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EMEC encourages SMEs in the Maritime Industry to participate in EU funding programs

EC works on SME friendly funding programs. 5 billion euros available until 2013.

For further information, please contact: EMEC organised a workshop for the SMEs in the maritime sector to inform them about possibilities of European funding. Among the guest speakers were Wolfgang Hehn, Policy Officer Shipbuilding of DG Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission, Bernd Reichert, Head of Unit SMEs of DG Research of the European Commission and Gert-Jan Huisink, Managing Director of Holland Marine Equipment (HME).

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Wolfgang Hehn clearly stated that the focus of the European Commission is on SMEs. "SMEs are an essential driver of Europe's economy, job creation and welfare", said Hehn. "That's why the European Commission is looking into possibilities to reduce the bureaucracy to make funding programs more accessible and more friendly for SMEs." The role of the Commission is defined in the Small Business Act (SBA).

Bernd Reichert explained the possibilities of Research and Development funding of SMEs from the 7th Framework Program (7FP). Reichert: "SMEs should participate in 7FP because it is the best resource for technological innovation. Through their flexibility are SMEs best suited to pick up new market opportunities for which they need new technology." SMEs are encouraged to participate and a target of 15% SME participation has been set. This equals an amount of 5 billion euros until 2013.

Gert-Jan Huisink closed the afternoon with some best practices and experiences. In his opinion the key for successful applications is to know exactly the needs of each company and bring those needs together into one proposal. "It is important to bring companies together that have added value for each other. That's the base for a successful start of projects," concluded Huisink.

The presentations delivered during the workshop are available for download at:

<http://emec.eu/smes>

Background Note

The European Marine Equipment Council (EMEC), which represents the European marine equipment industry, consists of 13 European trade associations from Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (two), Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

The term '**marine equipment**' refers to all products and services supplied for the building, conversion, maintenance of ships (seagoing and inland) and maritime structures. This includes technical services in the field of engineering, installation and commissioning, and ship maintenance (including repair).



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