

## **ASSEMBLY GENERAL MEETING**

### **boot Düsseldorf – Tuesday, 24 January 2017**

#### **Item 4 – President’s Report for the year 2016**

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear members,

Welcome to our Assembly General meeting. I hope you all enjoyed your festive break and I wish you all a successful and prosperous year 2017!

This is my second year as President of European Boating Industry, and I am proud to say that we handled successfully several changes within our association, while maintaining its leading role of voice of the European industry and achieving a number of success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Council Members, Robert Marx, Jean-Pierre Goudant, Piotr Jasionowski and Olda Straka for their precious help and dedication.

Dear members, it is of outmost importance that the boating industry remains visible and vocal with the EU institutions, where the huge majority of the legislation is developed. Your active participation, through your input, your time, and your support, is greatly appreciated.

Today, I will outline the main highlights of 2016

#### **I. About the association’s life**

After several years running the association, since its creation in 2009 actually, Secretary General Mirna Cieniewicz left her position to move towards new professional challenges. Sandrine Devos was appointed as new Secretary General and took her functions at the end of August. The transition went smoothly, thanks to the support of EBI members, and thanks to the assistance of Ewa Tomczuk, European Affairs Officer. You may have noticed the absence of Ewa, who is on maternity leave and will be back to resume her work in a few weeks. The head-quarters of EBI had to be moved for practical and financial reasons. The new office is still at the heart of the European quarter in Brussels and you are always welcome there. As you can see, despite some developments, EBI has a solid team based in Brussels at the service of its members.

In 2016 again, European Boating Industry has grown as a recognised partner by the EU Institutions and by the relevant stakeholders. We are consulted on a wide range of policies, invited to an increasing number of events and we cooperate with other associations and companies.

On the financial side: expenses have been kept to a minimum, but finances remain challenging due to limited incomes from membership fees.

## **2. EU Affairs**

The objectives of our work, as defined in the Industry Roadmap are:

- A) Develop & strengthen industrial leadership
- B) Develop & strengthen skills & vocational training
- C) Support boating-friendly public policies
- D) Secure the access to water & the freedom of leisure navigation
- E) Contribute to the development of boating/watersport markets in Europe
- F) Contribute to the development of boating/watersport markets outside Europe

The actions listed under the objectives A-F often relate to more than one of the objectives they are assigned to. They are in fact like road directions that all lead to one destination: a stronger European boating sector.

### **A. Develop & strengthen industrial leadership**

The files which are being monitored or actively worked on are numerous. Let me just highlight the major ones:

A major topic in 2016 was still the Recreational Craft Directive, as during this transition year, the industry was still facing several potential difficulties with the delays in Member States, not only when it comes to the transposition of the EU rules into the national law, but also the delays in the Member States in accreditation of the notified bodies, in accordance with the new Directive. European Boating Industry actively addressed these issues with the European Commission and some Member States.

We kept focusing our efforts on informing all boating companies of the changes brought by the new EU Directive 2013/53/EU on Watercraft. Our best-seller, the EU RCD Guide, which was developed together with ICOMIA, was welcomed by companies and some updates were published.

The Boat Sales Statistics Programme has been running for its first year, and tomorrow a meeting is conveyed to assess its functioning.

Safety is always a priority for responsible industries. European Boating Industry followed the revision of the Regulation on Personal Protective Equipment and the fitness check on passenger ship safety

Following the Boat DIGEST project, boat dismantling and recycling is still on the radar, especially with the EU Circular Economy package.

### **B. Develop & strengthen skills & vocational training**

In August 2016, we successfully closed the **EU project TCC-SCV** (TRECNET Core Curriculum for Small Commercial Vessels).

The closing events (the conference and cocktail event) of June were very well attended and successful. The project gained a lot of attention within the EU institutions:

- The European Commission will most likely include some of our recommendations in the upcoming study on nautical tourism;
- The European Parliament agreed to dedicate a budget to nautical skills;
- The Maltese EU Presidency has expressed interest in promoting the initiative.

More about the project on <http://www.tcc-scv.eu>

### **C) Support boating-friendly public policies**

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, the EU Regulation on **monitoring, reporting and verification of ship emissions** was published in the EU Official Journal. Joining forces with ICOMIA, MYBA and SYBAAss to represent the superyacht sector on this file, European Boating Industry achieved that the changes we had lobbied for were maintained in the adopted legislation and that the vast majority of superyachts will be saved from this new requirement for the time being. The application of the law will start on 1 January 2018 when companies shall start monitoring emissions.

