



# ECA

# WILDWATER CANOEING



# SPORT PROGRAM

# WILDWATER CANOEING



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## PRESENT OUR DISCIPLINE

- Definition
- History & Evolution
- Community

## STRATEGY

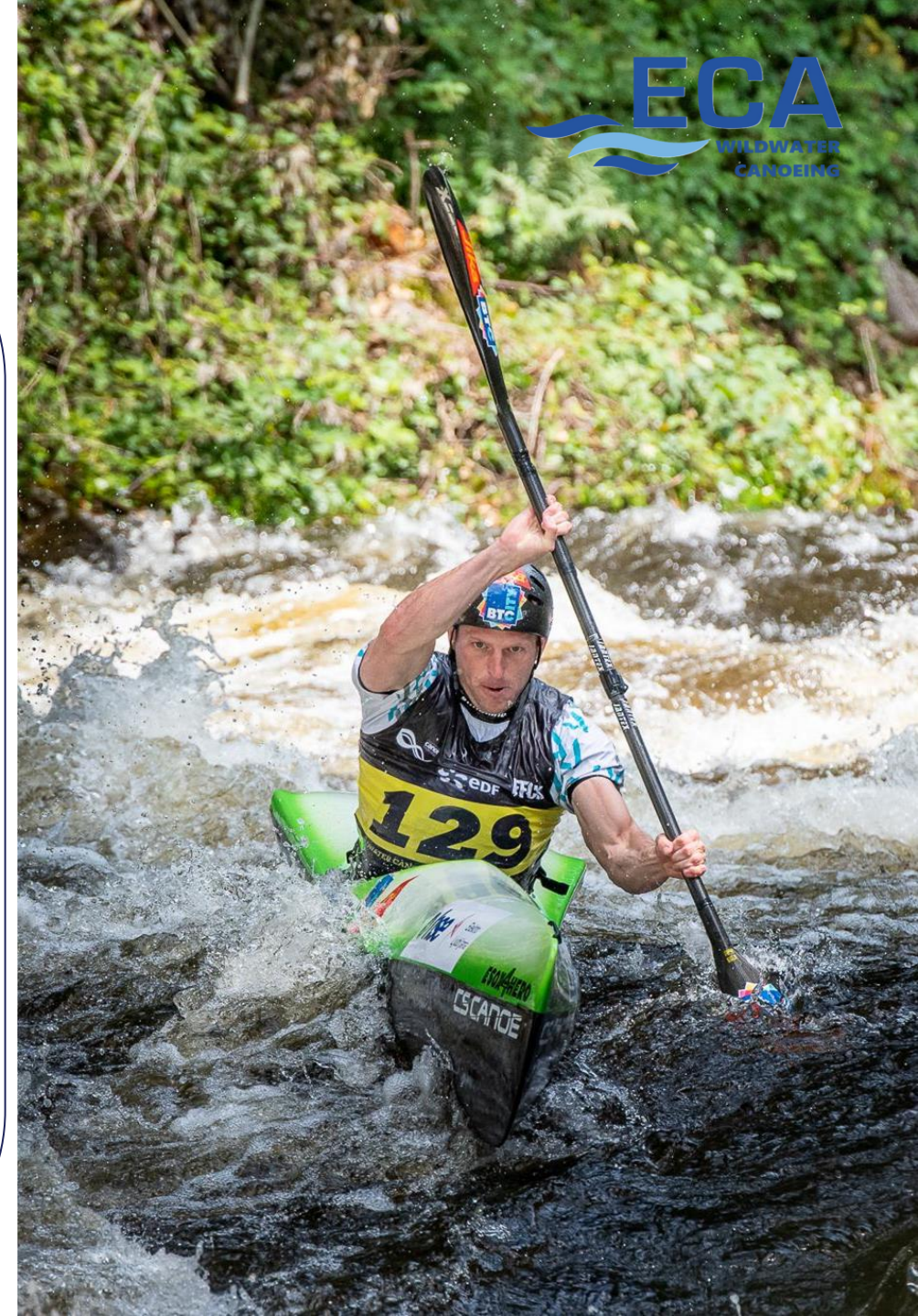
- SWOT Analysis
- Diagnosis of selected topics
- Action Planning





