

A missed opportunity for global alignment to accelerate the transition: Fuel manufacturers regret postponement of the IMO Net Zero Framework adoption

Brussels, 27 October 2025: FuelsEurope expresses deep concern following the outcome of the UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) held in London from 14 to 17 October 2025, where Member States voted to postpone by one year the adoption of the IMO Net Zero Framework. The decision represents a major setback for global efforts to provide a predictable regulatory pathway and demand certainty for the decarbonisation of maritime transport.

The IMO Net Zero Framework, approved in 2025, was designed as a cornerstone of global maritime climate policy. There was broad support and expectations were high that MEPC would secure the formal adoption of the Framework, setting a clear trajectory for the sector toward 2050 climate neutrality objective. Instead, the decision to postpone by one year creates renewed uncertainty for the industry. This delay, although procedural, sends the wrong signal at a critical time.

The constructive discussions that took place last week clearly demonstrate the continued willingness and strong commitment of Member States to work together. This is a reassuring signal that, despite the postponement, the ambition behind the Framework and the shared determination to move forward remain intact. Such cooperation is vital, as shipping is an international industry that depends on global solutions to decarbonise. However, the delay risks undermining investor confidence among fuel manufacturers preparing to scale up alternative maritime fuels. Predictable regulation and long-term policy visibility are essential for capital-intensive projects, and without a clear global framework, investment uncertainty increases. Regional initiatives may continue to progress, but without international alignment, market fragmentation and uneven incentives are likely to persist.

“Although this postponement is disappointing, the ongoing discussions show that Member States remain committed to working together and to keeping the ambition of the IMO Net Zero Framework alive,” said Liana Gouta, Director General of FuelsEurope. “Our industry stands ready to deliver, but long-term policy clarity is essential to unlock investments in renewable and low-carbon fuels. FuelsEurope will continue to support the development of a global framework that drives both decarbonisation and competitiveness.”

FuelsEurope, the voice of the European fuel manufacturing industry. FuelsEurope represents, within the EU institutions, the interest of 40 companies manufacturing and distributing conventional and renewable fuels and products for mobility, energy & feedstocks for industrial value chains in the EU.

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