

**FIRST ROUNDTABLE WITH EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S DELEGATION**  
**Düsseldorf boat – 26 January 2010**

European Commission: Alexandra Jour-Schröder & Jean-Jacques Woeldgen



*On Tuesday 26 January 2010, European Boating Industry met with the delegation of the European Commission's DG Enterprise & Industry in charge of the EU Recreational Craft Directive, namely Alexandra Jour-Schröder (Head of Unit), Jean-Jacques Woeldgen (Team Leader), Jan Mayerhöfer (Assistant Policy Officer) and Clémentine Leroy (Intern). The group discussed the EU policy actions that are directly and indirectly affecting the European leisure marine industry, such as the revision of the*

*Recreational Craft Directive, the effects of the crisis on the EU economy and our sector, and the role of the EU in setting the right regulatory framework conditions. European Boating Industry presented some of the strategic challenges that the European industry has and will have to face to maintain and promote its world leadership.*

**About the revision of the EU Recreational Craft Directive**

Considering emissions from recreational marine engines, the European Commission explained that the current revision was limited to further reducing the exhaust emissions while not tackling the issue of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions at this stage. Nevertheless, the industry should be prepared for this issue to appear on the political agenda in the coming years. Regarding noise, measures limiting the speed and use of the boats were retained as appropriate means to limit noise nuisances. Looking at the calendar, the European Commission expects to adopt its proposal this spring so that the European Parliament and the Council can kick off the legislative process in autumn 2010. It is planned to have a final text by 2012 with an entry into force by 2015.

**Navigation: looking at boaters' qualifications and safety equipment**

The Commission showed interest in the application by EU Member States of the UNECE Resolution 40 creating an international certificate of competence (ICC). The Commission would like to assess the possible benefit of harmonising the rules for boaters throughout the Union. *European Boating Industry* will provide an overview of the current situation in the various EU Member States. It also proposed looking at the current national requirements for safety equipment onboard recreational craft, with a view of assessing the benefits in terms of safety of a possible harmonisation of the today national requirements.

**EU internal market: current prospects and improving the market surveillance**

The Commission explained that the European industrial production is expected to be down by 30% while unemployment will rise to 11% in 2010. This takes us back to the 1990 level after many years of constant and solid growth. *European Boating Industry* estimates that in 2008-2009 the industry's sales and turnover went down by 30-50% on average and all market segments were affected. Thousands of manufacturing companies were hit by the financial crisis and the credit crunch, resulting in restructuring and cost-cutting programmes, massive lay-offs, bankruptcies of major players around the world. The strong euro and the



volatility of currencies also affected the competitiveness of the European boating industry. Some areas in Europe are also facing rising imports of non-compliant used boats, mostly from North America. The European Commission underlined that since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010, a new set of rules entered into force for market surveillance and CE marking. *European Boating Industry* noted that European countries with national boat registration systems dramatically reduced the presence of non-compliant boats and proposed considering the possible promotion of such systems.

### **The EU 2020 Strategy for a smarter and greener economy**

The new European Commission (said “Barroso II”) will be committed to attach more importance to a “*smarter and greener economy*”. One of its priorities is the establishment of a framework for a competitive, connected and greener economy. This comprises inter alia action to stimulate lower and more efficient consumption of non-renewable energy, reduction of emissions and the development and use of more energy-efficient technologies. Is the EU’s environmental legislation a threat or an opportunity for the boating industry? Green rules and measures to thrive competitiveness do not automatically exclude themselves. *European Boating Industry* agreed that to keep their competitive advantage, European companies must remain at the forefront of environmental innovation. It added that the European industry is ready to work on high environmental standards provided that a) companies, mostly SMEs, have the necessary time to adapt; b) cheap and polluting products are prevented from entering the EU market (a fair competition and efficient market surveillance are required); and c) the access to the EU internal market is not restricted by the emergence of local rules limiting boating and water sport activities for environmental reasons. The European Commission committed to creating a foreseeable regulatory framework that allows industry sufficient time to adapt and takes into account special needs for small and medium sized companies while at the same time going for ambitious regulation. *European Boating Industry* stressed that green legislation should not prevent economic activities when these are proved to be sustainable and not harmful to the local environment.

### **About R&D and innovation**

*European Boating Industry* presented examples of the R&D and innovation work carried out by the industry such as hybrid and electric propulsion systems, the eco-conception approach for boats, the development of low emission paints and resins, or of waste water management systems for small boats. The Commission mentioned the existing EU instruments to finance R&D and innovation, though it recognised that the application procedures are often too complicated and cumbersome: EU R&D programme rules and content are not well adapted to the needs of SMEs and simplification is needed there.



J.-J. Woelgden, C. Leroy, A. Jour-Schröder, K. Heiberg-Andersen (Windy Boats)

### **About international trade outside of EU**

The European Commission said that tackling non-tariff barriers and technical barriers to trade becomes more and more important, since different regulations or regulatory approaches easily create hurdles for market access. *European Boating Industry* added that the sector was seeking support for its companies to take full advantage of the EU internal market and also strengthen their export capacity abroad. Unifying export markets was a suggested approach.