# INTRODUCTION

- **Wildwater canoeing** or **Downriver racing**
  - **The fastest** paddling sport on natural rivers
  - Raced on courses **200 meters** to **several kilometers** long
  - **Natural rivers** or artificial slalom courses
  - Simple results: the racer who competes the section **the fastest wins**
  - **Started together with slalom** during the first half of the 20th century
  - Requires **strength, endurance, quick reactions and experience**
  - Paddling between **waves, water cylinders, rocks** and other obstacles
  
  - **Classic** and **sprint** race
  - Classic is approx **20 minutes long** (maximum 60 min)
  - Sprint is approx **40 to 70 seconds long**
- Categories:  
**K1 men and women**  
**C1 men and women**  
**C2 men and women**  
**Team races** in every category  
(requires 3 boats always)



# The History of the Senior Wild Water World Championships



20th century      21st century

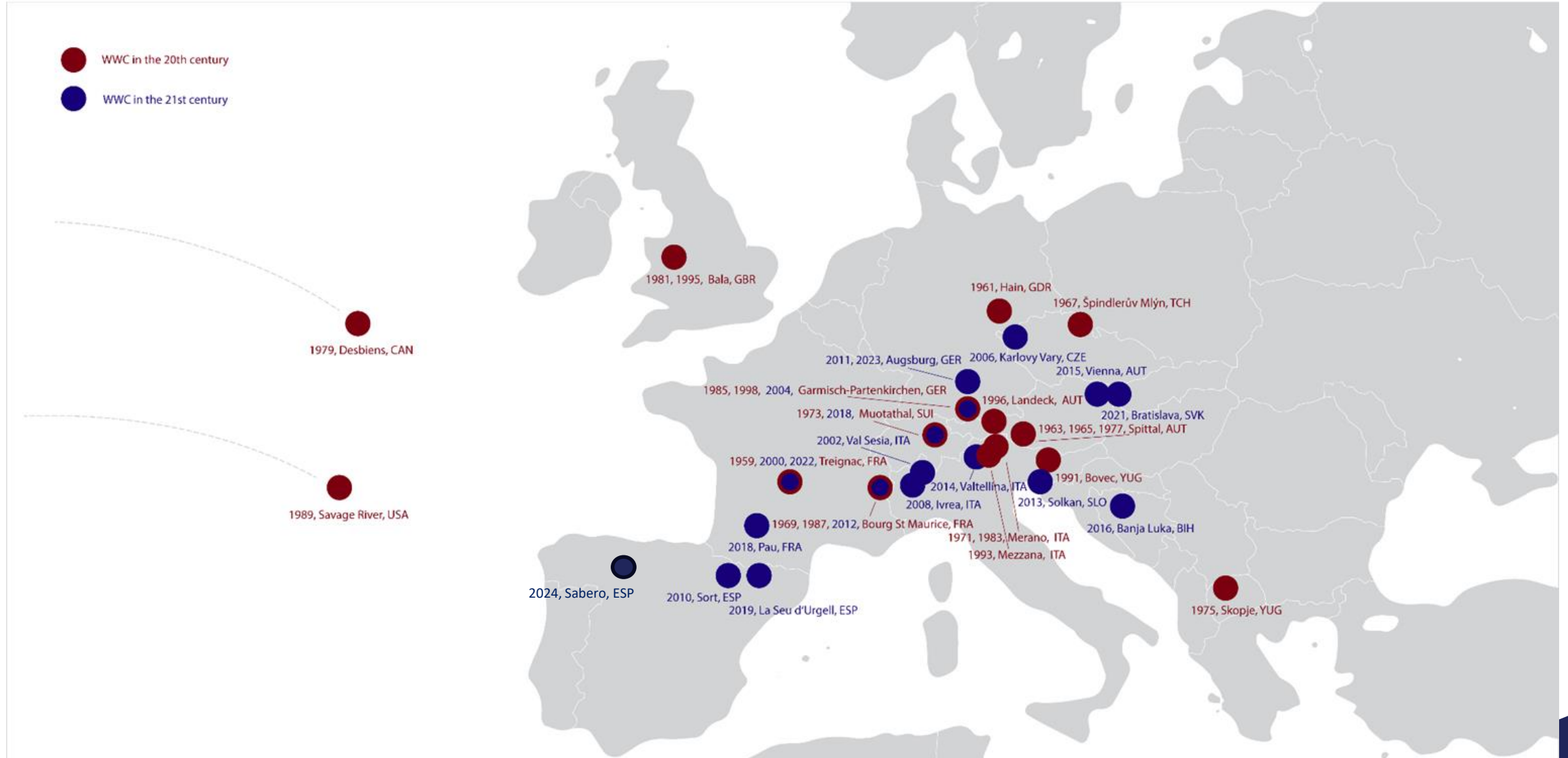
|      |                  |     |                             |      |                  |     |   |
|------|------------------|-----|-----------------------------|------|------------------|-----|---|
| 1959 | Treignac         | FRA | the first WWC               | 2000 | Treignac         | FRA |   |
| 1961 | Hain             | GDR | together with Slalom        | 2002 | Val Sesia        | ITA |   |
| 1963 | Spittal          | AUT | together with Slalom        | 2004 | Garmisch         | GER |   |
| 1965 | Spittal          | AUT | together with Slalom        | 2006 | Karlovy Vary     | CZE |   |
| 1967 | Špindlerův Mlýn  | TCH | Slalom WC in Lipno TCH      | 2008 | Ivrea            | ITA |   |
| 1969 | Bourg St Maurice | FRA | together with Slalom        | 2010 | Sort             | ESP |   |
| 1971 | Merano           | ITA | together with Slalom        | 2011 | Augsburg         | GER | Sprint WWC                              |
