

## Technology leadership at the heart of Framework Programme 10

Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the report of the European Commission's Framework Programme 10 Advisory Group, calling for technology leadership.

Brussels, 17 October 2024

On 16 October, the Advisory Group on Framework Programme 10 published its report "[Align, Act, Accelerate: Research, Technology and Innovation to boost European Competitiveness](#)". Building on these recommendations, the independent experts are calling for an increased, more focused and protected budget. According to their analysis, this investment would position Europe as a leader in international R&I collaboration and governance.

The European waterborne sector is uniquely positioned to contribute to the objectives as laid down in the report. The sector consists of classification societies, shipbuilders, shipowners (both maritime and inland navigation), equipment manufacturers, ports, infrastructure and service providers (e.g. dredging), universities and research institutes. As highlighted in the recent [report by Mario Draghi](#) for the waterborne sector, examples of key targets and priorities in research, development and innovation are: autonomous shipping, climate proof waterway vessels and infrastructure, and offshore wind platform technologies. These examples show the broad scope of industrial base and activities in the European waterborne ecosystem. Finally, at the heart of the sector are the large number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), critical in their contribution to the European economy, and to the innovation activities of the waterborne ecosystem.

All segments of the European waterborne sector play a key role, and the functioning of the entire sector will be pivotal to ensure that it remains a global leader and offers quality jobs. Technology leadership means being at the forefront in enabling transformation, for example developing and deploying competitive solutions to mitigate climate change, provide the capability to become climate resilient, eliminate all harmful pollutants, improve working conditions and create new jobs, and stimulate a resilient, competitive and prosperous future.

The report focuses on research, development and innovation to achieve technology leadership. In addition, it highlights the need to consider new ways of involving and committing industry for the smoothest path from idea to demonstration, upscaling and deployment. Furthermore, partnerships, as currently existing, should further leverage cash and in-kind contributions from industry, the need for the deployment and use of results, and the needs for reinforced openness to new players, in terms of sectors, scientific disciplines and geographies. The latter is in line with the operational principles of the [Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport](#) since its start in 2021.

Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: *"We warmly welcome the emphasis on technology leadership in the report, which is in line with the main theme of our long-term strategy. The report highlights not only the important role of research, development and innovation, but also the indispensable link with demonstration, upscaling and deployment. All these elements need to be taken care of in an integrated approach, together with the public and private stakeholders of the European waterborne sector and taking into account its specificities, including the large number of SMEs. Furthermore, we can fully support the call for an increased, more focused and protected budget. However, technology leadership requires a dedicated initiative for the waterborne sector. Simplification of instruments does not necessarily correlate with the diversity of this sector, nor with the main theme of the report, competitiveness."*



**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](http://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](mailto:jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu), tel: +32 493 835 626