



EBI welcomes European Parliament report on sustainable tourism giving strong political support for boating industry measures

Brussels, 26 March 2021 – The European Parliament adopted its Report on Establishing an EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism with a resounding majority. Through it, MEPs call for several measures to make tourism cleaner, safer and more sustainable, as well as to support the sector’s recovery. European Boating Industry (EBI) welcomes the report and calls on the Commission and on EU countries to implement the proposals. The report singles out the potential of nautical tourism and recreational boating through concrete support measures which EBI has been advocating.

The report was adopted on 25 March by the Parliament’s plenary, with 577 votes in favour, 31 votes against and 80 abstentions. It is non-binding but promises to be a precursor for future Commission initiatives and offers strong political support. Prior to that, the report had been approved by the Parliament’s Transport and Tourism Committee by 47 to 2.

The report stresses the grave impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the tourism sector and proposes a wide array of measures to make tourism more environmentally friendly, diversified, and resilient to the crisis. It asks EU countries to implement common and coordinated criteria for safe travel, including a common vaccination certificate (as was proposed by the Commission last week¹). It also calls for Member States to include travel and tourism in their recovery plans, in order to ensure that adequate investment is available for the sector’s modernisation and digitisation and makes investment proposals. In addition, the report proposes the creation of an EU hygiene certification seal and of an EU Agency for Tourism. Altogether, it aims for the ambition of a European Tourism Union.

At the plenary session, the report’s rapporteur, **MEP Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar**, said: *“The 27 Member State recovery programmes must have plans to cover the tourism sector. The EU has to bring its efforts together and push forward a European tourism plan. This report is key to make sure our compatriots understand that the EU has measures and has funding to help companies, institutions and citizens”*.

EBI has been playing an active role in the report, being in close contact with the key MEPs and with its allies to provide input that reflects the needs of the sector. This has been successful, with a number of key points that EBI has been advocating finding cross-party support. Namely, the report:

- “Commends the Commission for its work on the 14 actions which make up the Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism, and invites it to present the results, which can be used to channel financing to infrastructure (ports and marinas), logistical and operational support, waste prevention and the use of renewable energy; stresses the need to respect the maritime ecosystem, promote dialogue between Member States, regional and local authorities,

¹ European Commission press release: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1181



stakeholders and civil society, and foster the sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism.” (point 49)

- “Calls on the Commission to develop initiatives for nautical and coastal tourism with regard to the recognition of skipper qualifications, VAT rules on boats, marinas and anchorages, to tackle seasonality and promote cross-border routes, such as a network of routes for nautical tourism.” (point 50)
- “Urges the Commission to work together with associations in the sector and to use best practices to issue recommendations and provide financial support for the organisation of trade tourism events, fairs [and] congresses.” (point 70)

EBI Secretary-General Philip Easthill commented: *“The tourism industry, which represented 11.2% of the EU’s employment and 10.3% of its GDP before the pandemic, has been extremely badly hit by the crisis. As EBI, we welcome the report, and we call on the Commission and on national governments to implement the many positive proposals put forward in it. In particular, we are very pleased that the importance of nautical tourism and recreational boating is acknowledged in the report. The sector is an essential element in the move towards a sustainable, diversified and resilient tourism sector, and it offers a real potential to help regions and related sectors recover from the crisis.”*

This achievement is embedded in EBI’s strategy of working closely with the EU institutions and emphasising the role of the sector in tourism policy at EU level. Last September, the European Economic and Social Committee, an EU advisory body, published its opinion “Tourism and transport in 2020 and beyond”, which contained several proposals specific to boating and nautical tourism as a result of EBI’s advocacy efforts.² In addition, on 20 April, EBI and boot Düsseldorf will be holding the 2021 International Breakfast Meeting, an event involving high-level panellists from business and politics who will be discussing the present and future of the boating industry within tourism and recreation. It will include the participation of Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius, as well as MEP Ismail Ertug.³ Through these efforts, EBI aims to be at the forefront of policy discussions and decisions affecting the boating industry and nautical tourism.

The “Report on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism” can be found [here](#).

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² EBI press release: <https://www.europeanboatingindustry.eu/newsroom/latest-news/item/361-eu-advisory-body-calls-for-recovery-measures-for-boating-and-nautical-tourism>

³ Information and registration:

https://www.boot.com/en/Trade_Visitors/Events_for_Trade_Visitors/International_Breakfast_Meeting



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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