

Written message from the Federal Chancellor for SMM 2026

As the world's leading maritime industry event, this year's SMM is taking place at a time when international shipping and European shipbuilding face landmark decisions. Geopolitical tensions, fragile supply chains, increasing maritime security requirements and the path to climate neutrality make determination, innovativeness and close cooperation imperative.

Shipping is the lifeline of the global economy. It ensures our prosperity and supplies us with goods. To sum it up, no shipping means no shopping. Likewise, no shipbuilding means no shipping, as the prerequisites for modern, safe and sustainable shipping can only be brought about by an efficient and technologically leading shipbuilding industry. Germany and Europe have a strong maritime industry, excellent research and great innovativeness in this sector. We must use these strengths decisively because we will only be able to meet the demands of tomorrow's maritime industry by making greater use of digitalisation and artificial intelligence, more sustainable technologies, and efficient production and value-added chains.

SMM is the central international platform for turning innovations into market-ready solutions, concrete projects and commercial contracts. At the same time, the International Conference on Maritime Security & Defence, an important part of this trade fair, underlines the growing importance of maritime security. Safe shipping routes and resilient critical infrastructure are vital for free trade, stable supply chains and investment security. The close dialogue between industry, the security authorities and policymakers is thus of crucial importance.

I am pleased to have taken on the patronage of this year's SMM. As an outstanding location for the maritime industry, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg is the ideal setting for this trade fair. I hope that the exhibitors and visitors from all over the world will experience inspiring meetings, successful talks and game-changing ideas for the future of the maritime industry.