Activities initiated in 2015 were pursued: for instance the cooperation with SYBAAss on superyacht files.

Looking at EU policies, European Boating Industry is closely involved in **the implementation of the EU Strategy on Coastal and Maritime Tourism** adopted by the European Commission. This Strategy includes several of our proposals: professional skipper qualifications, safety requirements for charter, study on marina innovative practices, etc.

European Boating Industry can also support its members at national level in their lobbying activities.

### **D) Secure access to water**

Securing access to water is often more of a local or national issue than a European one. Nevertheless European Boating Industry can support its members in their **national lobbying work**.

EBI has been involved in the EU environmental legislation: marine protected areas (Natura 2000), water and air quality, and noise. EBI has been approached by MedPAN and we have to see how we can cooperate.

A recurrent activity, the Secretariat participated in the actions undertaken by Navigation Task Force on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive or Marine Strategy Framework Directive. We have also continued our dialogue with various green NGOs and organisations on sustainable boating.

### **E) Contribute to the development of boating in Europe**

The European institutions have been working on two broad themes which are relevant to us: tourism and the blue economy. EBI has been active in both, actively seeking to put recreational boating high on the agenda.

In the field of tourism in particular, European Boating Industry (EBI) has joined forces with other private and public tourism stakeholders and signed the Tourism for Growth and Jobs Manifesto. This is an important area to work on, which also includes changing trends: senior boaters, new comers, use vs ownership, or seasonality. We are currently analysing the funding opportunities in this area and are being invited at several events.

The monthly newsletter is regularly advertising the various funding opportunities available to the industry, with EU officials speaking about it at our meetings. All members are invited to share this information with their member companies.

### **F) Contribute to the development of boating outside Europe**

2016 saw major political changes in the world, which can have a more or less direct impact on our sector:

The Brexit will most certainly have an impact as UK will have to negotiate new trade agreements with the EU.

The US elections meant that the negotiations for the EU-US Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) were mainly on a break.

Although 2016 was more of an observation year, European Boating Industry kept close contacts with its US counterpart, the NMMA, and the European Commission who is the lead negotiator. EBI also renewed its service level agreement with ICOMIA and the exchanges of information from both sides are beneficial to all members.

European Boating Industry continues to promote the benefits of international standardisation (vs national rules) to achieve global standards worldwide.

### **3. Communications**

The **website** is our business card, especially for EU policy-makers wishing to know more about our sector. It is regularly updated and a new version has been released to improve the use of mobile devices, the access to information and sharing on social media.

The monthly **newsletter** is a powerful information tool. All members are invited to share their national news with the Secretariat.

European Boating Industry publishes a monthly **column on EU affairs** in Boating Business, a UK-based trade magazine with a circulation of approximately 5,500 copies. The Secretariat issues press releases about its work and articles to IBI.

With an active presence on social media, European Boating Industry runs a **Twitter** account @EuroBoatingInd with over 822 followers (+110 compared to last year!), including prominent EU officials retweeting our posts. On LinkedIn, over 180 people follow European Boating Industry and its company page on <https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-boating-industry>

### **4. Events and Meetings**

For the record, this is the list of events organised or attended by European Boating Industry in 2016:

- 26 January: International Breakfast Meeting on competitiveness, boat Düsseldorf (Germany)
- 18-19 May: European Maritime Day, Turku (Finland)
- 9 March: Speech by Secretary General M. Cieniewicz at ANEN Nautical Congress, Barcelona
- 15 June: Nautical tourism cocktail reception hosted at European Parliament, Brussels
- 16 June: "Skippers Working Without Borders" conference, Brussels

- 14 November: Presentation by S. Devos at conference “Sustainability in the Marine Industry” at METS, Amsterdam (Netherlands)
- 6 December: Conference “Innovation & technology: the future of boating”, Nautic Paris (France)

In 2016, European Boating Industry held 2 meetings of the Assembly General, 4 of the Council and 1 of the Committee of Executives. Beside the statutory meetings, the Secretariat regularly attends meetings and conferences in Brussels and outside.

As President, I am proud of all the great work we have done so far!

European Boating Industry activities are led in Brussels by the General Secretariat, but many actions come from our members, the national industry associations, and the companies.

I am a strong believer of the unique role of the European Boating Industry. We have achieved a lot already, and I am more than confident that we can achieve much more in the coming years. We have a lot of challenges and exciting projects ahead of us and I look forward to continuing the good work with you in 2017.

Thank you for your attention,

Piero Formenti, President