

Long-term competitiveness of the EU: looking beyond 2030

The Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the long-term view on competitiveness published by the European Commission, emphasizing the importance of research, development and innovation.

Brussels, 20 March 2023

European businesses are engines of our society, creating employment, innovation and prosperity. Competitiveness and productivity are essential requirements for businesses to flourish. The Waterborne transport sector is at the heart of the European economy. 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 waterborne transport sector is of key importance for the EU.

To foster the future of Europe's competitiveness, the European Commission [proposes](#) to work along nine mutually reinforcing priorities. Accompanying these priorities and, in parallel, the European Commission will work actively towards a regulatory framework to facilitate growth. One of the priorities identified by the European Commission is Research and Innovation. *For the EU industry to remain competitive, it needs to accelerate the pace of innovation, notably for the green and digital transitions and the sectors that are also shaping the economy and society of the future. Public-private partnerships and research, development and innovations support measures including under Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) are key to de-risk innovation*, according to the European Commission. As a next step, the European Council and the European Parliament are invited to endorse the priorities identified by the European Commission and review progress on a regular basis.

Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: *"Improving competitiveness by means of strategic research, development and innovation is one of the main priorities of the Waterborne Technology Platform. Public-private partnerships are key to ensure a coordinated, joint approach to developing disruptive solutions and a catalyst of investments. For example, in the framework of the Co-Programmed Partnership on Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport (2021 – 2030), the investments made by the sector are six times the investments made by the EU. Technology leadership will be essential to maintain Europe's position as the worldwide frontrunner in the development and implementation of innovative technologies and solutions, today and 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 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