



## **Nautical tourism in the spotlight for the EU institutions following EBI event**

*Brussels 13 July 2022 – In a high-level event of the European Parliament Intergroup on Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas, the industry and EU institutions came together to discuss the priorities for recreational boating and nautical tourism. It was followed by the launch of a declaration on “Developing common rules for truly European nautical tourism”. The event was co-organised by European Boating Industry and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions featuring key figures for the industry at European level.*

The event of the European Parliament Intergroup on Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas (SEArca) was co-organised by European Boating Industry (EBI) and the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR). The influential cross-party Intergroup, covering maritime and inland topics, brings together 107 MEPs from 23 different Member States and 6 political groups. The event stood under the theme of “Developing a truly European and sustainable nautical tourism”. With close to 200 registered participants, it was the setting for a much-needed and enriching conversation on the steps that EU institutions should take to secure the future of European nautical tourism and the boating industry, which is intrinsically linked to the blue economy.

The event concluded with the launch of a declaration initiated by MEP Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Vice-President of SEArca and Vice-Chair of the Transport & Tourism Committee. The declaration will be open for all actors, including MEPs in the SEArca Intergroup, to sign in the next weeks. It underlines the need for a common set of rules for nautical tourism sector at EU level. The main measures highlighted are the recognition of private boaters’ licenses, the mutual recognition of skipper qualifications, the sustainable development of pleasure ports and inland recreational navigation as well as the alignment of reduced VAT rates across the tourism sector to ensure a level playing field.

The host of the event, **MEP Jan-Christoph Oetjen**, commented *“As we heard at the meeting of the SEArca Intergroup, it is of vital importance that the EU institutions support the nautical tourism sector. In the declaration presented at today’s event, we have taken up the essential aspects, which we will push to see implemented at European level.”*

The event featured some of the highest-level actors from the European Commission and European Parliament, as well as the German Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure<sup>1</sup>. Speaking for the industry were Roberto Perocchio (Assomarinas & Confindustria Nautica), Olivier Albahary (Globesailor & FIN) and Harald Kuhnle (Kuhnle Tours & BVWW). They highlighted that the approach for on-land activities needs to be replicated for on-water, such as boaters’ licenses being treated in the same harmonised way as car driving licenses.

All speakers agreed on the need for a more European approach to tackle the issues highlighted at the event. In a thriving sector, this would push sustainable growth of nautical tourism and manufacturing in the next years.

**Philip Easthill, EBI’s Secretary-General** said *“This high-level event with the European Parliament SEArca Intergroup is of utmost importance for the nautical tourism sector. It is an unprecedented*



*opportunity that will open the door to further discussions and collaboration. EBI will not let the momentum stop here. We will continue to work hard to ensure that what has been discussed today, especially what is reflected in the declaration, is translated into action “*

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### **About European Boating Industry**

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, 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: [europeanboatingindustry.eu](http://europeanboatingindustry.eu).

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<sup>i</sup> The full agenda can be found on the SEArICA website:

[http://www.searica.eu/media/com\\_eventbooking/SEArICA\\_Agenda\\_Boating\\_0507.pdf](http://www.searica.eu/media/com_eventbooking/SEArICA_Agenda_Boating_0507.pdf)

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