



Evening conference

22 October 2026

17:00 - 18:30

The Belgian Maritime Sector: National Importance, Global Challenges



ROYAL HIGHER
INSTITUTE
for DEFENCE

Rear Admiral Tanguy BOTMAN (Commander of the Belgian Navy)

Capt. Marc NUYTEMANS (Chairman of the Royal Belgian Shipowners' Association)

*Prof. Dr Chris PEETERS (Chairman of the Policy Research Corporation
and Professor of Maritime Economics at the University of Antwerp)*

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference** hosted by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the **Royal Higher Institute for Defence** on **Thursday 22 October 2026** from **17:00 until 18:30**.

Belgium is one of Europe's most maritime-oriented countries. With its world-class ports, extensive merchant fleet, innovative industry and growing offshore sector, the maritime economy plays a crucial role in our country's prosperity, energy supply and international trade. At the same time, the sector is facing increasing geopolitical tensions, disruptions to global supply chains and stricter sustainability requirements. To address these challenges, international partners have also called upon the Belgian Navy and its renowned capabilities in the field of mine countermeasures.

In this context, the Belgium maritime sector stands at a critical crossroads. The consequences of conflicts along key shipping routes, the competition between great economic powers, the energy transition and the digitalisation of maritime activities require both the government and businesses to make strategic choices. The way in which Belgium and its maritime players respond to these developments will determine their competitiveness, resilience and international position in the years to come.

During this evening conference, we will examine the major challenges and opportunities facing the Belgian maritime sector. How can the Belgian ports, shipowners, Navy and logistics companies strengthen their strategic role in an increasingly complex world? What impact do global developments have on the maritime economic, environmental and safety interests of Belgium? How can our country tackle the transformation of maritime power balances and power projection in an innovative and sustainable manner?

To tackle this complex subject matter, we are delighted to welcome Rear Admiral Tanguy Botman (Commander of the Belgian Navy), Capt. Marc Nuytemans (Chairman of the Royal Belgian Shipowners' Association) and Prof. Dr Chris Peeters (Chairman of the Policy Research Corporation and Professor of Maritime Economics at the University of Antwerp). The conference will be moderated by Mr Filip Reyniers (Associate Researcher at the Centre for Security and Defence Studies).

This conference will be held **in Dutch and in French** at the **auditorium K.10.24 (room Peeters)** at **campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**) on **Thursday 22 October 2026 at 17:00**. At the auditorium, simultaneous interpretation will only be available in English. Please note that online participation will also not be possible.

Kindly register in advance at www.defence-institute.be. **Registration is required by Thursday 15 October 2026 at the latest.**

(Signed)

Baudouin COPPIETERS DE GIBSON, MSc Eng

Rear Admiral

Aide-de-Camp to the King

Director-general

Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16:30:	Welcome
17:00:	Conference and Q&A
18:30 – 19:30:	Reception

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