

Press Release

MS&D 2026: Chief of the German Navy Jan Christian Kaack to deliver farewell address

High-level international programme featuring National Armaments Director Vice Admiral Carsten Stawitzki and international industry representatives – strong representation from European navies

Hamburg, 27 August 2026 – Representatives of European navies, decision-makers from the maritime industry and technology experts will gather in Hamburg on 3 and 4 September for the **MS&D – International Conference & Expo on Maritime Security & Defence**. Held as part of SMM, the conference will address Europe's maritime capabilities, new requirements for naval warfare, cybersecurity, and manned and unmanned systems.

A particular highlight will be the appearance of **Vice Admiral Jan Christian Kaack, Chief of the German Navy**. Shortly before leaving office, Kaack will deliver a keynote address on Thursday, 3 September, focusing on the current security environment and the future of the German Navy. Afterwards, he will discuss these issues further with **Dr Sarah Kirchberger**, Director of the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University (ISPK).

With **Vice Admiral Carsten Stawitzki**, National Armaments Director at the German Federal Ministry of Defence, **Irina Haesler**, Member of the Executive Board and Head of EU Representation at the German Shipowners' Association (VDR), and **Dr Oliver Juckenhöfel**, Executive Vice President, Segment Surface Vessels at TKMS, the programme brings together military, political and business perspectives. Other European navies will also be represented at senior level: **Rear Admiral Rémi Thomas**, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff for Plans and Programs of the French Navy and **Rear Admiral J. F. Jeroen Hodes**, Director of the Directorate of Materiel Sustainment of the Royal Netherlands Navy, will be coming to Hamburg.

"With the MS&D Conference now taking place annually and the new Naval Hall B8, we are giving maritime security significantly greater prominence at SMM. The high-calibre two-day MS&D Conference remains the centrepiece. What is new is that the MS&D Expo and the four-day programme on the Naval Stage will extend its presence throughout SMM. This is how we are systematically expanding this area," says **Claus Ulrich Selbach**, Vice President Exhibitions Maritime & Energy at Hamburg Messe und Congress.

Europe's maritime capabilities in focus

The conference programme on Thursday opens with the panel **“Europe’s Maritime Capabilities”**. **Giovanni Cremonini**, Head of Maritime Security Sector at the European External Action Service (EEAS), **Dr Oliver Juckenhöfel** and **Irina Haesler** will discuss the requirements for Europe’s maritime capabilities. The panel brings together perspectives from European security policy, industry and commercial shipping.

Following Admiral Kaack’s keynote address, the panel **“Maritime Warfare Requirements”** will examine the requirements facing modern naval forces. Speakers include **Rear Admiral Rémi Thomas** and **Rear Admiral J. F. Jeroen Hodes**.

The underwater domain in focus

Against the backdrop of new threat scenarios and the need to protect critical maritime infrastructure, the underwater domain is becoming increasingly important. In the panel **“The Underwater Domain”**, **Prof. Dr May-Britt Stumbaum**, Director of the SPEAR Institute, will moderate a discussion with **Malte Kutscher** of ELAC Sonar, **Dr Moritz Lehmann** of Starboard Intelligence and **Alice Rowlands**, Product Lead Perception at Helsing, on technological developments and new applications.

“The maritime security environment is changing at a rapid pace – and with it the requirements facing our navies. At MS&D, military decision-makers from different countries discuss with industry and technology experts which capabilities will be needed in the future and how they can be made available more quickly. This combination of operational perspectives and technological expertise makes this year’s programme particularly relevant,” says **Rear Admiral (ret.) Karsten Schneider**, President of the German Maritime Institute and Programme Director of the MS&D Conference.

Cybersecurity, manned and unmanned systems

The second day of the conference begins with a keynote address by **Vice Admiral Carsten Stawitzki**. The focus will be on current requirements for equipment and procurement.

The panel **“Current Developments of Maritime Security”** illustrates just how broad the spectrum of maritime security has become. **Captain Sebastian Hamann** of the German Armed Forces Operational Command, **Stefan Langhammer** of OHB Digital Connect, **Annika Nevaste**, CEO of DNV Cyber, and **Haythem El Mir**, CTO of Cypurge, will discuss current developments with a particular focus on cyber and information security.

The conference concludes by turning its attention to manned and unmanned systems. In the panel **“Manned and Unmanned Systems”**, **Rear Admiral Christian Bock**, Head of the Bundeswehr Innovation Centre, **Magnus Lunde** of Kongsberg Discovery and **Simon Volkmann** of Eurobotics

will discuss how autonomous and unmanned technologies can enable new maritime capabilities and the role of cooperation between armed forces and technology companies.

MS&D as a meeting point for navies and industry

The **Naval Hall B8** will serve as the central hub for maritime security and defence throughout SMM from 1 to 4 September. The **MS&D Conference** will take place there on 3 and 4 September on the **Naval Stage**. The accompanying **MS&D Expo** will showcase technologies, systems and solutions for maritime security and defence throughout the four days of SMM. In addition, the **Security & Defence Route** will guide visitors to companies offering security- and defence-related solutions across all SMM halls.

Conference programme at a glance

Thursday, 3 September 2026

- Panel 1: Europe's Maritime Capabilities
- Keynote address by Vice Admiral Jan Christian Kaack followed by a discussion with Dr. Sarah Kirchberger
- Panel 2: Maritime Warfare Requirements
- Panel 3: The Underwater Domain

Friday, 4 September 2026

- Keynote address by Vice Admiral Carsten Stawitzki
- Panel 4: Current Developments of Maritime Security
- Panel 5: Manned and Unmanned Systems

Accredit now for SMM 2026:

Media representatives can now apply for accreditation for SMM, taking place in Hamburg from 1 to 4 September 2026. SMM press accreditation also provides access to the MS&D Conference on 3 and 4 September in Naval Hall B8.

Accreditation: [Press Shop](#)

About MS&D – International Conference & Expo on Maritime Security & Defence

MS&D – International Conference & Expo on Maritime Security & Defence – is Germany's only international conference dedicated to maritime security and defence. It brings together high-level representatives from navies, government, industry and academia to address key maritime security challenges, European defence procurement and technological developments. The MS&D Conference & Expo combines exhibition and conference into an international meeting point for maritime security and defence technologies, as well as for dialogue between navies, industry and

procurement organisations. Increasingly, topics such as the protection of critical infrastructure, maritime resilience, dual-use technologies and the security of global supply chains are also moving into focus. Since 2025, MS&D has been held annually, strengthening its role as a European platform for dialogue, innovation and collaboration. In SMM years, the MS&D Conference & Expo takes place as part of SMM – the world’s leading maritime industry event – in Hamburg; in the intervening years, it is held as a standalone conference.

More information: [MS&D Conference - SMM](#)

About Hamburg Messe und Congress

Hamburg Messe und Congress (HMC) is an organizer and host of major international events, trade fairs, and congresses. Its unique event campus in the heart of Hamburg comprises eleven exhibition halls and the CCH – Congress Center Hamburg – connected by the park Planten un Blomen. Leading international trade fairs such as SMM, WindEnergy Hamburg, and INTERNORGA are meeting places for visitors from all over the world. In addition, there are numerous guest events on a wide range of topics, including aviation, mobility, and renewable energies. The portfolio of trade fairs and congresses is geared towards the economic clusters of the Hamburg metropolitan region. Hamburg Messe und Congress employs over 350 people and generated sales of around 92 million euros in 2025.

More information: [Trade fairs | Conferences | Events - Hamburg Messe und Congress](#)

Digital press kit

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[Digital Press Kit](#)

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