



EU Innovation Fund is key to support the transition to zero-emission waterborne transport

300 participants attended the infoday regarding the EU Innovation Fund for the waterborne transport sector, showcasing the importance of support for the transition to zero-emission waterborne transport

Brussels, 1 February 2024

Today, CLIA Europe, ECSA, ESPO, FEPORT, SEA Europe and WaterborneTP jointly organised the EU Innovation Fund infoday for the waterborne transport sector, co-organised by the European Commission. Approximately 300 participants from the broader waterborne transport sector (private and public stakeholders) attended the infoday, showcasing the commitment of the sector to engage and set sail for deploying solutions for societal challenges, while highlighting the need for financial support for the uptake of clean fuels and for the deployment of innovations to progress as fast as possible on the net-zero pathway.

The Innovation Fund uses revenues generated by the EU Emissions Trading System to invest in Europe's green transition. 20 Million EU Emission Trading System (ETS) allowances have been earmarked under the new EU ETS Directive for the maritime sector. These allowances correspond to 1.5 to 2 billion EUR under the current carbon price. Although waterborne transport projects were already eligible, the most recent call for proposals in the framework of the EU Innovation Fund includes specificities of the sector, taking into account the fact that maritime transport contributes to the EU ETS from 1 January 2024 onwards. The Innovation Fund focuses on highly innovative technologies and flagship projects within Europe that can achieve significant emission reductions. The aim is sharing the risk with project promoters and putting the spotlight on highly innovative projects with clear European added value.

In the waterborne transport domain, support can be provided to various clean technologies that contribute to the decarbonisation of the sector. These include energy efficiency, sustainable fuels and energy sources as well as infrastructure. Various examples of new projects were presented by different stakeholders during the infoday.

Whilst the sector is acknowledging the importance of the EU Innovation Fund, there is still a need to further finetune the Fund for future calls and the upcoming dedicated maritime calls, to ensure the specificities of the sector are properly addressed. The event provided a unique opportunity to discuss also these items as well, ranging from calculation methods and assessment of the award criteria that must be targeted to the specificities of the sector to the need to ensure access to the funding instruments for small and medium-sized enterprises and the importance of a comprehensive network approach in deploying the innovative solutions.



Marie-Caroline Laurent, Director General Europe, CLIA said: *“The cruise industry is at the heart of the European maritime industrial cluster with 98% of cruise vessels built in Europe. The opportunity to access the EU Innovation Fund will support our industry’s drive to innovate. To achieve the maritime industry objective of zero GHG emissions by 2050, reinvestment of EU ETS revenues into maritime innovation, research & development and adequate renewable energy infrastructures at ports will essential at European and national level.”*

Sotiris Raptis, Secretary General, ECSA, added: *“Decarbonising shipping is not a question of ‘if’ but a question of ‘how’. Setting aside almost 2 billion EUR of the ETS revenues for maritime is a victory for the decarbonisation of the sector. Clean fuels can be up to five times more expensive compared to fuels currently used. Dedicated support through the Innovation Fund is key to bridging the price gap with clean fuels, as well as improving the energy efficiency of ships, fostering innovation and building the infrastructure in ports”*

Isabelle Ryckbost, Secretary General, ESPO, continued: *“The EU Innovation Fund is instrumental in paving the way to progress as fast as possible on the sector’s greening path. This requires important and more high-risk investments in ports, to ensure the supply and infrastructure needed for the new energies and technologies. As such, the Fund should make sure to support projects that are proven highly effective in terms of emission reduction and overall climate impact, and must be improved and scaled up even further through further innovation. ”*

Lamia Kerdjoudj, Secretary General, Feport, added: *“This workshop is a very important exercise that allows us to identify the main needs to be considered in the framework of the forthcoming calls. It has also shown the importance to dedicate part of the revenues of the Innovation Fund for the maritime sector and port sector¹. FEPORT also underlines the need to focus on GHG emission avoidance, cost efficiency and replicability as important award criteria to ensure that the Innovation Fund can leverage adequate support for energy efficiency in ports and the electrification of the maritime sector”*

Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General, SEA Europe, added: *“Today's highly attended infoday highlighted the remarkable interest of the maritime sector towards the current and forthcoming calls under the Innovation Fund. The growing recognition of maritime project specificities within the Innovation Fund framework marks a significant stride forward. However, SEA Europe is now looking to propel progress even further by contemplating the establishment of a dedicated maritime envelope or fund. Such an approach will foster competition exclusively among maritime project proposals and so, aims to amplify opportunities and streamline advancements within the maritime industry.”*

Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General, Waterborne Technology Platform, concluded: *“The EU Innovation Fund is a key instrument to deploy innovations. The Fund has the potential to ensure the sector meets the climate targets that have been set. Taking into account the fact that the waterborne transport sector mainly consists of SMEs, further necessary amendments to the Fund would ensure a just transition of the waterborne transport sector.”*

¹ As agreed upon by the EU Parliament and the Council in 2023: EU ETS revenues should go back to the maritime sector to support the uptake of clean fuels and foster innovation (20 million ETS allowances, which correspond to around 2 billion Euro)



Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is the world's largest cruise industry trade association, providing a unified voice and leading authority of the global cruise community. On behalf of the industry, together with its members and partners, the organization supports policies and practices that foster a secure, healthy and sustainable cruise ship environment, as well as promote positive travel experiences for the more than 30 million passengers who cruise annually. The CLIA community includes the world's most prestigious ocean, river and specialty cruise lines; a highly trained and certified travel agent community; and cruise line suppliers and partners, including ports and destinations, ship development, suppliers and business services. The organization's global headquarters are in Washington, DC, with regional offices located in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australasia. For more information, visit www.cruising.org or europe.cruising.org or follow CLIA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

ECSA represents 21 national shipowners' associations based in the EU and Norway (www.ecsa.eu). European shipowners control 39.5% of the global commercial fleet, contribute 149 billion euros per year to the EU GDP and provide 2 million people with careers both on board and ashore. ECSA strives for a regulatory environment that fosters the international competitiveness of European shipping, to the benefit of the EU.

Enquiries about ECSA can be sent to: *ECSA Senior Director Shipping Policy & Communications, Luisa Puccio*, Luisa.Puccio@ecsa.eu

ESPO represents the port authorities, port associations and port administrations of the seaports of the European Union's Member States and Norway at EU political level (www.espo.be). ESPO also has observer members in Albania, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Enquiries about ESPO can be sent to: Isabelle Ruyckbost, Secretary General, mail@espo.be, +32 2 736 34 63

FEPORT Since 1993, FEPORT represents the interests of a large variety of private port companies and terminals performing cargo handling and logistics related activities in the seaports of the European Union (www.feport.eu). FEPORT members employ more than 390 000 port workers.

Enquiries about Feport can be sent to: Maarten Boot, Policy Advisor Maarten.boot@feport.eu, tel: +32 (0)2 736 75 52.

SEA Europe represents the European shipbuilding industry in 15 nations, encompassing the production, maintenance, repair, retrofit 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.

Enquiries about SEA Europe can be sent to: Benoit Loicq, Technical and Environmental Affairs Director, bl@seaeurope.eu, tel: +32475917724

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 21 Member States. In addition, the Associations member of the Waterborne Technology Platform represent the broader waterborne sector throughout the entire EU.

Enquiries about the Waterborne TP can be sent to: Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General Waterborne TP, jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu, tel: +32 493 835 626