



International Breakfast Meeting 2021 shows compelling tourism and recreation opportunities for boating industry

Brussels/Düsseldorf 20 April 2021 – The 2021 International Breakfast Meeting was held digitally on 20 April to great success. High-level panellists from business and politics, including European Commissioner Sinkevičius and a Member of the European Parliament, discussed the key issues for the boating industry, including the impact of COVID-19, the sector's recovery, and trends in travel and tourism. It was a unique opportunity for the boating industry to come together in a highly relevant exchange.

The 6th edition of the International Breakfast Meeting (IBM), which was jointly organised by European Boating Industry (EBI) and boot Düsseldorf, was successfully held on 20 April. The event, which was held online for the first time, brought together high-level experts from the worlds of business and politics to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the recreational boating industry, the industry's recovery, and new trends and opportunities, under the title "A Corona reboot of tourism and recreation: What future for boating?".

The event, which was moderated by EBI Secretary-General Philip Easthill and introduced by boot Düsseldorf Project Director Petros Michelidakis, included the participation through video message of European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius. This was the first time a Commissioner participated in IBM, showing the increasingly prominent presence of the boating industry in EU policy-making. Commissioner Sinkevičius stated that "*the recreational boating industry will have an essential role to play to help us build back better*", and he referred to the European Green Deal and to the forthcoming Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy as key policies to ensure the protection and cleanliness of marine areas.

Also coming from the sphere of EU policy-making, Member of the European Parliament Ismail Ertug shared with participants the latest developments in EU tourism policy. Mr Ertug, who is member of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee, stated that the sector is facing four main challenges: the first one is about security and safety; the second one is about economic competitiveness among Member States which have different regulatory, administrative and tax burdens; the third one is about technology, where businesses have to keep up with globalisation and digitalisation; and the fourth one is the growing demand for customised experiences. "*We are in the middle of the pandemic and last year was the worst one ever, but this is also a big chance for tourism policy. In the past it was national competence of Member States, but now this is maybe a chance for harmonisation at the EU level.*"

Next, Amelie Cesar and Natascha Zwenke, graduates from the Jade University of Applied Sciences, presented to attendees the study they conducted for EBI on the impact of COVID-19 on the boating industry. This study will be officially published on 27 April. Moreover, Lyublena Dimova, Research Manager at the European Travel Commission, gave insights into post-COVID-19 trends in the wider travel and tourism sector. Clearly visible are an increasing optimism among Europeans to travel, a

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preference for domestic and intra-regional destinations, as well as coastal getaways being extremely appealing for Western and Central Europeans. Luca Brancaleon, Deputy Director Manager of Groupe Beneteau, talked about the future direction of the industry. Finally, EBI President Jean-Pierre Goudant gave a closing speech.

Petros Michelidakis, boot Düsseldorf Project Director, said: *“IBM 2021 provided a formidable opportunity to come together as an industry and look back on this past year, taking stock of the impact that COVID-19 has had on the sector. Although this year’s boot Düsseldorf had to be cancelled, we have put together an extremely successful online IBM, which has been accessible to new participants. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all speakers for taking part and to all participants for making of this event a great success.”*

Jean-Pierre Goudant, EBI President, commented: *“It was a great event, and we were delighted with such a strong presence from the EU institutions, as well as to hear the latest market trends. Boating and the nautical tourism industry are well positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities in tourism and recreation. The advocacy work that we lead as EBI at EU level will help to drive this forward and support the industry. We very much thank our co-organisers, boot Düsseldorf and Petros Michelidakis, for their support in the event and in these challenging times. We are excited to return to boot Düsseldorf 2022 and hold an in-person International Breakfast Meeting on 25 January 2022.”*

The event was attended by 220 people. The livestream can be found [here](#). Further information on IBM is available [here](#).

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About boot Düsseldorf

boot Düsseldorf is the biggest boat and water sports trade fair in the world with almost 250,000 visitors and is the place where all of the industry meets every January. About 2,000 exhibitors are presenting their interesting innovations, attractive new developments and maritime equipment with the next edition taking place from 22 to 30 January 2022. The market will be coming to Düsseldorf to provide an exciting insight into the entire water sports world for the nine-day exhibition covering 220,000 square metres in 17 different halls. There is something for every water sports enthusiast, with the main focus on boats and yachts, motors and engine technology, equipment and accessories, services, canoes, kayaks, kitesurfing, rowing, diving, surfing, wakeboarding, windsurfing, SUP, fishing, maritime art, marinas, water sports facilities, beach resorts and chartering. All necessary information can be found on boot Düsseldorf’s website, boot.com.

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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 that employ over 280,000 people directly. The vast majority of the sector is made up of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). More information on EBI's website: europeanboatingindustry.eu.

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