



## Environmental sustainability

### *EBI position paper*

European Boating Industry (EBI), representing the recreational boating industry in Europe, recognises the critical need to ensure healthy marine ecosystems and transforming the EU's economy and society to a sustainable future. These are of crucial importance to the recreational boating sector and its users, also to maintain a competitive position for the boating industry that relies on a good marine and inland water environment.

This paper sets out the industry's approach to managing and mitigating its impacts to the environment as well as recommendations for policy-makers on how the ongoing transformation towards environmental sustainability can be accelerated and combined with economic success and strengthening of Europe's leadership in recreational boating. With this, the recreational boating industry also provides its input to the delivery of several aspects the European Green Deal. It should not be seen as a comprehensive overview but provide the basis for engagement on certain key issues.

The recreational boating sector is predominantly made up of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) at over 95% of the 32,000 companies in the sector. Within all areas addressed in this position paper, this requires special attention and support from policy-making to ensure applicability and suitable policy mix to achieve the right outcome. Across Europe, the sector employs around 280,000 employees and creates economic opportunities for peripheral and coastal regions of Europe, as well as along inland waterways. A well-managed transition towards a sustainable boating industry has the potential to provide long-term employment and growth opportunities for these.

#### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

EBI is a member of the UN Decade for Ocean Science to engage with academia and stakeholders at global level, as well as a supporter of the Navigating a Changing Climate Initiative to promote low-emission transport infrastructure and develop climate change mitigation policies. More information can be found [here](#).

### **1. Circular economy**

The materials that boats are most built from is composite material (Fibre-reinforced polymer), which provides the best material qualities required for recreational boats. It does however have certain drawbacks in recycling. The usual lifetime of a boat is between 30 and 40 years but can last much longer through good use and maintenance. Based on European Commission estimates around 80,000 boats reach their end-of-life every year<sup>1</sup>. For wind turbines that use the same material, about 15,000 wind turbine blades having to be decommissioned in the next five years<sup>2</sup>. Around 2.5 million tonnes of composite material are in use in the wind energy sector.

In the circular economy, material cycles should closely follow the ecosystem process. There is no such thing as waste, because every residual stream can be used to make a new product. Boats present issues in recycling due to their nature of the components, size and the need for many different

<sup>1</sup> SWD nautical tourism, [https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/swd-2017-126\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/swd-2017-126_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://etipwind.eu/files/reports/ETIPWind-How-wind-is-going-circular-blade-recycling.pdf>



materials. The industry is developing new ways to reduce, reuse and recycle and also has also to work on a new approach based on design for dismantling and the introduction of new materials<sup>3</sup>.



The EU-funded project that EBI was a partner on improved the Health, Safety and Environmental standards of recreational craft dismantling practices and developed guidelines for users and all stakeholders. It raised the awareness of end of life responsibilities and options for recreational craft owners and professionals. More information can be found [here](#).

The boating industry understands the need to apply these approaches to boats at their end of life. The industry is actively working on finding the material reutilization mechanisms for current boats reaching end-of-life and new materials to build boats with higher rates of reutilization and recyclability.

In addition to this, the collaborative economy and use versus property is becoming more popular in the boating industry and represents an advantage in terms of more exploitation and use of resources by making them available to more users. All these initiatives should significantly advance in the next years and contribute to the deepening of the circular economy in the boating industry.

### EBI recommendations

- Cooperation with all sectors involved in the production and use of FRP (boating industry, boat users, composite sector, wind energy sector, other composite sectors)
- Prioritisation of EU Research and Innovation funding to diversify and scale up recycling technologies for FRP (based on EU waste hierarchy)
- Prioritisation of EU Research and Innovation funding to integrate eco-design into boat building and development of bio-based materials
- EU support for national systems on end-of-life boat dismantling and identification of a suitable funding system
- Continuation of dialogue with European Commission to develop EU roadmap on end-of-life boat dismantling (in format of DG MARE-EBI Working Group)

## 2. Impacts related to the navigation

Nautical activities can impact the environment, which the sector tries to minimise and reduce to the largest extent. These impacts are primarily related to the following activities or uses:

### 2.1. Anchoring impacts

Boat anchoring can represent an impact on the environment if not done correctly. This can be in the form of impact of certain types of seagrass (*Posidonia*) that is crucial for biodiversity and carbon absorption. The nautical sector and authorities are promoting awareness and educating boaters on environmentally friendly anchoring. Solutions to this issue already exist and should be increasingly rolled out, such as installation of permanent eco-friendly moorings.



