



EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY GENERAL MEETING
European Leisure Marine Industries Federation

Monday, 24 January 2011, from 13:30 to 15:30

Meeting Room 6 – CCD South/Süd (2nd floor)
Boot Düsseldorf (Germany)

Item 3 – President's Report on 2010

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear members,
Dear guests,

It is a real pleasure to see you all present today for this extraordinary meeting of the Assembly General. Please let me welcome you all and present you my best wishes for the New Year that has started.

The year 2010 marked the first full year of operation for our European federation and given the still modest means we have, I can say that the results did not only meet my expectations but in some cases, went also above them. I wish the markets and the economic situation for the European industry had evolved as positively too.

First, let me outline the 5 objectives of our association for the period 2010-2012 which I presented you in April last year at our first Assembly General in Brussels:

- Be the single reference organisation at EU level to represent the European industry
- Profile ourselves as both a successful sector of the economy and the voice of the European boating industry
- Successfully manage the top 5 issues in EU affairs
- Grow the association, its resources and its influence
- Capture and integrate contacts and experiences.

Today, we are the sole industry federation present in Brussels to represent the interests of the European boating industry. Our Secretary General Mirna Cieniewicz carried out a lot of communication and public relation work among EU institutions to raise the visibility and the profile of our organisation, in order to make *European Boating Industry* a well-known association and the direct contact for anyone interested in boating. I believe this objective was well achieved and I will present you later on the results in this regard.

Despite an economic situation that is not yet satisfactory for many of our companies, we decided during the last Assembly General in April 2010 to raise the level of the fees for the 2 largest categories of our membership. This decision will be reflected in the 2011 budget, which will be presented to you by our Treasurer Yves Lyon-Caen. The objective here is to grow the financial capacity of the association in order to grow its resources and its influence. As you will all see from my report, the number of EU issues affecting the boating industry – be they of technical, environmental, legal

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or political nature – is high and also continuously growing. We need to give our association the means to face those challenges, continue being a trusted interlocutor with credibility, and the source of high-quality information and expertise about our industry in Brussels.

Looking at the membership basis of our organisation, I took personally the task of convincing the few remaining European associations, which were not yet a member of our organisation, to join *European Boating Industry*. And I would like to welcome here our newest members who are DBSV from Germany, POLBOAT from Poland and SBV from Switzerland. I also warmly welcome our guest from the Estonian Boatbuilders' Association.

The year 2010 was also a year of transition for us, members, since we moved from 2 working groups (EURMIG and ECNI) towards a single and very dynamic European federation. I can say that this transition was successfully managed and that the Council, which acts as a Board is a fully-functioning and operational one. The year 2010 was an important year for me as first elected President but also for my colleagues in the Council. It was the first year we all worked together within the Council and I believe we managed to establish trust, build good working relationships and bring forward a lot of issues from our work programme. In this regard, I would like to thank the Council members and all the executives in the national associations for their work and especially for their commitment to build together a strong and active association.

Let me now move on to our achievements and present you in further details our work in specific 3 areas: EU affairs, communication and events / meetings.

1. EU Affairs

Today, EU institutions in Brussels are active on a growing number of issues in the areas of environment, technical & safety, navigation, R&D & innovation, business & taxation, professional training, and many others. *European Boating Industry* has to operate on multiple levels there: providing you with policy intelligence and analysis of EU legislative proposals, being the representative voice and source of expertise about our particular industry, and increasingly also dealing with regulatory authorities.

In the field of environment, the top issue identified was the EU carbon tax on fuels used by boats but I am relieved to announce that this proposal is for the time suspended. However, other environmental issues came higher on the political agenda: boat's end-of-life and waste reception facilities for marinas will become the hot topics in 2011 while steady work was done on the various legislation regulating water and the marine environment, industrial emissions, biocides and paints.

In the field of technical and safety matters, the top issue was with no doubt the revision of the recreational craft directive. I would like to thank here your technical staff in national associations for the work and the expertise they provided to the Secretariat. Your experts were really instrumental in ensuring that our industry gets a new legislation, which is both respectful of the environment and adapted to the industry's needs. The directive's text was expected now in January but we heard there are some administrative delays. *European Boating Industry* will continue to closely follow its development during the debates in European Parliament and in

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Council of Ministers. The other important issue is the revision of the directive regulating personal flotation devices. This topic will continue in 2011 and the first meeting with European manufacturers is taking place right after our meeting. Another technical topic concerned the radio equipment directive. Finally, I must mention here the good cooperation with the ICOMIA Technical Committee. Our Secretary General attended most of its meetings and could share information with its members and ICOMIA Technical Manager Udo Kleinitz.

In the field of navigation, the top issue was the topic of boater's qualifications. The Secretariat produced an overview of the current requirements and the implementation of a UN convention for an international certificate called ICC, which facilitates mutual recognition of national documents. The European Commission launched in the summer 2010 a consultation on this issue and we are now expecting the results to be presented at the next meeting in February. The idea here is to see how the free movement of boaters and their boats can be encouraged, while reducing administrative burdens. The other important topic relates to the boat registration. The Secretariat produced an overview of the current national systems, while the Finnish model was presented as the user-friendliest one. Finally, there is one topic we could not develop due to both a lack of time and resources; it is the minimum safety equipment on board.

In the field of R&D and innovation, the boating industry was represented by the Secretary General and a consultant you probably know called Ken Wittamore. They attended the various meetings of the EU Waterborne Technology Platform, which is the grouping of maritime industries for innovation. You were informed of EU funding opportunities offered by the 7th Research and Development Programme and the Eco-innovation programme. As far as I know, there was no project proposal submitted by our members or they were not successful. Nevertheless, I think it is important to continue our participation there and continue alerting companies on funding opportunities.