| 1973 | Muotathal        | SUI | together with Slalom        | 2012 | Bourg St Maurice | FRA |   |
| 1975 | Skopje           | YUG | together with Slalom        | 2013 | Solkan           | SLO | Sprint WWC                              |
| 1977 | Spittal          | AUT | together with Slalom        | 2014 | Valtellina       | ITA |   |
| 1979 | Desbiens         | CAN | Slalom WC in Jonquiére CAN  | 2015 | Vienna           | AUT | Sprint WWC                              |
| 1981 | Bala             | GBR | together with Slalom        | 2016 | Banja Luka       | BIH |   |
| 1983 | Merano           | ITA | together with Slalom        | 2017 | Pau              | FRA | Sprint WWC together with Slalom         |
| 1985 | Garmisch         | GER | Slalom WC in Augsburg       | 2018 | Muotathal        | SUI |   |
| 1987 | Bourg St Maurice | FRA | together with Slalom        | 2019 | La Seu d'Ugrell  | ESP | Sprint WWC together with Slalom         |
| 1989 | Savage River     | USA | together with Slalom        | 2020 | Nantahala        | USA | Cancelled because of Covid-19 pandemics |
| 1991 | Bovec            | YUG | Slalom WC in Tacen YUG      | 2021 | Bratislava       | SVK | Sprint WWC together with Slalom         |
| 1993 | Mezzana          | ITA | together with Slalom        | 2022 | Treignac         | FRA |   |
| 1995 | Bala             | GBR | Slalom WC in Nottingham GBR | 2023 | Augsburg         | GER | Sprint WWC                              |
| 1996 | Landeck          | AUT |                             | 2024 | Sabero           | ESP |   |
| 1998 | Garmisch         | GER |                             |      |                  |     |   |

in total:      40 Senior Wildwater World Championships  
 16 were together with the Slalom World Championships



