

Date of the report: 24.02.2025

➤ **ECA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Chair: Noémi Horváth

Members: Scott Warren, Tommy Dee Packendorf, Susak Molinero, Mikhalis Farsaris

➤ **ACTIVITIES 2023-2024**

- **COMPETITIONS 2023**

The first Stand Up Paddling competition of the ECA was held in 2024.

- **COMPETITIONS 2024**

According to the recent decision made by the board of directors of the European Canoe Association (ECA), the Stand Up Paddling (SUP) European Championships will now be held every two years, beginning in the year 2024. This decision marks a significant milestone for the sport, as it aims to promote and elevate the profile of stand-up paddling across Europe. The inaugural edition of these championships was successfully organized in conjunction with the Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe European Championships, which took place in Szeged, Hungary. The event attracted a diverse range of participants and spectators alike, showcasing the growing popularity of SUP.

During the four exhilarating days of competition, athletes participated in a variety of SUP races, including sprint, technical, long distance, and inflatable races. Each of these race formats presented unique challenges and showcased the various skills required in stand-up paddling. One of the most significant challenges faced by the organizers was the creation of a comprehensive timetable that would allow all events to fit seamlessly around the canoe sprint and paracanoe races. This complex scheduling effort required careful planning and coordination to ensure that each event received the attention it deserved while maintaining an efficient flow throughout the competition.

A remarkable total of more than 200 athletes from 20 different countries descended upon Szeged to compete in the thrilling SUP events. The sprint course was designed to mirror that of the canoe sprint, featuring a straight 200-meter line. Athletes launched from automatic starting boots and raced on eight lanes, finishing before the finish tower. The intensity and speed of the sprint events captivated both participants and spectators.

In addition to the sprint races, the long-distance competition was a test of endurance and strategy. Starting from the southern end of the course, athletes embarked on a challenging journey that consisted of four laps, each measuring cca. 2,000 meters, bringing the total distance to an impressive 9,000 meters. This demanding course required competitors to maintain their stamina and focus throughout the event.

The technical race was equally exciting, commencing with eight athletes positioned at the southern end of the course. Participants paddled up to the 500-meter start before making their way back to the finish line, navigating five buoy turns along the way during a 1,000-meter course. This format tested not only the athletes' speed but also their agility and precision in maneuvering through the course.

Perhaps the most visually striking event was the inflatable race, which drew a large crowd. Nearly 100 paddlers started on the water simultaneously, launching into the 4,500-meter course in a spectacular display of energy and enthusiasm. The sight of so many athletes racing together created a vibrant and exhilarating atmosphere, showcasing the competitive spirit of the stand-up paddling community.

In summary, the inaugural Stand Up Paddling European Championships in Szeged proved to be a remarkable event, highlighting the skill and dedication of the athletes involved while setting a promising precedent for future championships. With the decision to hold these championships biennially, the ECA is undoubtedly fostering the growth and development of this exciting sport across Europe.

#### - MEETINGS

In January 2025, the new ECA SUP Technical Committee was established, bringing together representatives from five National Federations. This diverse committee includes athletes, event organizers, and technical officials, ensuring a comprehensive representation of various perspectives within the sport. The Technical Committee convenes regularly to discuss upcoming ECA SUP events and to strategize on future development programs, paving the way for the growth and enhancement of the sport.

#### - OTHER ACTIVITIES

The ECA Stand Up Paddling Ranking Series is planned to be established to promote the sport of stand-up paddling across Europe and to create a structured competitive framework for athletes of all levels.

---

➤ STRATEGIC PLANS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

The long-term goal is to enhance the participation, quality, and appeal of stand up paddling events across Europe, while ensuring inclusivity for all age categories and attracting top-tier athletes.

- Improve the Quality of Events
- Increase Number of Participating Athletes
- Engage with National Federations
- Develop races on different water surfaces
- Organize races in all age categories
- Attract the best paddlers in Europe
- Broaden the range of participants at events
- Support hosts throughout the whole organizing period
- Organize fun races for recreational paddlers

This strategic plan aims to enhance the image of stand up paddling in Europe through inclusive practices, high-quality events, and community engagement. By working with national federations, local organizers, and athletes, we can create a vibrant SUP culture that attracts participants of all ages and skill levels, ultimately fostering a thriving paddling community across the continent.