In the field of business and taxation, the top issue was the EU anti-dumping investigation started against Chinese fibreglass imports. We joined forces with the European composite association and this alliance proved to be a successful one. The voice of the European boating industry was heard and considered. Furthermore, the European Commission has now reduced the proposed anti-dumping duties by 2/3 asking for 13.8% levy instead of the currently in place 43.6%. After postponing the vote once, only 4 Member States voted in favour of the anti-dumping measures but these were carried since an astonishing number of countries abstained with the result of being counted as favourable votes too. Here again, I would like to thank you – the national associations – for your active participation in European affairs. In addition, briefing notes were circulated on RAPEX, which is the EU alert system for unsafe products and the new rules on VAT for services. Finally, we planned to work on a proposal for reduced VAT rate on boating safety equipment but due to both lack of time and the difficult economic climate, we have not yet started working on it.

Last but not least, tourism became a new area of work for our association. With the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, tourism is now under European competence and the European Commission started developing a tourism policy. *European Boating Industry* was extremely active in raising the profile and the contribution of boating to

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tourism and early information seem to confirm that we have been so far successful. Tourism is an area of work that will continue developing in 2011 and that could possibly also involve new aspects such as employment, training and skills.

Before moving to the next area of work which is Communication, I would like to mention that our Secretary General is assisted in Brussels by a public affairs consultancy called Logos, where a team of 3 consultants assists her with the monitoring and analysis of EU developments.

Additionally, we benefit from a good cooperation with ICOMIA, and especially its Technical Manager and its Environmental Director in these fields. Our service-level agreement with ICOMIA foresees an annual review and I can say the Council is satisfied with the positive collaboration.

2. Communication

In the field of communication now, we have established in 2010 the essential communication tools, which are:

- The website www.europeanboatingindustry.eu that features a Members' Area where most of the briefing notes and other documents are available for consultation
- The News Alerts is an e-mail-based communication that is sent out to all members every 6 weeks. It aims at presenting the latest developments at EU level and the news are made short and simple so you can easily use them to inform your companies.
- Notes and briefings are sent out to the various internal mailing lists (Council, Executives, Technical & Environmental Managers) on specific topics, typically when your thoughts and positions are needed to prepare the European one.
- Finally, our Secretary General deals with specific member's questions and requests for information. Such questions coming from a national association are drawing attention to a specific national matter, which often also has a European origin. So please don't be shy and keep asking since it is often later to the benefit of all members.

I am aware that there is a lot of communication and e-mails coming out from the Secretariat and requiring your attention and most of the time also your response. Given the large amount of topics now dealt by EU institutions, I am afraid this trend will not reverse and I understand it can be difficult for a smaller association to keep track on all topics dealt with by *European Boating Industry*. However, if we want to be an active organisation and function in a democratic way, the Secretary General has no other choice than inform you and seek your advice or position. And the rule is that no reply means a positive reply. At the same time, please inform the Secretariat if you have a burning issue so we know who has a key interest in it. We are still building our association, so please feel free to share your thoughts with us. We are open to all suggestions and ideas to improve our communication to you and your companies.



3. Events & Meetings

In 2010 *European Boating Industry* organised a series of events with the objective to raise the visibility and the profile of our industry sector and organisation.

Roundtable with the European Commission – January 2010 in boot Düsseldorf

Last year at boot Düsseldorf, we hosted a delegation from the European Commission, precisely the Unit in charge of the revision of the recreational craft directive. They had the chance to visit a boat show for the first time and meet with our members to exchange about the actions of the Commission relating to the boating sector, while we presented them with the challenges of our industry.

Briefing session with the European Commission – April 2010 in Brussels

At the occasion of the Assembly General last year, we also organised in Brussels a briefing session with the Commission's Directorate-General in charge of enterprise and industry. Attendants could learn about several programmes offered to companies such as the Enterprise Experience Programme, the Erasmus for Entrepreneurs and the Competitiveness & Innovation Programme. Some members did participate in some of them.

European Maritime Day – May 2010 in Gijon (Spain)

The European Maritime Day is a large gathering of all actors involved in maritime affairs, from governments and public authorities to industry and the civil society. *European Boating Industry* was particularly active with a dedicated stand we shared with our Spanish member ANEN, with the sailing boat *Traité de Rome* – the first racing boat under European flag – on which we embarked with EU officials for a tour at sea, and as speakers in various workshops and conferences such as the Maritime Industry Forum, the workshop on coastal tourism and the one on boat's end-of-life.

Roundtable with Vice-President Tajani – October 2010 in Genoa

The event with the highest political importance was without any doubt the meeting with European Commission's Vice-President Antonio Tajani who is in charge of enterprise, industry and tourism. The meeting took place during the Genoa boat show and again, it was the first time that such a high political figure visited a boat show and met with European industrialists from our sector. This meeting also reinforced the image and the positive perception of our sector by high-level politicians.

I would like to finish my report with the statutory meetings organised in 2010. We held our first Assembly General in April with a strong participation of the members (12 out of 15 member associations at the time were present). The Council met 4 times, mainly on boat shows and once in our Brussels' offices. The Committee of Executives, which is open to all directors and executives met 3 times, in London hosted by the BMF in March, in Brussels in September and in METS in November.

I thank you for your attention and if there are any questions, I am ready to take them.

President Fritz Conyn