

Historic EU Industrial Maritime Strategy backs Europe's leadership in recreational boating

Brussels, 5 March 2026 – European Boating Industry (EBI) welcomes the launch of the first-ever EU Industrial Maritime Strategy¹, a landmark initiative by the EU Commission to strengthen Europe's maritime industries, support innovation and sustainability, and reinforce the competitiveness of Europe's recreational boat and yacht sector from builders to propulsion and equipment manufacturers and the refit sector.

The strategy highlights the strategic importance of maritime manufacturing and confirms Europe's strong position in technologically advanced maritime manufacturing segments, highlighting recreational craft and yachts, clean propulsion and refit where European industry holds global leadership.

The Commission notes that Europe *"is still a global leader in some of the most technologically sophisticated ship types ... including yachts and recreational craft, clean propulsion systems and advanced equipment"*, underlining the sector's role as a key contributor to Europe's maritime industrial base and innovation ecosystem. It also noted that *"subsegments, such as ... nautical tourism, have an important innovation potential to enhance their sustainability."*

Philip Easthill, Secretary-General of EBI, commented: *"We strongly welcome the EU Industrial Maritime Strategy and the recognition of Europe's leadership in recreational craft and yachts as well as across the entire ecosystem. Europe's boating industry is a European success story, driven by innovation, high-quality manufacturing supported by thousands of SMEs and jobs across the continent.*

It is great to see the first-ever EU strategy for the maritime industry come forward which is a step-change for the recreational boating industry. The strategy sends a clear signal that Europe values the maritime industries and is committed to supporting the competitiveness, sustainability and technological leadership of the recreational boating sector.

EBI looks forward to taking the lead in the next months and years as the strategy is implemented, including in the EU Industrial Maritime Value Chains Alliance being set up under the Strategy."

EBI particularly welcomes the strong focus on innovation, clean technologies, alternative fuel infrastructure in marinas and industrial competitiveness, which are central to the future of the recreational boating sector. The strategy outlines actions to support innovation, strengthen supply chains, and improve access to finance and investment.

The strategy also recognises the sector as a high-value segment with a strong industrial potential for manufacturing in the EU, and ongoing efforts to advance sustainability and circular economy solutions. It commits to the roadmap on the circular economy for end-of-life recreational boats, developed by EBI together with the European Commission.

In addition, the Commission confirms that the evaluation of the Recreational Craft Directive will assess the regulatory framework for novel propulsion systems and innovative watercraft, helping ensure that EU legislation supports innovation and the transition to more sustainable boating.

¹ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/document/download/2cda36ec-b5fc-4cc9-9091-a8014ba8177e_en?filename=communication_on_EU_industrial_maritime_strategy_3.pdf

The strategy also recognises the importance of nautical tourism and boating activities within the wider maritime and tourism ecosystem. The upcoming EU Sustainable Tourism Strategy will support the sustainable growth of tourism sectors including the boating industry, reinforcing the contribution of boating to Europe's coastal and regional economies.

EBI looks forward to working with the European Commission, Member States and stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy and to further strengthen Europe's leadership in recreational boating.

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Notes to Editors:

The full Industrial Maritime Strategy can be found [here](#), with the EU Commission press release [here](#). The Roadmap on end-of-life recreational boats can be found [here](#).