

2009 European Annual General Meeting (EAGM)

Linz, Austria – 28 & 29 November 2009

Summary Report

The chairmen and class representatives of the countries of the European region of the Laser Class Association met in Linz for the annual two day meeting to discuss the activities and developments of Laser sailing in Europe.

This year, a new Chairman and Vice Chairman for the European region were elected – Calle Lindfors from Finland was elected as the new Chairman and Laszlo Matyas from Hungary was elected as the new Vice Chairman. The meeting thanked Jean-Luc Michon and Ahmet Ediboglu, the retiring Chairman and Vice Chairman, for their service to the European Laser class. Calle and Laszlo join the three remaining members of the European Executive Committee, Luc Dumonceau (Master's coordinator), Elena Papazoglou (Women's coordinator) and Zlatko Jakelic (Laser 4.7 & Youth coordinator) and will continue to work hard this year to lead the European Laser Class forward through 2010.

The meeting spent a substantial amount of time discussing the financial position of the European Laser class; with reserves of £39,315, the class is financially secure in the short term. However, the current income and expenditure account showed a deficit in 2009 of £7,780. This was mostly due to losses in exchange following the weakness of the British pound and a reduction in the subsidy received from LaserPerformance through the global economic slowdown. The discussion then moved on to the forecasts for 2010 & 2011. The meeting agreed on two points of action to enable the region to generate a small surplus in each year. The first point of action is that all European Championships will now be operated in Euros and entry fees will be charged in Euros. The second action is that the entry fee is set for European Championships at the equivalent average Euro rate for entry over the last five years (€210). It was also agreed that the European Executive should propose a system through which the European Masters Championship, the Europa Cup and the Euro Masters Series may be entered and / or registered through the European office in 2011.

The discussion then focused on a proposal to introduce a limit on the number of extra places that would be available for each country at each European Championship from 2011. A similar proposal was recently adopted for ILCA World Championships for 2010. The meeting discussed the positive and negative aspects of the proposal, there were questions whether the limit should apply to youth championships, also if the allocations and limits could be based on the actual number of sailors in each country participating in the respective Laser rig. The meeting voted in favour of the entry limit per country. The meeting then discussed the publication of sailing instructions for European championships and agreed that the sailing instructions would be emailed to all entrants before the championships in order to save paper and sailors would be asked to print the sailing instructions if they feel it necessary and to bring with them. The meeting also agreed that the sailing instructions would be changed to allow a race committee the flexibility to adjust the starting order of fleets within a championship to ensure that racing could always go ahead smoothly if the conditions were suitable. The prizes awarded at the European Championship were also changed in order to better reflect the

participation numbers. In addition the European Trophy was created which can be awarded to European and non-European competitors alike, which the European Championship prizes are reserved to European competitors only.

There was also a discussion about the process for selecting European Championships, the meeting agreed on a new format of bids three years ahead, followed by site visits, and inspection before a preferred venue is selected. The new selection procedure will start with all 2012 European Championships. The selection of the 2012 European Championships was postponed until April, as it is important to wait for the selection of the 2012 World Championships before making a choice for the Europeans. Any club interested in hosting a European Championship in 2012 should contact their national Laser Class and review the bid information at <http://events.laserinternational.org/en/europe/championship/bids>.

A comprehensive review of the Europa cup series, presented by Laszlo Matyas, was discussed and based on the findings the meeting agreed to some changes to the series. The changes increase the number of prizes available for the Laser Radial fleet; as the largest fleet in terms of participation, it was felt that more prizes would better reflect the challenge of succeeding in this demanding fleet. The next change was to require sailors to attend some of the high attendance regattas to receive an overall series score – specific details of the changes can be found in the Europa Cup Notice of Race, which is available from the web site (www.laserinternational.org/europe/europacup2010).

A proposal that has been discussed in various different forms for the past three years is to ask the ILCA World Council to consider a change in the Laser class rules to allow the sailing instructions to alter rule 42. This was discussed again in Linz as a proposal: that would allow, except on a beat to windward, pumping, rocking and ooching. An interesting discussion was held in which the meeting tried to balance the preferences of the professional sailors and aspiring new stars with the club sailor and average open meeting sailor. There were several points raised about the policing of rule 42 and how better training for jury could help, some concerns were also heard about how this change could alter the physical requirements of sailing a Laser and possibly “change the game” of Laser sailing. The meeting agreed by majority that this proposal would not be put forward to the ILCA World Council.

Calle Lindfors, the new Chairman, thanked the Austrian Laser Class for providing a well organized and great meeting venue, thanked Laser Performance for their support throughout 2009 and finally thanked the many national Laser Class officers present for all their efforts and hard work as volunteers each year.

The next EAGM is scheduled for 27 & 28 November 2010 in Milan, Italy.