

Fostering research, development and innovation of batteries for the waterborne transport sector

The Batteries European Partnership Association (BEPA) and Waterborne Technology Platform sign a Joint Declaration which underscores both player's firm commitment to working on the future of electrified waterborne transport.

Brussels, 25 November 2022

In an effort to develop batteries suitable for deployment in the waterborne transport sector, the Waterborne Technology Platform and the Batteries European Partnership Association (BEPA) have formally signed a Joint Declaration on 17th November 2022, during the Transport Research Arena (TRA) conference in Lisbon, Portugal. The said declaration formalises the cooperation between the two Partnerships.

Climate change mitigation is amongst today's most vibrant and pressing topics. As stated by António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General at the high-level opening of COP27, "We need all hands on deck for faster, bolder climate action."

Waterborne transport moves nearly 90% of all international trade, more than 75% of external EU trade, and 40% of the internal EU trade. Undeniably, the sector is of strategic relevance to a functional society. Yet, waterborne transport is also responsible for around 13% of total EU transport emissions. Globally, waterborne transport emits over one billion tons of CO₂, which accounts for 2-3% of total GHG emissions. Accordingly, the European Commission and the European waterborne transport sector have joined forces forming the Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport and increasing the development and uptake of zero-emission solutions for and by the European waterborne transport sector.

"There is a great potential that can be unlocked through specific R&I focused on battery technology for the maritime sector to improve the performance and functioning of such systems" commented Dr Edel Sheridan, who represents Europe's research organisations in the BEPA Executive Board. "In particular we see potential for valuable collaboration in research to address this sector's needs, but also to use synergies in future applications, for example, regarding fast charging."

Electrification of the waterborne transport sector, besides the shift from fossil fuels to sustainable alternative fuels, will be a significant step to catalyse the transition to a zero-emission mode of transport. Batteries which take into account the specificities of the waterborne transport sector are crucial in this transition.

Both BEPA and the Waterborne Technology Platform have partnered with the European Commission in dedicated co-programmed European Partnerships to foster research in the battery and waterborne value chains, respectively. This declaration will ensure that the research priorities are aligned, avoiding duplication and creating synergies whenever possible.

In a first reaction, the Chairman of the Waterborne Technology Platform, Eero Lehtovaara, said "As a diversified sector – in terms of ship size, ship types and voyage distances – waterborne transport will be dependent on various types of energy carriers to become a zero-emission mode of transportation. Batteries will be a key enabler to store green electrical energy to offer such zero-emission operation. I am very pleased about the cooperation agreement between BEPA and the Waterborne Technology Platform. This is essential to jointly set the next targets for research, development and innovation for the waterborne transport sector"

“With our common goal of decarbonization, driven by the European Green Deal, we see the battery technology as an increasingly important sector to waterborne transport contributing to this goal,” added Franz Geyer, member of BEPA’s Executive Board and leader of BEPA’s Working Group on Mobility Applications “There is a huge variety of powertrain solutions for fully electric boats (sport boats, ferries, etc.) and hybrid solutions (e.g., Vessels, cruise ships), for example, driven by a Fuel Cell and dynamic positioning which can benefit from the increased use of batteries.” He added “there is significant rapid growth of companies building the battery systems for all kind of ships, in particular in the Nordic regions of Europe”.

Together, Batteries European Partnership Association (BEPA) and Waterborne Technology Platform will contribute methodologically towards developing activities that will foster research, development and innovation of batteries for an electrified and sustainable waterborne transport sector.

The Batteries European Partnership Association (BEPA) is the international non-profit making association (AISBL) representing the private-side of the BATT4EU Partnership. It gathers the European battery community willing to contribute to the ambitious upcoming Research & Innovation Batteries Partnership under Horizon Europe. The main activity of BEPA is thus to provide input and advice to the European Commission in order to contribute to the identification of priorities of research and innovation activities and the definition of call topics to be included in the Horizon Europe Work Programmes.

For more information about opportunities to become a member of the BEPA community and give first-hand contribution to the future of a sustainable European battery value chain, please visit <https://bepassociation.eu/> or contact: Elisabetta Frisaldi, Tel: +32 (0) 2 743 29 80 .

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 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, tel: +32 493 835 626