



An innovative European waterborne transport sector driving our green, digital and resilient future

EU Member States agreed on conclusions regarding 'A competitive European industry driving our green, digital and resilient future', recognising the crucial role of innovation as well as the waterborne industry for the EU

Brussels, 30 May 2024

On 24 May 2024, EU Member States adopted so-called [Council Conclusions on 'A competitive European industry driving our green, digital and resilient future'](#). These Council Conclusions are specifically important for the European waterborne transport sector for two reasons. First, the EU Member States requested the European Commission to develop a new strategy that supports the European maritime industry, which is vital for the EU's strategic interests, in the digital and green transition and that encompasses all the dimensions of the sector's competitiveness.

Secondly, the Member States acknowledge the crucial role of world-leading industrial innovation, excellent research, including fundamental research, and technology development to strengthen Europe's scientific and technological bases by achieving a European research area and driving European competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability and to achieve the Union's policy ambitions. In addition, Member States encourage cooperation between industry (including SMEs), research and technology organisations, higher education institutions, funding agencies and relevant public authorities to boost innovation and accelerate market uptake, as well as industrial and commercial scale up of innovation.

Finally, the need to ensure a better connection between innovation and industrial initiatives, building on the New European Innovation Agenda is emphasized by Member States and in that regard Member States underline the importance of drawing on existing mechanisms and partnerships, such as **European Technology Platforms**, Joint Undertakings and other **Horizon Europe partnerships**.

The Waterborne Technology Platform (TP) is the **European Technology 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. Furthermore, the Waterborne TP coordinates the private side of the **Horizon Europe Partnership** on [Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport \(ZEWT\)](#) with the European Commission. Currently representing 124 members, from 20 European Member States and four other European Countries, the Waterborne TP has a significant footprint in the European Union.

These Conclusions are specifically relevant for the implementation of the [Long-term Strategy](#) of the Waterborne Technology Platform, which is centred around Technology Leadership. Technology leadership means being a frontrunner in enabling transformation, which entails developing and deploying competitive solutions to mitigate climate change, providing the capability to become climate resilient, eliminate all harmful pollutants, improve working conditions and create new jobs, and stimulate economic prosperity. Progressing on the green and digital ambitions is one of the priorities of the European waterborne transport sector. However, different segments might have different challenges and opportunities, and related research, development, and innovation needs. Specifically for this reason, the Waterborne Technology Platform will soon start to update its missions and visions towards 2050, so as to ensure a coordinated approach towards research, development and innovation.



Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, added: *“These Conclusions are extremely important for the waterborne transport sector. First, since the specific inclusion of the maritime industry comes at a crucial moment in time. Secondly, the essential role of research, development and innovation, and the unique position of European Technology Platforms and Horizon Europe Partnerships, offers a solid base to start implementing our Long-term Strategy. This implementation will be based on broad consultations, taking the input from all different sectors of the waterborne transport ecosystem into account. The Conclusions also lay the foundations for a proper, fact-based discussion on the next European Research and Innovation Programme, Framework Programme 10, and its related budget needs”.*

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 20 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