



EBI welcomes EU tourism package and calls for swift start of nautical tourism activities across Europe

Brussels, 13 May 2020 – Today, the European Commission presented a package of measures to support the tourism industry in the COVID-19 crisis and start the summer season. Many measures that formed the European boating industry's joint call that EBI has advocated for, have been taken up. The European Commission recognises on-water recreation and nautical tourism as a key part of Europe's tourism industry, recovery period and ready to restart following health and safety protocols.

The European Commission presented a package of guidelines and recommendations to gradually open borders and allow tourism businesses to restart while respecting health and safety measures. It encourages consumers to take advantage of the summer tourism season and help the EU tourism sector recover. It includes an overall strategy towards recovery in 2020 and beyond, a gradual lifting of border restrictions, re-establishment of transport links, criteria for restoring tourism activities and health protocols, as well as a recommendation on vouchers as alternatives to reimbursement¹. These guidelines and recommendations are provided to EU countries and companies for implementation.

Throughout these measures, the Commission recognises the importance of on-water recreation, and the maritime and inland waterway tourism industry. At several points, it highlights that leisure boating should not fall under a general prohibition but be allowed following a risk-based approach and implementing specific procedures, such as regular cleaning and disinfection. EU countries should lift restrictions for leisure boating based on specific health and safety protocols. The Commission specifically mentions marinas and resuming activity in these under strict health and safety conditions. The Commission recognises that domestic and intra-EU tourism will be increasingly popular and should be promoted. It sees a strong role for maritime and inland waterway tourism in this.

The announcement from the European Commission comes after many weeks of advocacy activities and dozens of virtual meetings by EBI with the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament and other members of the EU institutions. Advocacy actions were based on the joint policy paper that 19 European boating industry associations and EBI signed in early April². This unity has been key to advocacy. Several boating industry associations have also prepared guidelines to facilitate the application of social distancing rules and all applicable health and safety requirements.

European Boating Industry Secretary-General **Philip Easthill** commented *"We are a fundamentally European industry. Boating relies on open borders between countries for navigation, holiday travel and supply chains. We support the measures announced by the European Commission to gradually reopen borders and swiftly restart nautical tourism and support recovery in our sector. We have been advocating for many of these measures since the start of the COVID-19 crisis and will continue to do so. Taking the European Commission's risk-based approach, the conditions are in place for boating,*

¹ The full information can be found on the website of the European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_854

² <http://europeanboatingindustry.eu/newsroom/latest-news/item/310-european-boating-industry-associations-join-forces-to-call-for-eu-support-to-address-covid-19-outbreak>



boat charter, marinas and its infrastructure to swiftly reopen under strict health and safety rules across Europe.

“When it comes to the introduction of vouchers as alternatives for reimbursement, we urge EU countries to include individual tourism activities in their scope. Nautical tourism activities, such as boat charter, must be a part of this to ensure a level playing field in the tourism industry. National and eventually a European guarantee fund could help protect consumers and support companies’ liquidity at a critical time.

EBI will continue its advocacy to ensure that the boating industry continues to be recognised and address the key issues in the COVID-19 crisis. EBI is also providing resources on the measures taken at EU-level regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. These can be found [here](#).

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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. The vast majority 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

Press contact: office@europeanboatingindustry.eu