



Dutch waterborne sector encompasses key players for the transition towards a resilient, competitive, and sustainable waterborne sector

Waterborne Technology Platform met with representatives of the Dutch waterborne sector to discuss RD&I building blocks ensuring future success

Brussels, 12 November 2024

The waterborne sector in the Netherlands consists of more than 12,000 companies creating €18.5 billion in added value, with employment amounting to some 167,000 jobs. The indirect added value represents an additional €4.3 billion and 90.000 jobs¹. The shipping industry, major ports, the world's largest dredging fleet, the largest European inland waterway fleet, the third-largest shipbuilding industry in the Europe Union (in terms of number of ships) – including a prestigious yacht-building sector – offshore, fisheries, the water sports industry, shipping finance, legal advisors, insurers, maritime education and research, a modern Royal Navy, equipment suppliers and service industries: together they all form one waterborne network.

The Waterborne Technology Platform (TP) and the Dutch representatives of the waterborne transport sector met in Amsterdam on 12 November 2024. The discussions are of particular importance for the implementation of the [long term strategy](#) of the Waterborne Technology Platform, which is centred around Technology Leadership. One of the main conclusions of the meeting was that cooperation is key to achieve the objectives of a resilient, competitive and sustainable waterborne sector. Pooling together the experience, expertise and resources from both the public and private stakeholders of the waterborne sector is thereby of utmost importance. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to step up a common and systematic approach as regards to deployment of innovations.

Eero Lehtovaara, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterborne TP, said: *“Our meeting with the representatives of the Dutch waterborne sector provided insights into the opportunities and challenges of this important waterborne nation. Whilst the transition to zero-emission waterborne transport is a priority for all, a coordinated and joint approach towards research, development and innovation was emphasized as key. Furthermore, to be able to timely meet the environmental objectives, a joint and targeted approach towards deployment of innovations is needed. Certainly, when considering that small and medium-sized enterprises form the largest part of the waterborne sector. A coordinated approach towards research, development, innovation and the deployment of innovations will be key to achieve a sustainable and competitive European waterborne sector.”*

Marjolein van Noort, Vice-chair of the WTP Board of Directors and Head of EU representation at the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners added: *“The Netherlands has a strong short sea position in European waters. The maritime energy transition can bring about not only a zero-emission industry, but it can also boost Europe's energy security. In order to get there, we need upscaling of clean fuel production, proven green technologies and adequate port infrastructure to accommodate zero emission waterborne transport. Additionally, the investments needed to accelerate the energy transition requires optimal cooperation within the Dutch and European waterborne sector.”*

¹ [The Dutch maritime cluster | NL Flag](#)



Theresia Hacksteiner, member of the Waterborne TP Board and Executive Director European Inland Waterway Transport Platform concluded: *“Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) obviously plays a pivotal role in decarbonising the European transport. This has been particularly recognised by the industry and the policy makers in the Netherlands, the country with the highest share of IWT and biggest fleet in Europe. Shifting freight and passenger flows to IWT per se implies decarbonisation of transport, given the low GHG emissions from this sector. To improve the already positive emission record, the IWT sector is looking into new technologies in terms of vessels and alternative fuels. Some of them have been showcased at the meeting and the sector is committed to move towards zero-emission. This however requires the right policy framework and tailor-made funding that fits this SME characterised 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). 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

Please visit www.kvnr.nl/en for more information on the **KVNR**.

Please visit <https://www.inlandwaterwaytransport.eu/> for ore information on the **European Inland Waterway Transport Platform** (EIWTP).