

Research and Innovation key for a sustainable competitiveness of the waterborne value chain

The Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the crucial role of research and innovation in the transition pathway for the EU mobility industrial ecosystem

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Without waterborne transport, Europe would not be able to function. According to the [report on the transition pathway for the EU mobility industrial ecosystem](#) published yesterday, as more than 80% of the EU's external trade and 40% of the EU's internal trade are carried by sea and EU shipping controls 39.5% of the world fleet, waterborne transport has a strategic dimension. Europe's maritime technology sector comprises some 300 shipyards and more than 28,000 maritime equipment manufacturers and technology suppliers. The EU has all the necessary ingredients for a flourishing and competitive waterborne transport sector, supplying Europe with among others energy and food as well as raw materials for its industries.

The report highlights the crucial role of the transition to clean shipping as an opportunity for the EU waterborne industry to regain sustainable competitiveness. This will require significant investments in new technology development in a market where the EU already plays a frontrunner role in RD&I. It will also lead to new opportunities in terms of fleet renewal and retrofitting activities (i.e. energy efficiency improvements, conversion of ships to alternative fuels). The waterborne transport sector is involved in a complete transformation especially focusing on the production and integration of innovative zero-emission, air pollution control, noise reduction, sustainable, digital, and automated/autonomous technologies as the cornerstones of the industry's global competitiveness.

Another important line of innovation in the sector is through the digitalisation of ships and ship systems. Further RD&I activities regarding the digital transformation are recommended in the report

Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: *"The items identified in the transition pathway for the EU mobility industrial ecosystem clearly identify the need and the significant added value of EU research and innovation activities and the deployment of these innovations. The digital and green transition will be the cornerstones of our activities for the coming period. These activities should benefit the entire waterborne transport ecosystem to increase competitiveness at the global level. Only this way the EU will be able to secure the fundamental role of a European waterborne transport sector."*

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 21 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