



European Skippers' Organisation  
Organization Européenne de Bateliers  
European Inland Waterway Operators' Organization  
Europäische Schifferorganisation  
Europejska Organizacja Armatorów Śródlądowych

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Changing of the guard at European Skippers' Organisation (ESO) :

**Van Lancker succeeded by the duo Beelen and Schultz**

**Brussels, 22 June 2026.** Marjan Beelen and Erik Schultz were appointed by the General Assembly of the European Skippers' Organisation (ESO) on 18 June 2026 as successors to Christiaan Van Lancker. Van Lancker has headed the organisation since 2009 and has played a key role in representing the European inland waterway sector for seventeen years.

**With the appointment of Marjan Beelen and Erik Schultz, ESO is deliberately opting for a dual chairmanship. Their complementary backgrounds, expertise, and experience form a strong foundation for the continued management of the organization and the representation of European inland shipping entrepreneurs.**

The new chairpersons emphasize the importance of a strong and future-oriented inland shipping sector, with particular attention to the independent entrepreneurs and family businesses that form the backbone of the sector. Inland shipping faces numerous challenges today, but also significant opportunities. Attracting sufficient people to the sector, further increasing the sustainability of the fleet, along with the many technological developments and digitalization, require a joint approach from entrepreneurs, clients, and policymakers.



*“Inland shipping holds a strong position within the European transport system. By working together with our members, customers, and stakeholders, we can ensure that our sector makes the most of tomorrow’s opportunities while simultaneously providing answers to the challenges it faces,” said Marjan Beelen and Erik Schultz in a first joint statement.*

### **Van Lancker not out of the game yet.**

Christiaan van Lancker reacted with satisfaction to his successors: “With Marjan and Erik, ESO gains a strong co-chair duo. Their knowledge, experience, and commitment give me the confidence that the interests of inland shipping will be vigorously defended in the future as well.”

Although Van Lancker is stepping down as president, at the express request of the board he will remain active for the time being as a board member of ESO on behalf of his Belgian organization, the Bond van Eigen Schippers. He will also continue to represent ESO within the European Inland Waterway Transport Platform (EIWT).

### **Farewell to Devos**

During the same meeting, a farewell was also said to board member Alain Devos. He had been part of the ESO board since 2013 and represented the organization for many years on the EIWT board. In his role as director, he was also responsible for coordinating the various committees and numerous other activities for many years. With his knowledge, dedication, and unwavering commitment, he has made a lasting contribution to the functioning of ESO and the development of European inland waterway representation. We therefore thank him wholeheartedly for his years of commitment.



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You will find more information about Marjan Beelen and Erik Schultz below in two short profiles.

#### **Short biographies:**

**Marjan Beelen** holds various board and advisory mandates at European, national, and regional levels, including at the European Skippers' Organisation (ESO), the Federation of Belgian Inland Navigation (FBB), the Institute of Inland Waterway Transport (ITB), and Koepel Binnenvaart Vlaanderen (KBV).

As an economist specializing in transport and maritime economics, she combines a strong academic background with in-depth knowledge of the inland shipping sector. Thanks to her expertise in economic, policy, operational, and technological developments, and her broad network within the sector, government, ports, knowledge institutions, and other stakeholders, she actively contributes to the further development of European inland shipping.

**Beelen** is in daily life the director of CITBO (Corporation Inland Tanker Barge Owners). This cooperative, which unites owners and operators of inland tanker vessels, is committed to a professional, safe, and sustainable tanker shipping sector.

**Erik Schultz** is a board member of Koninklijk Binnenvaart Nederland (KBN) and chairman of SchippersVereniging Schuttevaer. He has served as a director in national and international inland shipping associations for many years and is also a board member of the European Inland Waterway Transport Platform (EIWT). Trained as a shipbuilder and business economist, Schultz has earned his stripes in the international business world through the exercise of various commercial and managerial positions. Thanks to his years of board membership at various organizations and in different roles, he expects to be able to make an active contribution to the ESO organization. The experience gained in the European arena, and his commitment to the important role of private inland shipping in the transport sector, undoubtedly form a solid foundation.



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### Press release imagery

#### *Van Lancker (m) handing over the president's gavel*

