

Landmark Conference on End-of-Life recreational boats marks milestone for next European Agenda

Brussels, 19 March 2024 - The Belgian EU Presidency, in collaboration with the European Commission and European Boating Industry (EBI), convened a landmark conference yesterday at the prestigious Egmont Palace in Brussels. This conference marked a pivotal moment in addressing the pressing issue of end-of-life recreational boats.



The event brought together stakeholders from across sectors, including industry representatives, policymakers, and related sectors. Among the distinguished attendees were representatives from the Belgian EU Presidency, European Commission, and EBI, who joined forces to underscore the urgency and necessity of cooperation in tackling this critical issue. The political importance of the event was highlighted through opening speeches by Georges Gilkinet, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Mobility, Delilah Al Khudhairy, Director for Maritime Policy and Blue Economy at the European Commission and Robert Marx, President of EBI. The conference highlighted the readiness of technology and the willingness of industry to collaborate in creating a robust European regulatory framework. Participants emphasised the importance of continued joint efforts between the private and public sectors to drive meaningful change.

A variety of perspectives were presented¹, highlighting the topic's complexity. Research presented during the conference included a wide range of topics, such as financial and legal frameworks, technical advancements in recycling, and environmental impact assessment. It provided significant insight on the challenges related to the recycling and disposal of recreational crafts.

The conference also recognised the role of innovation in addressing environmental challenges in the boating industry, as also presented in the EU Roadmap on the implementation of the circular economy for end-of-life recreational boats². Furthermore, ongoing research and innovation in composite materials and life cycle analysis will play a vital role in supporting a circular approach to boat-building and reducing its environmental footprint.

Robert Marx, President of EBI commented *“As we move forward, it is imperative that the momentum generated by this conference translates into concrete action. The implementation of the EU Roadmap must be the key next step after the approaching EU elections. Industry is ready, the technology is ready and we now need to set up the regulatory framework to make it happen. We are delighted to have the support of the European Commission and Belgian Council Presidency in this endeavour”*.

¹ <https://shorturl.at/GTU06>

² <https://shorturl.at/doDFK>



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About European Boating Industry (EBI)

EBI represents the recreational boating industry in Europe. It encompasses all related sectors, such as boatbuilding, equipment manufacturing, marinas and service providers. The industry is a significant contributor to the European economy, representing 32,000 companies, predominantly SMEs that employ over 280,000 people directly. The mission of EBI is to advance and represent a sustainable boating and nautical tourism industry #MadeInEurope. More information on EBI's website: www.europeanboatingindustry.eu

European Boating Industry

Square de Meeûs 35 | B-1000 Brussels
www.europeanboatingindustry.eu | office@europeanboatingindustry.eu
Transparency Register #74989093163-18