



Finnish waterborne sector committed to driving innovations

Waterborne Technology Platform met with representatives of the Finnish waterborne transport sector, to discuss the needs for research, development and innovation, and next steps towards competitive, digital and zero-emission waterborne transport

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The Finnish maritime cluster comprises nearly 3,000 companies, from large multinationals to small micro-enterprises. While joint-stock companies represent the majority, with 1,800 businesses, there are also small companies consisting of sole traders, and several businesses that are not operating in the maritime cluster only but have activities in multiple sectors. The combined revenues of the Finnish maritime cluster were approximately EUR 11.7 billion in 2020. The maritime technology sector (shipyards and maritime equipment manufacturers) accounted for the largest share, followed by the waterborne transport companies and the port sector. As a competitive, digital and zero-emission sector is of strategic importance to Finland, representatives of the country's waterborne transport sector met with a delegation of the Waterborne Technology Platform on 29 – 30 May 2023.

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 competitive, digital and zero-emission waterborne transport sector was the key topic of discussion throughout the visit.

The discussions are of particular importance for the Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport, a co-operation between the European Commission and the Waterborne Technology Platform. This Partnership aims to develop and demonstrate zero-emission solutions for all main ship types and services before 2030. The European Commission has committed to investing up to EUR 530 million from Horizon Europe towards the Partnership, and the industry has committed to over EUR three billion of investments for the period 2021 – 2030.

Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: "Our meeting with the representatives of the Finnish waterborne transport sector has clarified our understanding of their opportunities and challenges in the transition to competitive, digital and zero-emission waterborne transport. The maritime cluster in Finland is an innovative cluster, with an impressive number of SMEs delivering new services to it. The need for research, development and innovation and the related challenges highlighted during our discussions here provide clear guidance to Waterborne TP's agenda in securing a truly competitive, digital, zero-emission waterborne transport sector."

Spyros Hirdaris, Associate Professor of Marine Technology, Aalto University, says "It was a pleasure for Aalto University to co-host the Waterborne TP Finland meeting. Radical creative research on future marine and arctic technology can solve environmental challenges, improve operational efficiency, and assist in the sustainable use of the ocean. Research combined with needed infrastructure offers possibilities for industry and other stakeholders to research, test and solve important challenges towards technology and service deployment."

Karno Tenovuo, CEO, Awake.AI, concluded: "When looking for much needed solutions for the zero emission waterborne transport future, SMEs with innovative, added value services are playing a key role in cross disciplinary work. Meanwhile they must choose projects wisely because of often limited



resources. There are plenty of opportunities to cooperate and SMEs are committed to driving innovations for sustainable and intelligent maritime logistics.”

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