AUTOMATED AND CONNECTED WATERBORNE TRANSPORT

The EU to support European Waterborne Technology Sector

to be ahead of international developments

Brussels, 14 June 2019

The European Maritime Technology Sector is specialised in the building, maintaining, repairing, converting or equipment of the most innovative, sophisticated and high technology vessels. The sector is a worldwide frontrunner on developments regarding connected and automated waterborne transport.

Nevertheless, significant investments in research, development and innovation remain essential for the further development of technologies in digitalisation, automation and autonomy in the shipbuilding processes, to secure the competitiveness of the European Maritime Technology Sector as well as to enable the sector to cope with its societal challenges. In addition, there is also a need to develop an adequate framework for educating and training current and future employees in shipyards and equipment manufactories.

Also, the operation of autonomous ships has the potential to create a competitive advantage for the European Maritime Technology Sector provided that Europe remains amongst the fastest developers and that the necessary international regulatory changes are taking place fast enough.

SEA Europe's Secretary General, Christophe Tytgat, says:

"*The existing business opportunities for waterborne transport and ICT industries can boost Europe's competitiveness, if a worldwide IP and data protected, cyber safe and equal level-playing field is established for the benefit of the European Maritime Technology Sector. At the same time, Europe can aspire to become again competitive in the building of standard ship's types, currently built in Asia, on the condition that complex ICT integration expertise remains in Europe.*"

The waterborne sector will gradually evolve from ships with automated processes and decision support to autonomous ships able to take decisions and determine actions by themselves and able to reduce the administrative burdens for seafarers. To that end, communication systems between autonomous ships and shore/authorities need to be properly developed, according to different situations such as open sea, coastal and inland navigation, port areas, or offshore operations. These communication systems will increase the overall safety and security.

In this regard, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) needs to properly consider the timely adaptation of the international regulatory framework, able to embrace the safety aspects, the human element aspects and the technology developments all the way up to the highest levels of autonomy in a goal-based approach.

Since the decision-making process within the IMO may take some time, SEA Europe recommends that the EU takes the first concrete steps with regard to inland, coastal, offshore activities and short sea shipping, inter alia, by facilitating safe trial operations in European waters and by supporting fast development of innovative technology and cyber-safe standards.

"*The security strategy needs to be addressed primarily from the ship digital infrastructure with well designed and implemented responsiveness to cyber threat or attack*", Christophe Tytgat said.

The SEA Europe position paper can be downloaded from [here](#).

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.*

For further information please visit www.seaeurope.eu or contact:

Christophe Tytgat, Secretary General, ct@seaeurope.eu

Tel: +32 (0)2.230.32.87