



Waterborne TP and the Greek shipping sector strengthen the competitive edge of European Research, Development and Innovation together

Representatives of the Greek shipping sector met the Waterborne Technology Platform to discuss the opportunities and challenges of the sector

Brussels, 07 December 2022

International shipping is responsible for transporting approximately 90% of world trade and European shipowners control 40% of the global fleet. Greek shipowners control approximately 21% of the global ship tonnage. Thereby, the Greek shipping industry is of key importance to shape the future research, development and innovation agenda of the European waterborne transport sector. For this reason, on 05 December high level representatives of the Greek shipping industry met with a delegation of the Board of the Waterborne technology platform in Piraeus. On 06 December, the Waterborne Technology Platform organised a workshop for the Greek waterborne sector to discuss the Greek priorities regarding research, development and innovation.

The Waterborne Technology Platform (TP) is the European research and innovation platform for the waterborne industries, providing policy guidance to the European institutions regarding Research, Development and Innovation as well as the deployment of these innovations. The transition to a zero-emission, safe, secure, connected and automated, but at the same time, competitive waterborne transport sector was the key item during the both days.

The exchanges are especially of importance for the recently launched Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport, a cooperation between the European Commission and the Waterborne Technology Platform. This Partnership aims to develop and demonstrate zero-emission solutions deployable for all main ship types and services before 2030. The European Commission has committed 530 MEUR from Horizon Europe towards the Partnership, and the industry has committed over €3 BNEUR of investments in the period 2021 – 2030.

In a first reaction, Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: *“the exchanges regarding opportunities and challenges of the Greek waterborne transport sector, and the related needs for research, development and innovation conducted in the past two days are of significant importance to guide our future activities in Waterborne TP. With Greek shipowners controlling 21% of the global tonnage, and the Greek maritime technology sector being at the forefront of zero-emission technologies, the exchanges will provide guidance to ensuring that our research, development and innovation agenda will result in a European zero-emission, safe, secure, connected and automated waterborne sector. In addition, deployment of innovations has been extensively discussed, as well as the research, development and innovation needed to stay competitive internationally.*

Mr. Vasilis Korkidis, President of the Piraeus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), *welcomed the participants of the Waterborne Informal High Level Meeting, underlined the importance of Greek shipping in the global and European context and referred to the Greek maritime cluster. According to Mr. Korkidis, coordinating the interests of the Greek shipping sector with those companies active in supporting shipping, like maritime equipment manufacturers, is of fundamental importance. The vital role of Greek coastal shipping for the connectivity of the insular regions in Greece and the need to retrofit or replace the existing coastal shipping fleet, based on a pragmatic and viable approach is, according to Mr. Korkidis, of paramount importance. Finally, Mr. Korkidis concluded underlining the role*



of the Waterborne Technology Platform as a vehicle in bringing together Industry partners and advising the European Commission on the research priorities towards reaching implementable technological solutions.

Mr. Manolis St. Koutoulakis, Secretary General of Aegean and Island Policy, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, indicated “Greek shipping is a leader at global and European level in terms of vessels ownership, management and capacity. Besides that, waterborne transportation for Greece - domestically - plays a critical role for supply of goods and territorial cohesion for the islands. Especially short sea shipping and ferry/passenger shipping are entering to a new era and the need for renewal of the fleet but also improvement of their carbon-footprint are two factors that lead the Government’s decisions. In addition, blue growth is a fundamental element in addressing insularity related issues and boosting the development of our extended island network. In this context, we need answers for creating a realistic mechanism that will support the shipping industry to invest in new green technologies. The dialogue that opens now between the Greek maritime ecosystem and the Waterborne Technology Platform is going to enhance and accelerate visibility of the maritime transportation as an equal priority on research on EU levels, but at the same time will bring together research, academia and industry in the same pipeline of decisions and tangible results. Greek government is already investing in proof-of-concept projects exploiting funding from Cohesion Funds and RRF for that reason, and using Greek insularity as a test-bed for realistic solutions applied in practice”

Dr. Nikolaos Liapis, member of the Board of Directors, Hellenic Shortsea Shipowners Association, emphasized the importance of the development of European know-how not only in shipbuilding, but also in individual technological equipment and IT applications for shipping.

Mrs Elpi Petraki, Vice-President, Hellenic Shortsea Shipowners Association & President, Wista Hellas, pointed out that “the need for the development of tools by the European Union and the Member States to replace the Short Sea Shipping fleet with newer and greener ships is imperative. Along with safeguarding the competitiveness of the European shortsea shipping sector against third countries that do not apply regulations and new technologies”.

