



Port Authority of Bilbao to join the Waterborne Technology Platform

The Port Authority of Bilbao joins the Waterborne Technology Platform, further strengthening the participation of port actors in the coordinated approach towards research, development, innovation and its deployment

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The Waterborne Technology Platform (TP), has received and warmly welcomes the application for membership by the Port Authority of Bilbao. The Waterborne Technology Platform provides policy guidance to the European institutions towards research, development, innovation and its deployment, and coordinates the private side of the [Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport Partnership](#). Besides the activities in the framework of this partnership, the Waterborne TP has working groups dealing with all other elements of ships & shipping, as well as blue economy activities and ports & logistics.

The waterborne sector is dynamic, featuring a diverse array of public and private stakeholders. These stakeholders range from classification societies, shipbuilders, and shipowners (both maritime and inland navigation) to equipment manufacturers, ports, infrastructure and service providers (e.g. dredging), as well as universities and research institutes. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) form the largest part of the EU waterborne sector and play a crucial role in the sector and the European economy. The various stakeholder groups offer a wide range of services, trades and products. For example, the global fleet can be categorized by different ship types and services, classified according to power requirements and autonomy. Further distinctions are made between liner and tramp shipping and their business models, as well as between retrofitting existing vessels and building new ones. Furthermore, the ecosystem is highly interdependent. Taking these characteristics into account is essential to develop and deploy innovations, including zero-emission solutions, for all segments of the sector.

Recently, the Waterborne Technology Platform has updated its [Strategic Research Agenda](#), laying down the mission and visions of the working groups with a timeline of 2040 and 2050. In the area of “Ports & Logistics” the research activities will focus on port operations, digital and green maritime and hinterland corridors as well as port infrastructure.

Iván Jiménez Aira, President of the Bilbao Port Authority said: *‘It is a great honour for us as a port to join this dynamic community that is driving innovation and sustainability in the maritime and inland waterway sectors. We firmly believe that ports have a crucial role to play in the future of sustainable transport and decarbonising the logistics chain. Ports are becoming energy hubs, with an increasing number of ports working on decarbonisation projects involving OPS and alternative fuels. At Bilbao Port, one of the major ports of the Atlantic Arc and the Atlantic Corridor, we are implementing our BilbOPS project, which is establishing us as a sustainability and innovation frontrunner at EU level. By participating in this platform, we aim to actively contribute to developing new solutions that will shape tomorrow's maritime industry. We are eager to collaborate with fellow members, exchange ideas, and share best practices. Together, we can accelerate the transition towards greener, smarter, and more resilient waterborne transport.’*

Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General, Waterborne TP, added: *“The Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the application for membership by the Port Authority of Bilbao, further strengthening our working group Ports & Logistics. In addition, the Port of Bilbao’s contributions will also help shape our broader research agendas, as the waterborne sector is a highly interdependent ecosystem. Following the recent update of our Strategic Research Agenda, we are currently detailing our Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs). These documents include the technological roadmaps outlining the research,*



development and innovation needs to achieve our objectives for 2040 and 2050. The SRIAs will provide essential input for the framework programme starting in 2028, and for related developments, such as the upcoming industrial maritime and port strategies.”

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