

Research and Innovation shaping the future of the waterborne transport sector

In the framework of the LASTING project, the Waterborne Days Conference was kicked off with an award ceremony and signature of a new Memorandum of Understanding between leading organisations within the sector

Brussels, 26 September 2023

Day 1 of the Waterborne Days, an interactive two-day conference, brought together the European waterborne transport community to showcase the success of research projects co-funded by the European Union and to celebrate their contribution to the future of the European waterborne transport sector.

Mrs. Rosalinde van der Vlies, Director, Clean Planet, DG RTD – European Commission, said: *“With the objectives laid down in the European Green Deal, and specifically the objective to cut emissions by 55% by 2030, we have significantly increased the investments in research, development and innovation in the framework of Horizon Europe to accelerate the transition towards a zero-emission waterborne transport sector. The European Union has a unique waterborne transport sector, which is committed to develop and demonstrate disruptive solutions to eliminate CO₂ emissions, and water pollution. We have engaged in a coordinated and joined up approach on research, innovation and deployment with the private sector and the Member States to maintain and reinforce Europe’s global leadership in innovative, and green transport solutions.”*

During the event, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the framework of the LASTING project, bringing together experts across the sector to increase the impact and reach of European RD&I in waterborne transport. Participants engaged in insightful discussions on the potential of European funding opportunities to drive innovation and sustainability across different types of vessels, including inland waterway, long distance, offshore, cruise, short sea shipping and ferry.

Mr. Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General, Waterborne Technology Platform, added: *“Cooperation is key to achieve the objectives laid down in the European Green Deal. The first day of the Waterborne Days, attended by over 300 participants, showed not only the spirit of cooperation within the sector, but also highlighted innovative solutions for societal challenges. On 26 September, four projects have been granted a Waterborne Award for their outstanding innovations, and we are looking forward to having a next edition of the Waterborne Awards in 2025.”*

The Waterborne Awards 2023 recognised four outstanding European projects which have demonstrated significant impact, innovation, and capacity to be brought to the market. A panel of industry and institutional judges met to discuss over 30 submissions, from which four were selected.

The winners of the awards are:

- Environmental impact and climate change: [SeaTech](#) - The EU funded SeaTech consortium is developing two symbiotic ship engine and propulsion innovations, which, when combined, will lead to a great increase of fuel efficiency and radical emission reductions. The innovations will be characterized by high retrofitability, maintainability and offer ship owners a return-on-investment of 400% due to fuel and operational cost savings;
- Innovation: [iTERMINALS4.0](#) - iTerminals 4.0 project addresses study and pilot deployment in real operations at European port-container terminals of Industry 4.0 technologies within the



container-handling sector. A wide range of transversal benefits are expected from the digital transformation of container port operations in terms of operational efficiency increase, safety and (cyber) security improvement, costs reduction and carbon footprint decrease.

- Economic Viability - [AEGIS](#) - The AEGIS consortium will design Europe's next generation sustainable and highly competitive waterborne logistics system comprising more autonomous ships and automated cargo handling. Standardized cargo units and digital connectivity are key elements in the AEGIS system.
- Excellence award: [Orcelle Horizon](#) - The project is taking a 360-degree perspective on wind as main propulsion. This project combines improvements to simulation frameworks and wing systems by supporting the development of two physical demonstrator vessels. Both RoRo vessels are set to transport cars and other cargo, with significant emission reductions, across the world.

This event was co-organised with the support of the European Commission.

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 LASTING project seeks to broaden engagement of the waterborne transport sector in European RD&I activities, by developing and implementing a long-lasting communication campaign that increases stakeholder engagement in the sector and thereby the impact of European waterborne transport RD&I. This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101006923