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Ferry shipping executives call for broader shore power funding at Interferry's European Shipping Summit Seminar

Access to onshore power supply for ferries and ships is crucial for the further development and implementation of sustainable battery-based propulsion, and ultimately the decarbonization of the maritime sector. Therefore, shipping executives at the European Shipping Summit's side seminar, "Shore Power offers promising carbon cuts – are we on track?", called for a significant expansion of funding for shore power infrastructure. The seminar, co-hosted by Interferry and CLIA, took place on 19 March in Brussels.

The panel discussion, moderated by Claes Berglund of Stena AB, featured Isabelle Ryckbost, Secretary General of ESPO, Inesa Ulichina, Sustainable Shipping Officer at Transport & Environment and Jørgen Bjerre of the European Commission. The event drew numerous policy makers and regulatory stakeholders from the European Parliament and Commission, alongside ferry and shipping executives.

Executives stressed that current funding models often focused solely on the Onshore Power Supply (OPS) connection at berth, underplaying the importance for ferries to be able to charge their onboard batteries for electric drive on their crossings. They argued for a shift in focus. This includes funding for the entire energy supply chain from the power plant to the port, including investment in the port's electrical grid and overall energy infrastructure.

"This is a very important discussion," underlined Johan Roos, Interferry's Director of Regulatory Affairs. "Investment in OPS infrastructure is key to the energy transition of European and worldwide ferry operations, supporting the adoption of battery technology and reducing reliance on limited resources of alternative fuels. Focusing only on the vessel in port misses the bigger picture. We need robust power supply to charge the propulsion batteries on the ships, so that we can tap into the full technological potential of OPS."

Johan Roos further added: "The energy infrastructure in many industrialized countries needs a more coherent view, and this includes the importance of electric transportation and shipping. Funds must be allocated to upgrade the entire port infrastructure, and member states of the European Union can lead the way here and set the benchmark for global development."

Interferry CEO Mike Corrigan emphasized the organization's commitment. "The ferry industry is a driver in the development of sustainable propulsion solutions for the entire shipping industry, as we can see from the large number of projects and investments made by our member companies. Shore power is a cornerstone of our industry's decarbonization efforts, and we must ensure that funding supports the full scope of infrastructure needs. We need a holistic approach to achieve meaningful carbon reductions."



Interferry advocates for regulatory frameworks that recognize the unique operational requirements of ferry shipping. The association believes that strategic investment in shore power and port energy infrastructure is essential for a sustainable maritime future.

Interferry is a highly respected global ferry trade association with consultative status at the International Maritime Organization and similar influence at the European Union as well as many other maritime governance authorities. With membership exceeding 280 companies and representing plus 2,200 individuals in more than 40 countries, its primary purposes are to represent the ferry industry on regulatory and policy matters including safety and sustainability; to speak on behalf of the worldwide ferry sector which provides transport for over four billion passengers and 370 million vehicles annually; and to facilitate networking and communications among its members.

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