The ESPO Award on Social Integration of Ports has chosen the theme “Nature restoration projects in ports benefitting the local community” for the 15th edition of the competition, which will take place on 7 November at the Museum of Arts and History in Brussels.

The following 10 applications will be competing for the ESPO Award 2023: North Sea Port (Belgium- Netherlands), Guadeloupe Port Caraïbes (France), Port Network Authority of the Northern Central Tyrrhenian Sea – Port of Civitavecchia (Italy), Klaipėda State Seaport Authority (Lithuania), Port of Gdynia Authority (Poland), Port Authority of Cartagena (Spain), Port Authority of Ceuta (Spain), Port Authority of Sevilla (Spain), Port Authority of Vigo (Spain), and Shoreham Port (United Kingdom).

Since ports are often located in or near different precious natural areas, they strive to integrate the protection of biodiversity in all port operations, making it part of their license to operate. Over the years, ports in Europe have gained extensive experience with sustainable port operations and development. These sustainability efforts in ports are based on respecting and working with nature and habitat requirements already set out in European and national legislation, whilst striving to go beyond regulatory requirements.

The ESPO Award 2023 will go to the port managing body which has developed innovative ways to develop these new roles and combine port development with successfully protecting and restoring nature in and around the port area to the benefit of the citizens and local community. The winning project will be clearly demonstrate how nature protection and restoration efforts can be successfully combined with port development projects, and will be selected by an independent jury of international experts, under the Chairmanship of Dimitrios Theologitis, former Head of Unit of Ports and Inland Navigation in DG MOVE at the European Commission.

The Europe’s ports are nowadays at the service of economy, and society and an essential partner in the race to a net-zero and sustainable European economy and society., therefore it is more important than ever for ports to find ways to ensure that port development and activities, in particular those linked to achieving the net-zero goals and related energy policies, go hand in hand with the protection and enhancement of natural areas in and around ports.

More information:

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