily be addressed through the globally agreed ICAO framework. The interaction between CORSIA and the EU ETS must avoid double carbon pricing and additional competitive disadvantages for Europe's internationally operating transport and logistics sector. The 2032 review should provide a clear pathway back to the current EU ETS geographical scope where CORSIA demonstrates sufficient environmental effectiveness and international coverage.

iii) Support for decarbonisation (Article 3c)

The Commission proposes to extend the existing aviation decarbonisation support mechanism until 2040, making up to 110 million additional allowances available while broadly maintaining support for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and other decarbonisation technologies, including Renewable Fuels of Non-Biological Origin (RFNBOs), hydrogen, electricity, as well as electric and hybrid-electric aircraft.

CLECAT welcomes the increased support for the uptake of SAF and other aviation decarbonisation solutions. However, this should be complemented by a robust European Book-and-Claim framework for SAF, enabling freight forwarders and shippers to contribute directly to SAF market ramp-up and credibly account for the resulting emission reductions. Such a framework would help stimulate SAF demand, improve transparency throughout the logistics chain, and make SAF investment more accessible to transport customers.

Besides, a number of other points also need to be addressed: the overall volume of SAF Allowances needs to be increased to better reflect the contributions of the sector to the EU ETS and support for long-term SAF offtake agreements should be strengthened through a higher dedicated allowance reserve and the extension of supported contract durations from five to at least ten years in order to provide the investment certainty required for new SAF production capacity. In addition, the current proportionality principle should be removed to better align the mechanism with the objectives of ReFuelEU Aviation, while support for HEFA-based SAF should be maintained until alternative SAF pathways are available at sufficient scale and competitive costs. Finally, the EU should recognise emissions units approved under CORSIA by ICAO, thereby preserving a global level playing field and avoiding unnecessary regulatory fragmentation.

iv) ETS as a service (Article 25b)

The proposal introduces a mechanism enabling third countries to participate voluntarily in an EU-supported emissions trading framework, including through technical cooperation and revenue sharing. SAF produced in participating countries could also become eligible for support under Article 3c.

CLECAT supports greater international cooperation and interoperability between compatible carbon-pricing systems, provided equivalent environmental standards and robust safeguards are maintained. Closer cooperation could also facilitate links between the EU SAF market and SAF markets in third countries, supporting the development of a larger and more competitive international market for sustainable aviation fuels.

ETS Maritime

Maritime transport has been covered by the EU ETS since 2024. The Commission's proposal introduces targeted changes concerning the scope of the system, safeguards against carbon leakage and evasive port calls, its interaction with the emerging IMO greenhouse gas pricing framework, and support for low- and zero-emission maritime fuels and technologies.

i) Scope – smaller vessels (Annex I)

The Commission proposes to extend the EU ETS from 2029 to oil and chemical tankers as well as gas and LNG carriers between 400 and 5,000 GT, accompanied by corresponding MRV requirements. By the end of 2031, the Commission would assess a possible further extension to other vessels in this size category, including ro-pax and passenger ships. Existing derogations for certain services to small islands and outermost regions, as well as for ice-class vessels, would be extended until the end of 2035.

CLECAT supports consistent carbon pricing across comparable maritime transport activities and calls for a proportionate approach to smaller vessels. Any extension should take account of the administrative burden on smaller operators and avoid unintended consequences for modal shift and the competitiveness of short-sea shipping.

Moreover, existing and proposed derogations for transport servicing small islands and outermost regions should be permanently codified, rather than repeatedly prolonged, and should be extended to account for the additional fuel consumption resulting from navigation in ice conditions. This would provide operators with long-term legal certainty whilst recognising the strategic importance of reliable and affordable connections for the Union's territorial cohesion.

ii) Expansion of the scope – Neighbouring container transshipment ports (Article 3)

The Commission proposes to strengthen the anti-evasion framework for *neighbouring container transshipment ports*. For ports located within 300 nautical miles of an EU port, the threshold for designation would be lowered from 65% to 50% of total container traffic consisting of transshipment containers. Additionally, an alternative criterion would allow non-EEA ports located within 150 nautical miles of an EU port to be designated based on the availability of suitable container transshipment infrastructure. The list of designated ports would also be reviewed annually instead of

every two years, allowing the Commission to respond more quickly to changes in cargo flows and shipping patterns. The proposal introduces additional anti-evasion safeguards under Article 3ga, including amendments to the definition of a *port of call* and to the treatment of certain *offshore ships* and *container ships*. The Commission also proposes a temporary relief for certain long-distance containership services via EEA ports, aimed at limiting the risk that such services are diverted towards non-EEA ports due to the EU ETS.

