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CERAME-UNIE SHARES THE EUROPEAN SHIPPERS COUNCIL'S CONCERNS ABOUT CURRENT DISRUPTION IN GLOBAL TRADE DUE TO CONTAINER SHORTAGE

16 April 2021, Brussels – The ceramic industry is being affected by the unprecedented surge in freight transport prices and calls on the European Commission to ensure that EU producers continue to have access to fair and accessible shipping services.

The imbalances in supply and demand in maritime freight transport following the global Covid-19 pandemic have driven up the costs of shipping goods and disrupted global trade to an extraordinary degree.

The abrupt spike in maritime shipping costs is having a negative impact on the export of goods and the supply of raw materials across all European industries including ceramics. EU exporters of ceramic products struggle to secure their shipments and are obliged to pay increasing prices to dispatch their products overseas.

As a strong advocate for free and fair trade, Cerame-Unie calls on the Commission to monitor the disturbing developments in the shipping industry to ensure that fair conditions are restored and maintained. Investigations on the current behaviour of market players in the shipping industry have been initiated in the United States, South Korea as well as China. In the European Union, shipping lines are being regulated by the Consortium Block Exemption Regulation (CBER), which under these unprecedented circumstances may appear insufficient to efficiently oversee the market.

On 25 March 2021, the European Commission met with representatives from the shipping industry to exchange views on the current crisis. In this regard, Cerame-Unie would like to echo the request addressed to the EU Commissioners for Competition and Transport by the **European Shippers' Council** (ESC) as well as other EU and global associations, calling on the Commission to take prompt action to increase transparency and supervise the collaboration between different operators in the shipping industry to ultimately redress the current imbalances and prevent similar situations from occurring again in the future.