



Ecosystems at the core of the European Clean Industrial Deal

Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the Clean Industrial Deal, calling for coordinated research, development, innovation and deployment of innovations

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On 26 February 2025, the European Commission published the [Clean Industrial Deal: a joint roadmap for competitiveness and decarbonisation](#). This document outlines concrete actions to turn decarbonisation into a driver of growth for European industries, including the clean-tech sector. The main elements of the Clean Industrial Deal are centred around 1) affordable energy; 2) boosting demand for clean products; 3) financing the clean transition; 4) circularity and access to materials; 5) action on a global scale and 6) skills and quality jobs. According to the initiative, it is essential to move beyond traditional silo solutions and look at the value chain to ensure a thriving new European industrial ecosystem of growth and prosperity.

The EU needs to increase its annual investments in energy, industrial innovation and scale-up and transport system by around EUR 480 billion compared to the previous decade. It is proposed that the planned Competitiveness Fund will offer strong support to innovative industry for sustainable investment in the next Multiannual Financial Framework and a one-stop-shop simplified access to EU fundings. The European Commission will act to 1) strengthen EU-level funding, 2) leverage private investment and 3) enhance the effectiveness of state aid in support to the Clean Industrial Deal's objectives as well as that of other national support schemes. Research and Innovation (R&I) is a key enabler for promoting the next generation of clean tech, clean energy and decarbonised manufacturing in the EU. Deployment of innovations will be critical to achieve a competitive, resilient and sustainable future. This includes opportunities offered via the EU Innovation Fund, as well as Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI).

Dialogue and coordinated action at EU scale for investments and scaling-up will be essential, including cooperation with the Member States. The European Commission is inviting industry to exercise bottom-up leadership and targeted alignment to deliver tangible results that could be scalable at European level. The actions of this joint roadmap for decarbonisation and competitiveness for European industry will ensure that there is a sustainable future for manufacturing in Europe – economically, environmentally and socially.

This approach is key to ensure a resilient, competitive, and sustainable future, ensuring that the EU's waterborne transport sector remains a global leader and delivers quality jobs. The waterborne sector is dynamic, featuring a diverse array of public and private stakeholders. 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. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) form the largest part of the EU waterborne sector and play a key role in the sector and the European economy. The various stakeholder groups offer a wide range of services, trades and products. Only together can the highly interdependent ecosystem of the waterborne sector achieve a resilient, competitive and sustainable future



Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General, Waterborne Technology Platform, said: “An ecosystem approach is critical to ensure policy objectives are achieved. The waterborne sector is a highly diverse and interlinked ecosystem. Strategic initiatives like the [Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport](#) have ensured alignment of agendas, resources, and efforts among sectors and businesses, including SMEs that dominate in the field, in addition to pledges of additional resources for research, dissemination, capacity building, and general sensibilisation. One major achievement of the partnership is seen in the capacity-building of all actors through knowledge, technological solutions, and co-creation. Furthermore, it acts as a catalyst for investments, with the European Commission's contribution generating six times more investments in the sector. This partnership offers a unique stepping stone to achieve the objectives of the European Clean Industrial Deal, delivering tangible results scalable at European level also in the long term.”

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 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, tel: +32 493 835 626