



## STATEMENT ON THE 2018 ANNUAL ECONOMIC REPORT ON THE EU BLUE ECONOMY

The EU Blue Economy is thriving, and growing steadily, the EU's first annual report on the blue economy states published June 27th states (not clear). With a turnover of €566 bln, €174 bln added value and jobs for nearly 3,5 mln people (1,5% of total EU employment), the EU blue economy is an economic sector of great importance, coherently with the strategic character of Europe as a great maritime power. The European Network of Maritime Clusters (ENMC) applauds the ambition of the Commission to track and examine the development of the EU Blue Economy, and wishes to emphasize the importance of the annual report to maritime policy making.

Emphasizing the importance of the Blue Economy in the entire EU economy is key to the ENMC. The concept of Blue Economy enables us to connect the maritime cluster of various EU member states to each other. However, the ENMC wishes to underline the importance of differences between regional blue economies. In today's annual report, regional differences are understated. The ENMC offers their assistance in emphasizing the importance of regional blue economies.

The 2018 annual report on the EU Blue Economy illustrates the importance of EU agreed definitions on the Blue Economy. The example of coastal tourism illustrates this point. The definition of coastal tourism differs between member states, resulting in unrealistic representation of the entire national Blue Economy in the 2018 report. The ENMC therefore calls for the creation of unilateral definitions. An effort should also be made regarding the separation of shipbuilding merchant vessels rather than leisure crafts, as well as nautical tourism.

This also stresses the importance of continuous, trustable, and freely available statistical data on the Blue Economy. The ENMC, through its members, underlines the importance of the exchange of data on the Blue Economy between member states maritime clusters (private data), to the member states statistical authorities, and to EUROSTAT.

Finally, the ENMC applauds the ambition of the Commission to actively include emerging blue economies in future annual reports. The Blue Economy is an economy of continuous innovation in the fields of sustainability, and digitalization. Emerging in all European transport sectors, and to which the EU Blue Economy can be a global frontrunner. The ENMC therefore supports the active study of these sectors in future reports on the EU Blue Economy.

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