



## **European waterborne partnership is key for a resilient, competitive and sustainable future**

Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the Opinion of the Partnership Knowledge Hub on European Partnerships under the future EU Framework Programme

Brussels, 13 January 2025

On Friday 10 January 2025, the [Opinion of the Partnership Knowledge Hub on European Partnerships under the future EU Framework Programme](#) was published by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (European Commission). The Partnership Knowledge Hub was established to advise the European Commission in the implementation of the strategic coordinating process for EU R&I partnerships, and to provide a forum for coordination and cooperation with Member States and related stakeholders. The report underlines the approach of the Waterborne Technology Platform towards the [Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport](#), as well as the need for a future Partnership.

The European waterborne sector includes all relevant actors, including shipyards and equipment manufacturers, shipowners (both maritime and inland navigation), ports, classification societies, infrastructure and service providers, and the academic and research communities. This highly interdependent ecosystem can achieve a resilient, competitive and sustainable future only when all actors are unified and working together towards common goals. The same counts for European Partnerships, where, according to the report, Partnerships can only achieve their and society's objectives if they are built on trust and mutual understanding.

According to the report, Partnerships in the future EU Framework Programme (FP10), should ensure a strategic relevance, building upon and further strengthening the current approach to European Partnerships. A future Partnership for the European waterborne sector, is critical to ensure [a resilient, competitive and sustainable future of the sector](#). Building blocks of the strategic approach of a future Partnership will be enshrined in the upcoming Clean Industrial Deal, the [industrial maritime strategy and the comprehensive EU port strategy](#).

The report also points out some areas for improvement. Whereas the current Partnership landscape is often focussed on (high Technology Readiness Levels) research and innovation activities, the new set should include the full cycle – from basic research to large demonstration projects and beyond to market uptake and policy uptake in order to improve both results and ultimate impacts. Continuing the “team Europe” approach whereas the European Commission, Member States and Associated Countries and the sector will jointly steer the Partnership to achieving its full objectives, remains key.

Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: “We welcome the report of the Partnership Knowledge Hub on the relevance and the rationale of future European Partnerships. The report is fully in line with the vision of the Waterborne Technology Platform, which is coordinating the private side of the Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport. In this Partnership, half of the members are from the private sector, and the other half from the research world, which is the mix needed to best understand societal challenges. However, as indicated in the report, deployment of these innovations is and will remain key to achieve strategic objectives. In the European waterborne sector, this can only be done in the context of an ecosystem, from infrastructure, sufficient quantities of alternative fuels and electricity, to the installation of new technologies on board vessels. The “team Europe” approach will remain indispensable, and we are looking forward to shaping the content of a future Partnership together with the European Commission Services, Member States and Associated Countries, our members and the broader European waterborne 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](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 18 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