# The Senior Wild Water World Championships

between 1959 and 2023



## The History of European Championships

| The Junior European Championships |                  |     | The Senior European Championships |                  |     |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| 1995                              | Špindlerův Mlýn  | CZE |                                   |                  |     |
| 1997                              | Bourg St Maurice | FRA | 1997                              | Bourg St Maurice | FRA |
| 1999                              | Kobarid/Bovec    | SLO | 1999                              | Kobarid/Bovec    | SLO |
| 2001                              | Val Sesia        | ITA | 2001                              | Val Sesia        | ITA |
| 2003                              | Karlovy Vary     | CZE | 2003                              | Karlovy Vary     | CZE |
| 2005                              | Chaloux          | FRA | 2005                              | Chaloux          | FRA |
| 2006                              | Bihac            | BIH | 2007                              | Bihac            | BIH |
| 2008                              | Valtellina       | ITA | 2009                              | Valtellina       | ITA |
| 2010                              | Kraljevo         | SRB | 2011                              | Kraljevo         | SRB |
| 2012                              | Solkan           | SLO | 2013                              | Bovec            | SLO |
| 2014                              | Banja Luka       | BIH | 2015                              | Banja Luka       | BIH |
| 2016                              | Murau            | AUT | 2017                              | Skopje           | MKD |
| 2018                              | Skopje           | MKD | 2019                              | Bovec            | SLO |
| 2021                              | Solkan           | SLO | 2021                              | Sabero           | ESP |
| 2022                              | Banja Luka       | BIH | 2023                              | Skopje           | MKD |
|                                   |                  |     | 2025                              | Mezzana          | ITA |

# The Senior & Junior Wild Water European Championships

between 1995 and 2023





# The History of World Cups



|      |  |                            |                              |
|------|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1994 | I., II. Merano ITA   | III., IV. Bala GBR         |                              |
| 1997 | I., II. Garmich GER  | III., IV. Kramsach GER     | V., VI. Valsesia ITA         |
| 1998 | I., II. Mezzana ITA  | III., IV. Muotathal SUI    | V., VI. Lofer AUT            |
| 1999 | I. - VI. New Zealand (I. Turangi, II. Taupo, III. + IV. Murchison, V. + VI. Cromwell)      |                            |                              |
| 2000 | I., II. Karlovy Vary CZE   | III., IV. Lofer AUT        | V., VI. Vipiteno ITA         |
| 2001 | I., II. Bovec SLO  | III., IV. Karlovy Vary CZE | V., VI. Lofer AUT            |
| 2002 | I., II. Bovec SLO  | III., IV. Mayrhofen AUT    | V., VI. Karlovy Vary CZE     |
| 2003 | I. - VI. USA   |                            |                              |
| 2004 | I., II. Bovec SLO  | III., IV. Karlovy Vary CZE | V., VI. Muotathal SUI        |
| 2005 | I. - VI. Great Britain   |                            |                              |
| 2006 | I., II. Mezzana ITA  | III., V. Lofer AUT         |                              |
| 2007 | I., II. Lofer AUT  | III., IV. Karlovy Vary CZE | V., VI. Ivrea ITA            |
| 2008 | I., II. Karlovy Vary CZE   | III., IV. Lofer AUT        |                              |
| 2009 | I. - VI. Tasmania (I. + II. + III. Upper Mersey, IV. Bradys, V. Ouse, VI. Cataract George) |                            |                              |
| 2010 | I., II. Bovec SLO  | III., IV. Valtelina ITA    | V., VI. Lofer AUT            |
| 2011 | I., II. Sort ESP   | III., IV. Bovec SLO        |                              |
| 2012 | I., II. Kraljevo SRB   | III., IV. Banja Luka BIH   |                              |
| 2013 | I., II. Banja Luka BIH   | III., IV. Valtelina ITA    |                              |
| 2014 | I. - III. Lofer AUT  | IV. Vienna AUT             |                              |
| 2015 | I., II. Bovec SLO  | III., IV. Murau AUT        |                              |
| 2016 | I., II. Celje SLO  | III., IV. Pau FRA          |                              |
| 2017 | I., II. Muotathal SUI  | III., IV. Augsburg GER     |                              |
| 2018 | I., II. Banja Luka BIH   | III., IV. Celje SLO        |                              |
| 2019 | I., II. Treignac FRA   | III. IV. Nujiang CHN       |                              |
| 2020 | no WWC (covid-19 pandemics)  |                            |                              |
| 2021 | I., II. Banja Luka BIH   | III., IV. Treignac FRA     |                              |
| 2022 | I., II. Treignac FRA   | III. - V. Celje SLO        |                              |
| 2023 | I., II. Mezzana ITA  | III., IV. Lipno CZE        | V., VI. Ceske Budejovice CZE |