EBI was involved in the EU-funded PHAROS4MPAs project for the development of recommendations for marine conservation with a focus on Posidonia. The leisure boating recommendations were developed together with the WWF and the University of Girona. More information can be found [here](#).

#### **EBI recommendations:**

- Development and implementation of regional guidelines and plans for marine protected areas considering recreational uses
- Awareness-raising of boat users through information campaigns in cooperation with nautical tourism providers (e.g. marinas and charter companies)
- Prioritisation of EU, national and regional funding to implement and further development of eco-friendly mooring solutions

## **2.2. Use of engines**

The use of combustion engines for recreational boats leads to carbon emissions. Emissions from the recreational boating sector are gradually decreasing due to the limits imposed from EU law and improvements of construction standards of engines and boats<sup>4</sup>. The Recreational Craft Directive regulates the construction of leisure boats from 2,5m to 24m and includes exhaust emission requirements. Fuel efficiency has likewise increased over the past years. For the boating sector, reducing emissions where possible is key and through technological evolution, it now offers more environmentally friendly engines. These new engine types include electric engines, solar power, hybrid engines and first tests are being made as to the applicability of hydrogen. The European industry is leading in electric propulsion and developing into the foremost region of sustainable boating.

#### **EBI recommendations:**

- Introduction of electric and hybrid engines in the scope of the EU's Recreational Craft Directive to further support the development of low-, and zero-emission engines
- Prioritisation of EU Research and Innovation funding for low-, and zero emission recreational boating engines

## **2.3. Invasive species**

Implementation of an effective marine pest and bio fouling management regime is critical for minimisation of the transfer of invasive aquatic species. EBI recognises the importance of these for biodiversity and marine conservation. The boating industry recognises this situation and the potential risks derived from invasive species transfer through boat hulls or other parts of the boats. This requires a carefully balanced approach to the use of antifouling, where efforts are continuously made to make these more environmentally sustainable.



#### **EBI recommendations:**

- Prioritisation of EU Research and Innovation funding for alternative sustainable anti-fouling management to lower the use of biocides
- Cooperation between policy-makers, academia, industry and all stakeholders in the maritime area to address the key causes of invasive species transfer and implement best practices

#### **2.4. Waste minimisation and marine pollution**

Minimisation of black and grey wastewater, as well as other waste is a key aim of the recreational boating industry. This is specifically mentioned with the Recreational Craft Directive, by which boats shall be constructed to prevent the accidental discharge of pollutants overboard (oil, fuel, etc.). Toilets on board must also be directly connected to a holding tank or water treatment system. A key issue is the availability of waste discharge points, which varies by country.

##### **Blue Flag marinas**

The iconic blue flag symbol also includes certification of marinas. To qualify for the Blue Flag certificate, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria must be met and maintained. More information can be found [here](#). There are several other renowned “clean marina” schemes, such as Gold Anchor, Blue Star Marina and the Clean Harbour Guidelines. By January 2019, more than 90% of marinas in Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur were committed to “Clean Harbour Guidelines” and its certification process.

Even if most marine pollution stems from the land, all efforts should be made to minimise marine pollution from maritime activities including recreational boating (estimated at under 1%<sup>5</sup>). Pollution is a key issue for recreational boating as it harms the marine environment in which boating thrives best.

#### **EBI recommendations:**

- Support for the implementation of the Port Reception Directive<sup>6</sup> for marinas
- Awareness-raising campaigns to recreational boat users on the importance of waste minimisation and avoiding pollution
- Use of science and innovation to reduce marine pollution harnessing the potential of recreational boating

#### **3. Climate Change**

It is widely accepted that the world’s climate has been increasingly changing: heat waves, higher precipitation, droughts, rising sea levels, countless storms, and shrinking glaciers are some of the consequences. Carbon emissions are part of the cause and the boating industry is acting and developing plans to prevent emission of greenhouse gases using new technologies and renewable energies, changing practices and consumer behaviour.

The boating industry is equally impacted by the effects of climate change that have shown themselves capable of putting users, boats and marine infrastructure at risk through the increasing number and

<sup>5</sup> Nautical activities: What impact on the environment? A Life Cycle Approach for “Clear Blue” Boating Commissioned by the European Confederation of Nautical Industries (ECNI)

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02000L0059-20151209&from=EN>



intensity of storms and flooding. Climate change adaptation is therefore one of the areas that the boating industry is actively promoting.

