

# Declaration – “Developing common rules for truly European nautical tourism”

The nautical tourism sector, a key contributor to jobs and economic growth in coastal and inland regions, can be a catalyst for European tourism and the green transition. It plays a key role in coastal and maritime tourism, which is Europe’s main blue economy sector. The trends of the post-pandemic era have accelerated the democratisation of access to boating and nautical tourism, benefiting the entire value chain in manufacturing and services in which Europe is highly competitive at global level.

The sector’s developments are however held back by a lack of a harmonised European approach. In the framework of the **SEArca event on leisure boating and water-based tourism “Developing a truly European and sustainable nautical tourism”**, the signatories of this Declaration, members of the SEArca Intergroup, call on the European Commission, Council of the EU, and European Parliament to put in place common rules for the sector at EU level by:

1. Engaging with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Member States to boost the **recognition of private boaters’ licenses** by implementing and recognising the International Certificate of Competence (UNECE Resolution 40) in all Member States;
2. Developing a legal framework for the **mutual recognition of qualifications for skippers** of small commercial vessels at EU level;
3. Advancing the **green transition and development of pleasure ports/marinas** in line with the European Green Deal through policy prioritisation and funding, including climate change adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable expansion of facilities;
4. Coordinating and aligning national plans for the development of **inland recreational navigation** and supporting cross-border connections with EU funding;
5. Aligning **VAT rates** for on-land and on-water activities across the entire tourism sector in order to ensure a **level playing field**.

The signatories of the declaration, members of the SEArca Intergroup, look forward to seeing these calls implemented and followed up.

**MEP Jan-Christoph Oetjen**



Vice-Chair and Member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN)  
Substitute Member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

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