

***Zero-emission waterborne transport: "A sector ready to deliver"
The need for a co-programmed partnership in the framework of Horizon Europe***

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In 2018, 134 million tons of CO₂ or 13% of the total EU transport emissions were emitted by ships visiting European ports. On a global scale, shipping counts for 2 to 3% of total GHG emissions. If shipping would be a country, it would be the 6th biggest GHG emitter in the world. If no actions are taken, emissions from ships are expected to increase even further, up to 250% by 2050. In comparison, direct emissions from aviation account for about 3% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions and more than 2% of global emissions. If global aviation was a country, it would rank in the top 10 emitters.

Confronted with this major societal challenge, the European waterborne transport sector is committed to transform waterborne transport (both shipping and inland navigation) into a zero-emission mode of transport, from 2030 onwards. By 2030, the sector aims at building zero-emission shortsea ships and inland barges, whilst by 2050, it aims at making any ship types operating in any ship trades zero-emission.

With this ambition, the European waterborne transport sector actually goes beyond the Initial Strategy on GHG for ships from the International Maritime Organisation (adopted in April 2018), since this strategy merely aims at reducing the total annual GHG emissions from international shipping by at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008. In addition, this ambition is fully in line with the European Commission's long-term strategy for a climate neutral society by 2050 (Communication "A Clean Planet for All") and the European Green Deal of Commission President von der Leyen.

To implement its zero-emission ambition, the waterborne sector in Europe will need to make significant investments in research, development and innovation (RDI), beyond the investments already made by the European waterborne transport sector today. These investments will need to be made in the coming 5 to 10 years taking into account that the average lifetime of ships is at least 20 years.

In a first reaction, SEA Europe's Secretary General, Christophe Tytgat, said:

"The only suitable way to accelerate the European waterborne transport sector in its ambition to deliver on zero-emission waterborne transport, is to grant the sector a co-programmed partnership in the framework of Horizon Europe. Partnerships within other sectors such as "Clean Skies 2", Shift to Rail" or "European Green Vehicles Initiative" have certainly provided this leverage. This is even more important for waterborne transport where we can see potential solutions, but as a diverse sector employing unique and diverse technologies, it is essential to focus our R&I efforts if we are to achieve the vision of zero emission ships within ten years",m says Christophe Tytgat.

I realize that the waterborne transport sector has too often been criticised of either back-tracking on environmental issues or of not being ambitious enough. However, today SEA Europe – together with the Waterborne Technology Platform – is fully committed to transform waterborne transport into a zero-emission mode of transport and thereby to go beyond existing international obligations. It is of utmost importance that the European Commission and Member States grant a partnership for zero-emission waterborne transport in the framework of Horizon Europe, particularly at a time that climate change is so high on the political agenda, that youngsters are protesting in the streets and that the sector itself is willing and committed to deliver. Moreover, the partnership will ensure European coherence regarding the transition towards zero-emission waterborne transport, since the key role Member States play in policies and regulations for the maritime and inland waterway transport sector.

A co-programmed partnership for zero-emission waterborne transport is therefore a must for Europe's waterborne transport sector, not only to deliver on its climate and environmental ambitions but also to boost Europe's global maritime competitiveness and innovative leadership", Mr Tytgat concluded.

Background Note: *SEA Europe represents close to 100% of the European shipbuilding industry in 16 nations, encompassing the production, maintenance, repair and conversion of all types of ships and floating structures, commercial as well as naval, including the full supply chain with the various producers of maritime systems, equipment material, and services.*

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