#### EBI recommendations:

- Research on the role of climate change mitigation in the recreational boating sector
- Prioritisation of EU Research and Innovation funding and regional funding to develop and implement adaptation measures for recreational boating and infrastructure

#### 4. Education and awareness-raising

To understand the reality of marine activities and their environmental effects, awareness and environmental training is crucial. It should be transversal and involve the main environmental aspects which affect the activity and stakeholders, from manufacturers and distributors to the users, public opinion, and authorities. EBI, its members and companies in the sector are actively engaged in the area through participation in education and cooperating to improve the awareness in this subject-matter which is considered key and fundamental to advance in terms of sustainability.

Boating and water sports also has a strong role in raising awareness of the ocean and act as ambassador for the importance of its ecosystem in an unparalleled way. Through a close knowledge and experiencing the marine environment, the importance of preserving oceans and inland waters becomes much clearer for citizens. There is also substantial potential through galvanising the millions of boaters and water sports enthusiasts in citizen science and mapping oceans, as well as discovering and flagging environmental issues.



The French federation of nautical industries (FIN) published a free-of-charge Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to educate about the good practices of the eco-responsible boater. It covers the main areas: waste management, discards at sea, energy consumption, good mooring practices, boat dismantling, and other key topics. More information can be found [here](#).

#### Cap Bleu at Paris Nautic Festival



Each year, the Paris boat show, organised by a subsidiary of the French federation of nautical industries (FIN) occupies 130,000m<sup>2</sup> and welcomes more than 200,000 visitors. Its environmental commitment is carried out by the 'Cap Bleu' label and is implemented through the principles of 'Avoid, Reduce, Compensate'. A dedicated space now also welcomes NGOs, eco-organisations and pitch events to extend ocean knowledge and environmental protection.

#### love your ocean at boot Düsseldorf



The largest boat show in the world, boot Düsseldorf with 250,000 visitors in 2020 devoted 350 square m<sup>2</sup> to the love your ocean stand. Organised together with the German Ocean Foundation, it is devoted to sustainable interactive projects, alongside an informative programme. The "ocean tribute" award also recognises projects working on the development of innovative, future-oriented technologies to protect and conserve the oceans.

#### European Boating Industry

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## Annex: Public funding opportunities for a green and digital transition

### Green transition

- ✓ **Investment support for renovation and environmental transformation** of marinas through renewable energy installations (e.g. wind, tidal, solar), for electricity needs of marinas and charging of increasing number of electric boats, car parks and shore power, power storage, circular approach to waste disposal and use of water through small-scale desalination plants
- ✓ Adaptation of marinas to the **impacts of climate change** and the expected increase in extreme weather through investment in a more resilient infrastructure
- ✓ Development and renovation of **local and regional nautical tourism infrastructure** in coastal areas and on inland waterways (marinas, docks, locks, waterways)
- ✓ Roll-out of **eco-friendly permanent mooring solutions** in marine protected areas and areas of high ecological value as alternatives to anchoring and existing permanent mooring solutions
- ✓ **Research and innovation investment:** circular economy, recycling of existing boat building materials, use of new materials (including bio-based), low-emission engines and alternatives (electric, hybrid, hydrogen)

### Digital transition

- ✓ **Digital transformation of marinas** through roll-out of 5G, Wi-Fi and digital infrastructure allowing for connected boating, smart marinas, improved land-sea connectivity, Internet of Things, digital connectivity and automatised customer interaction technology
- ✓ **Research and innovation investment:** connected boats, autonomous boats, and improvement of on-board safety, citizen science, smart marinas
- ✓ **Investigation and pilot projects** between universities, research institutions and marinas as means to develop new projects in close connection with experts (equally valuable for environmental transformation)

### A shift towards sustainable tourism

- ✓ **Diversification of nautical tourism** offer through schemes decreasing seasonality, attracting new audiences and removal of barriers
- ✓ **Promotion of regional and European nautical tourism** through dedicated campaigns at EU level in cooperation with stakeholders targeting new audiences

## About European Boating Industry (EBI)

European Boating Industry (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 that employ over 280,000 people directly. Most of the sector is made up of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). It is a key contributor to tourism and has a global trade perspective. EBI is an established stakeholder at EU level, defending and promoting the interests of its members on key issues ranging from Single Market legislation to blue growth, tourism and trade policy. More information here: [europeanboatingindustry.eu](http://europeanboatingindustry.eu)

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