CLECAT welcomes the Commission's proposed strengthening of safeguards against ETS avoidance and cargo diversion to neighbouring non-EEA ports. Effective measures are needed to prevent shipping services from being artificially restructured to circumvent ETS obligations and to ensure that carbon pricing does not incentivise the relocation of transshipment activities outside the Union. This matters to freight forwarders as transshipment volumes help sustain regular calls by long-distance services at European ports. Those calls give freight forwarders and their customers a wider choice of connections, departures and routes for European imports and exports. A shift in transshipment to non-EU hubs could therefore reduce connectivity for cargo that is itself neither transhipped nor bound for those hubs. Monitoring must assess changes in direct service coverage, sailing frequency and deployed capacity, alongside transshipment volumes and port calls.

CLECAT also sees merit in the proposed temporary derogation for qualifying inbound voyages by large containerships, under which the ETS surrender obligation would be reduced in proportion to containers transhipped at an EU port for onward transport to a non-EU port. The measure could help retain transshipment activity and the long-distance port calls that support European connectivity.

CLECAT supports the proposed infrastructure criterion because it would allow the Commission to identify nearby ports capable of attracting transshipment traffic before large cargo volumes have shifted. This matters because, once shipping lines have reorganised their networks around a non-EU hub, it can be difficult and costly for European ports to regain those services and volumes. The Commission should therefore closely monitor its anti-evasion measures' practical effects, including changes in port calls, cargo routes, transshipment volumes, and service configurations, and respond promptly wherever new forms of ETS evasion or cargo diversion emerge.

Annual review of the list would help the Commission respond to such changes in time. At the same time, the measures should remain proportionate, enforceable, and carefully targeted, so that legitimate commercial operations are not unnecessarily burdened.

iii) Interaction with the IMO greenhouse gas framework (Article 3gg)

The Commission proposes to review the interaction between the EU ETS and any future IMO greenhouse gas pricing framework within 18 months of its adoption and before it becomes operational. The review would consider the ambition and environmental integrity of the IMO framework, as well as its interaction with the EU ETS, including the risk of double carbon pricing. Where necessary, the Commission may propose further legislation to ensure coherence between the two systems.

CLECAT considers it essential that the EU ETS and the future IMO framework work together without creating double carbon pricing. The revised EU ETS must predictably prevent double carbon pricing once the IMO framework applies, thereby maintaining certainty and the international competitiveness of European shipping and logistics.

iv) Support for decarbonisation

The Commission proposes a Sustainable Maritime Alternative Propulsion (SMAP) mechanism, reserving 110 million ETS allowances between 2028 and 2040 to support eligible sustainable maritime fuels and zero-emission propulsion. Operators using eligible fuels or technologies may use the allocated allowances for ETS compliance or sell them on the carbon market, thereby reducing associated additional costs.

The proposal also requires Member States to allocate at least 50% of their national ETS revenues to climate-related investments, with maritime transport remaining eligible for such funding. It further seeks greater alignment of EU ETS and [FuelEU Maritime](#) reporting requirements.

CLECAT welcomes the SMAP mechanism as a first step towards reducing the additional costs of sustainable maritime propulsion. To accelerate investment while maintaining the competitiveness of the European maritime transport sector, support should remain transparent, technology-neutral, and administratively straightforward for operators.

v) Transparency and monitoring of ETS surcharges

From a freight forwarding perspective, greater transparency is needed regarding the calculation of ETS-related surcharges applied by shipping lines. The Commission's 2024 maritime ETS monitoring report acknowledged that compliance costs had been fully passed on to customers and identified cases where surcharges exceeded estimated ETS costs. These findings reinforce the need for charges to be transparent, verifiable and proportionate to the compliance costs they are intended to recover. Freight forwarders and shippers should be able to understand the emissions basis, allowance price assumptions and methodology used, as well as how applicable relief measures and support, including benefits received under the SMAP mechanism, are reflected in the amounts charged. Monitoring should ensure that carbon pricing supports decarbonisation without becoming a source of unjustified additional margins, while avoiding disproportionate reporting requirements.

CLECAT further supports any greater alignment between EU ETS and FuelEU Maritime reporting to reduce the administrative burden and ease compliance. Co-legislators should explore to further simplify overlapping reporting and verification requirements throughout the legislative process.

Conclusion

CLECAT welcomes efforts to further develop the EU ETS and strengthening support for transport decarbonisation. The revised framework must, however, safeguard the competitiveness and connectivity of European transport and logistics and avoid carbon leakage, cargo diversion, and double carbon pricing.

CLECAT opposes extending the EU ETS beyond intra-EEA flights, maintaining that international aviation emissions should be addressed through an effective global framework under ICAO.

For maritime transport, robust anti-evasion measures and effective coordination with the emerging IMO greenhouse gas pricing mechanism will be essential to prevent cargo diversion and protect the connectivity of European gateways and supply chains. Necessary derogations for outermost regions

and winter navigation should be permanently codified, including appropriate recognition of the additional fuel consumption caused by navigation in ice conditions.

ETS revenues and support mechanisms should facilitate the uptake of sustainable aviation and maritime propulsion. Their design should recognise the role of freight forwarders and shippers in procuring lower-emission transport services, including through credible Book-and-Claim solutions, whilst remaining transparent, accessible, and administratively straightforward.

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