

Policy Paper

Edition 1: April 2020

End-of-Life Vessels & Responsible Boat Ownership

Policy Statement

The recreational marine industry is committed to supporting responsible boat ownership which is fundamental to ensuring ongoing and improving economic, social and environmental benefits. This issue incorporates the matter of end-of-life vessels. As an industry, we support the sustainable use and responsible disposal of our products in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

Responsible boat ownership is a key consideration that is relevant at all stages in the life of a vessel. This applies from purchase to disposal. Responsible ownership is entwined in the increasing global challenge of dealing with end-of-life vessels which is the subject of this paper.

The marine industry supports the following:

- objective evidence to determine if a vessel has reached its end of life
- sound risk and evidence analysis
- disposal is not purely an owner problem
- collaborative and innovative solutions
- education before regulation.

Background

Currently, the majority of boats in need of disposal are landfilled (legally or illegally), sunk or abandoned in ports, marinas, private premises and yards. For the authorities or stakeholders tasked with this job, the costs associated with disposing of abandoned boats is higher than it would likely have been for boat owners to take the boat to an appropriate disposal or recycling facility if such facilities were readily available.

Internationally, there is increasing awareness and support for the need to address the issue presented by end-of-life (EoL) vessels. French legislation¹ which was enacted from January 2019, has an objective to deconstruct 22,500 boats by end of 2023. It is anticipated that similar legislation is likely to be duplicated throughout Europe and beyond. Japan and Canada also have a specific interest in boat recycling. Canada has recently implemented legislation on this subject.²

The EU Study on Nautical Tourism indicates that up to 1-2% of over 6 million boats below 24 meters length (approximately 80,000) are reaching end of life each year³. However, only around 2000 of those are dismantled for the purpose of recycling.

The scheme run by APER which implements French legislation on boat recycling has shown that there is limited possibility for the last boat owner to pay for disposal costs, which is why an 'eco-contribution' has been used. Whilst this is not the only option, it has provided the scheme with the funds to offer this service to boat owners. It is also important to note that much of the problem with EoL boats stems from the lack of awareness and to some extent infrastructure to be able to apply sustainable disposal options for composite plastics, which make up a large proportion of the waste

¹ [Décret n° 2018-766 du 31 août 2018 précisant les dispositions de l'article R. 543-297 du code de l'environnement](#)

² [Abandoned Boats Program](#), Transport Canada

³ Commission Staff Working Document on Nautical Tourism, 2017 (EU)

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of boats manufactured within the last 50 years. This cannot be considered without reference to the current discussions around plastics, which may shape how manufacture and disposal of composites happen in the future. In Europe there are commercially available solutions for recycling composite waste, and in certain countries the marine industry is working with these schemes (see further information). As an industry we should increase cooperation with other composite-using industries (e.g. wind turbines) and their representative bodies such as the European Composite Industry Association (EuCIA), in order to maximise the volume potential for remanufacturing.

The issue is increasingly high on the agenda for the recreational marine industry:

- As an industry, we are increasingly interested in
 - Swift removal of EoL boats. Abandoned boats have the potential to damage our industry. Removing products at the bottom of the market will ensure demand for new boats.
 - There is increase client demand for products that better perform environmentally, the circular economy and boat recycling is key to this
- There is a lack of appropriate information available to industry, boat owners and prospective owners to support a sustainable lifecycle regarding vessels. Despite this, progress is being made in composite recycling/remanufacturing and alternative materials (see further information, below).
- Boat DIGEST developed an online training course for staff working at waste management facilities and having to treat boats; as well as creating a regularly updated dismantling network map which helps identify and locate professional dismantling sites in Europe. This project also raised awareness for boat owners as well as dismantlers.
- For the past few years, has taken centre stage at METSTRADE panel discussions, following on from conferences on the topic in 2015 and 2016

Justification for position

There is a need for a collaborative approach involving stakeholders across governments, industry and the public to develop a strategic approach to the management of the issue of end-of-life boats. A system that minimises the number of old, dilapidated and abandoned boats seen in waterways, marinas and elsewhere has social, economic and environmental benefits.

The solution should involve a multifaceted approach, with a significant education component and applying the principles of waste hierarchy (see below) which is the method used in the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98.

Waste hierarchy

- 1) prevention/waste minimisation;
- 2) preparing for re-use/reuse;
- 3) recycling (recovery of materials)
- 4) other recovery, eg., energy recovery
- 5) disposal by landfill (to be minimised)

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Further information

- [Promising Prospects for EOL Composite Mountain](#), METSTRADE Article
- [EOL Boats: Update on Progress](#), METSTRADE Article
- [Network of Dismantling Recreational Craft in France](#), EBI
- [Boat Digest project](#)
- [Ecocalculator](#), a Life Cycle Assessment tool for the manufacture of composites parts, developed and made available by The European Composite Industry Association (EuCIA). EuCIA is willing and able to play a coordinating role in composite recycling initiatives within EU.

Alternative materials and composite recycling projects

- [The Institute of Polymers, Composites and Biomaterials \(IPCB\)](#) have developed a patented process, which recycles composite material, such as from fiberglass boats, in to new thermoplastic composite materials. The obtained material is transformed into sheets or pellets for subsequent molding or thermoforming processes.
- [FILAVA](#), a recyclable composite, now adopted by superyacht builder Amer Yachts for future new build projects
- Remanufacturing Composites Project from Windesheim University, which identified links between industries to maximise the recycling potential
- [REVYTA – a sustainable industrial fibreglass recovery project](#)
- [Re-use of Composite waste in cement kiln](#), EUcia
- [NEOWA](#), waste recycling, including recycling of glass reinforced composites, which is then sold on for cement manufacture
- [ELG](#) Carbon Fibre operates the world's first and largest carbon fibre recovery plant in the UK