

## The EU: from maritime actor to sea power

The Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the paper published by the Analysis and Research team of the Council of the European Union, underlining the importance for action to ensure the EU will ensure maritime strategic autonomy as soon as possible

Brussels, 20 February 2023

International shipping is responsible for transporting approximately 90% of world trade and European-based maritime shipping companies control around 36% of the global fleet. The European maritime technology sector is a global leader in high-technology shipbuilding and green shipping technologies. European companies supply almost half of global maritime equipment and have developed and designed the majority of the world fleets' power systems. European ports are not only essential for moving goods around, they also constitute energy hubs for conventional and renewable energies. And finally, 400 million passengers embark and disembark in European ports every year. Thereby, the European waterborne transport sector is of key importance the EU.

Because of the strategic importance of the European waterborne transport sector, oceans and seas, the Analysis and Research Team (ART) of the Council of the European Union published a paper on 16 February 2023 called "The EU: from maritime actor to sea power". In this paper, the ART calls for a number of urgent actions, including:

- the need to establish a balance between harvesting and protecting the oceans;
- the need to ensure a greater commonality of vision amongst EU Member States on how to defend and promote the EU maritime interests.

Going more into detail, the paper explains the need to ensure EU maritime strategic autonomy, focussing on the need to enhance control over shipping routes and ports, as well as having the domestic industrial capacity to build and step up the production of ships. Research capabilities and maritime knowledge are seen as crucial assets to ensure strategic autonomy.

In a first reaction, Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: *"the urgent need to ensure EU maritime strategic autonomy was one of the key outcomes of a high-level meeting between private and public stakeholders at EU level in 2022, and this will be further discussed in September 2023. The paper published by ART is very timely, and clearly underlines the need for urgent action. European-based research capabilities and maritime knowledge, are crucial assets to ensure that the European waterborne transport sector remains a frontrunner, not only concerning the transition to zero-emission waterborne transport, but certainly also in digitalisation. The result will be that research development and innovation can be used to its full potential to the benefit of EU's strategic autonomy.*

**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