Mrs. Eleni Polychronopoulou, President Hemexpo, added “Whilst there can be no distortion in European competition, policymakers need to work in close cooperation with industry stakeholders to sustain a sector which remains a strategic part of European interests, including on matters of taxonomy and responsible financing. Together, we must create the conditions that will enable European shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers, especially SMEs, to play a full role in building a new generation of ships.”

Mr. Yannis Triphyllis, Executive Committee Member, Hellenic Chamber of Shipping, added that “Greek Shipping is by example efficiently transporting 20% of the world trade on bigger and younger ships than the world average vessel. However, our share of new buildings is much lower, at 5%. This is a result of economic slowdown and regulatory uncertainty. The estimated cost of greening maritime transport is in excess of \$1 trillion. The global consumer and citizens of the developed economies can expect higher costs of goods and transport for the same standard of living.

Mr. Antonios Venieris, President International Maritime Union in Greece, added: Vessels carry tons of cargoes but also tons of data and information about those cargoes, that are worth or save millions when analyzed correctly whilst minimizing the carbon footprint of the transportation of goods. Port agents, which we represent, do hold this information since they are the pivotal point of real time information flow between the vessel, the authorities, the terminal, the customs office and the rest of the logistic transportation chain. Therefore, emphasis through research and development should be given to the collection, analysis and optimized usage of this information, under a unified format, which will enable the instant exchange of vital information amongst all the supply chain participants.



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 19 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, Secretary General Waterborne TP, jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu, tel: +32 493 835 626

The Piraeus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) attempts to help set up a free, flexible, competitive and modern business environment which promotes the productive forces of the country and marks up the fields of commerce and industry as the engines that will lead to everlasting and sustainable economic growth (www.pcci.gr). At the same time, PCCI participates in the making of an economic policy aiming at creating a fair, reliable and stable tax system, at reducing red tape, making the public sector effective, and, more generally, creating the appropriate conditions for attracting and promoting Greek and foreign investment. In order to achieve this goal, PCCI intervenes daily with documented positions and proposes solutions by submitting memoranda, holding and attending meetings with representatives of all relevant bodies and organizations, government officials, members of parliament, local and regional authorities and political leaders. With the belief that the development of the city of Piraeus is directly linked to the wealth of the sea, one of the primary objectives of the Chamber is to upgrade the region as a shipping centre by bringing together the entire Maritime-Port Cluster in order to become a competitive magnet for international shipping. Moreover, through a series of actions, it promotes the improvement of extroversion of primary and secondary production of the country, focusing on the export of Greek products including supplying cruise ships and oceangoing vessels.

HEMEXPO – Hellenic Marine Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters – is a leading suppliers and exporters association for the shipping sector, representing Greek maritime technology specialists worldwide since 2014 (<http://hemexpo.gr/>). HEMEXPO brings together Greek companies that manufacture and export a comprehensive range of world class marine equipment and technical services used in the construction, conversion, maintenance and upgrading of ships and other marine structures.

The International Maritime Union in Greece is a non-profit professional Union established in 1922, recording for almost 100 years a dynamic course with constant and fertile presence to Maritime Industry (<https://dne.gr/>). The International Maritime Union represents today almost all Shipping Agencies who act as representatives of International Container Shipping Lines in Greek ports. Members of I.M.U also act as agents of Cruise Ships and Car Carriers. The Members of International Maritime Union provide mainly shipping agency services and combined transportation for import/export and in transit cargoes.

The Hellenic Chamber of Shipping is a legal entity incorporated under Public Law (governmental organisation) based in Piraeus (www.nee.gr). The Chamber is the official Advisor to the government on all shipping matters. It carries out its work in close co-operation with, and under the supervision of, the Ministry of Merchant Marine. Members are all vessels under the Greek flag.

The Hellenic Shortsea Shipowners Association (HSSA) operates since 1930 but it was officially found in 1940 under the name of “Mediterranean Cargo Vessels Shipowners Union” (<https://www.shortsea.gr/en/>). The special nature of the shortsea shipping in combination with the intense competition the Greek fleet received during this period, made the establishment of a dedicated association a necessity. Nowadays, HSSA is the oldest Shortsea Shipping associations in Europe accounting 75 years of uninterrupted operation.

WISTA Hellas is a non-profit association, established in Greece in 1993 for women at management level in the maritime, trade and logistics sectors (<https://wistahellas.gr>). WISTA Hellas promotes diversity and empowerment of women. To achieve these objectives, WISTA Hellas works towards building a strong inclusive community, addressing the existing gender gap in leadership positions, facilitating the exchange of contacts and experiences, and promoting business relationships. WISTA Hellas also supports continuing education as a means for professional development of its members and the younger generation.