

Towards Future-proof Inland Waterway Transport in Europe

The Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the initiatives of both the European Commission and the European Parliament towards future-proof Inland Waterway Transport

Brussels, 06 July 2021

Recently, both the European Commission and the European Parliament launched initiatives to prepare inland waterway transport for the future.

On 24 June, the European Commission adopted the NAIADES III action plan “[Boosting future-proof European inland waterway transport](#)”. This initiative focusses on two core objectives, notably: shifting more freight transport to inland waterways, and setting the sector on an irreversible path to zero-emissions. Both objectives are underpinned by a paradigm shift towards further digitalisation, as well as accompanying measures to support the current and future workforce. The action plan indicates the importance of the [Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport](#) to achieve the objectives set. Finally, the inclusion of waterborne transport applications in the [EU Innovation Fund](#) are also highlighted in the initiative.

On 28 June, the TRAN Committee of the European Parliament adopted a report “Towards Future-proof Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) in Europe”. The report includes a basket of proposed measures, including the transition to zero-emission waterborne transport and the digitalisation and automation of waterborne transport. In addition, the report emphasizes the importance of modular construction of ships to provide flexibility, predictability and cost savings. Finally, the report recognises the importance of the Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport.

The Chairman of the Waterborne Technology Platform, Henk Prins, said “*Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) is an important mode of transport for Europe. At the same time, the sector still has great potential for expanding its share in cargo transport. By transforming the sector to a zero-emission mode of transport, combined with the implementation of digitalisation and automation, the further increase of the modal shift to IWT could be achieved*”. The European Waterborne Technology Platform focusses its efforts on waterborne transport: i.e. both maritime as well as inland waterway transport. We are pleased to see that in both initiatives the importance of Research, Development and Innovation is recognised, with a specific reference to the Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport in the framework of Horizon Europe. From the side of the Waterborne Technology Platform, we will continue our efforts to pave the way for a zero-emission, climate-resilient, digitalised, safe and competitive inland waterway transport sector in the EU, in accordance with the EU’s ambitions on the European Green Deal and the EU Digital Agenda”.

WATERBORNE TP has been set up as an industry-oriented Technology Platform to establish a continuous dialogue between all waterborne stakeholders, such as classification societies, shipbuilders, shipowners, maritime equipment manufacturers, infrastructure and service providers, universities or research institutes, and with the EU Institutions, including Member States (www.waterborne.eu). The members of Waterborne TP comprise members as well as associated members from both maritime and inland navigation countries, representing about 18 Member States. In addition, the Associations member of the Waterborne Technology Platform represent the broader waterborne sector throughout the entire EU.

Enquiries concerning how to join and become more closely involved in the “Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport” partnership or other activities of the Waterborne TP can be sent to: Jaap Gebraad, Executive-director Waterborne TP, jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu, tel: +32 493 835 626