

Research, development and innovation at the heart of the European Ocean Pact

Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the European Ocean Pact, focusing on developing, scaling-up and deploying solutions for a competitive and sustainable blue economy.

Brussels, 09 June 2025

On 05 June 2025, the European Commission published the [European Ocean Pact](#). This comprehensive strategy focuses on better protecting the ocean, promoting a thriving blue economy and supporting the well-being of people living in coastal areas. It brings together the European Union's policies and actions related to the ocean and creates a unified and coordinated plan for managing the ocean. It is built around six priorities, notably: 1) restoring ocean health and productivity, 2) boosting the sustainable competitiveness of the blue economy, 3) supporting coastal and island communities, 4) advancing ocean research, knowledge and innovation, 5) enhancing maritime security and resilience and 6) strengthening EU Ocean diplomacy and international ocean governance.

Developing, scaling-up and deploying solutions for a competitive and sustainable blue economy are at the heart of the document. This includes the significant role of start-ups and scale ups which develop key blue economy innovations. The pact puts an emphasis on commitment, innovation and collaboration across all levels, including globally. The actions proposed in the Ocean Pact are based on four key principles: a source-to-sea approach on tackling pollution; a precautionary principle; a science-based approach to policy decision; and an ecosystem-based approach.

As regards boosting the sustainable blue economy, actions envisaged will focus on decarbonisation and scaling up innovation, as well as fast-tracking the deployment of clean blue technologies. A mix of public funding, private investment, enabling regulation, skills development, knowledge sharing, research and innovation, and effective maritime spatial planning is essential to achieve the objectives of the Pact. Further actions to support the digitalisation of maritime operations, investing in green technologies, and fostering green skills development will play a central role in ensuring the long-term sustainability and adaptability of the maritime industry. Finally, the pact calls for specific attention and measures tailored to the characteristics of outermost regions to break down their insularity and meet their needs; strengthening resilience and connectivity; developing economy, energy and food autonomy, as well as protecting their natural heritage.

Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General, Waterborne TP, said: *"The Waterborne Technology Platform welcomes the European Ocean Pact, which places technology leadership at the core of achieving its objectives. Research, development, innovation, and their deployment are key to ensure a competitive, resilient and sustainable future. The European waterborne sector invests in research, development and innovation to remain a frontrunner in the global green and digital transformation. Stimulating the systematic deployment of economically viable innovations, will provide the European waterborne sector with a frontrunner position and stimulate the transition towards a resilient, competitive and sustainable European maritime technology sector. The innovation areas identified in the Oceans Pact are in line with our renewed Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, which will be published in the coming weeks. We are looking forward to cooperating with all stakeholders of the sector, public and private alike, to jointly define the pathway to achieving the objectives laid down in the Pact."*



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