# STRATEGY



# WILDWATER CANOEING STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- **Easy to organise**
- **Gender equity**
- **Team races:** Team races open up the possibility for weaker athletes to win medals who finished worse in the individual race (via CAN 3x C1/JUN at WWC in Roudnice 2023).
- **C2 categories:** The last wild water sport that has not yet disconnected from the original roots of the boating disciplines, the most attractive category.
- **Sport in a natural environment:** organizers, athletes, coaches and entire teams work in beautiful natural places in the river valleys.
- **ECA CUPS:** a wide range of races in the ECA Cup series for juniors and seniors
- **Sprint races:** can be held on artificial canals together with slalom, freestyle and rafting races
- **ICF Officials at competitions:** only 3 ICF Qualified Officials needed

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Team races:** Keep the team races, because it attracts 3 to 4 athletes from each category, even 6 to 8 in C2
- Target **WWC athletes and recreational paddlers**
- **ECA Youth Cup** (age < 15) as part of development
- **The wildwater canoeing „lovers“:** there are a lot of former and less active downriver paddlers in the World who are just waiting for an impulse to get back in the game. Whether in the form of starting a club or making their own racing comeback (via team from New Zealand, Ireland)
- **Northern European countries:** The imaginary geographical boundary of our sport is in the northern part of Germany and the UK. However, the countries of the Baltics, and the countries of the North have far less of a problem with drying up rivers compared to Central and Southern Europe, and they also have canoeing facilities. There is potential to develop downriver.

## WEAKNESSES

- **Competition mainly in middle, south of Europe**
- **Non-cooperation with other disciplines of canoe sport:** Lack of coordination in the creation of the international calendar of whitewater international races (CSL, CFR, Rafting, WWC)
- **Little support from federations:** due to the non-Olympic status for athletes as well as organisers
- **Lack of C1 and C2 athletes:** A vicious circle of low support for C disciplines of individual federations and clubs and at the same time low participation in international events and low valuation of achieved results
- **Dependence on water conditions:** dependence on water in times of drought and the operation of hydropower plants
- **Little will to organize world races:** decreasing number of organizational teams in federations

## THREATS

- **Efforts to abolish the team race:** Let's not forget that all canoeing is about team not individuals, but about collective, cooperation and sharing
- **Cancellation of C2 categories:** C2 together with K1 are the founding categories of canoeing. If something in nature is threatened with extinction, we try to protect and promote it as much as possible.
- **The end of composite boats:** Future manufacturing problem
- **Not enough coaches:** especially in canoeing categories, which may lead to their complete decline
- Escalation in **costs** – travel, equipment and events



# DEVELOPMENT





# DEVELOPMENT

## DEVELOP GLOBALLY OUR DISCIPLINES

### OUR PRIORITIES

- Support the federations with wildwater history which are having trouble keeping the sport active
- Connect and involve new ECA national federations into the W/W Sport
- Increase the number of Federations with Team Races at Club and National Level
- Increase the number of Federations with Canoe Individual and Double Racing at Club and National Level
- Introduce new club and family friendly Race Formats to increase participation
- International coach support

### ACTIONS

- Communication + together training camps and competitions, exchanging paddlers, coaches, know-how, support the younger generations during the events → **person to person activity**
- Look into marathons, slalom, rafting and sprint divisions, get to know these people from their events, present them the W/W sport, come to their country and explain, share the know-how, let them try our boats, gear + take them to our competitions → then try to find the potential coaches and also help them with the communication with their canoe federations → **club to club activity**
- Develop a strong club network and strengthen team working and communications between National Federations → **club to federation activity**
- Experiment and Share successful race formats much more widely. (The Roudnice TIP programme → needs to become a regular part of the calendar. Jamie Christie's Barrow Race format → a family-friendly race format or Jesko Klammer's September Race event in Munich such as Giant W/W Slalom Race, Team Races, etc.) → **organiser to organiser activity**
- Joint events/meetings and teambuilding of coaches at international competitions → **organiser to person activity**
- Focus on development in countries that have exceptionally participated in international events in the last 10 years, see map on next slide for more details → **organiser to federation activity**

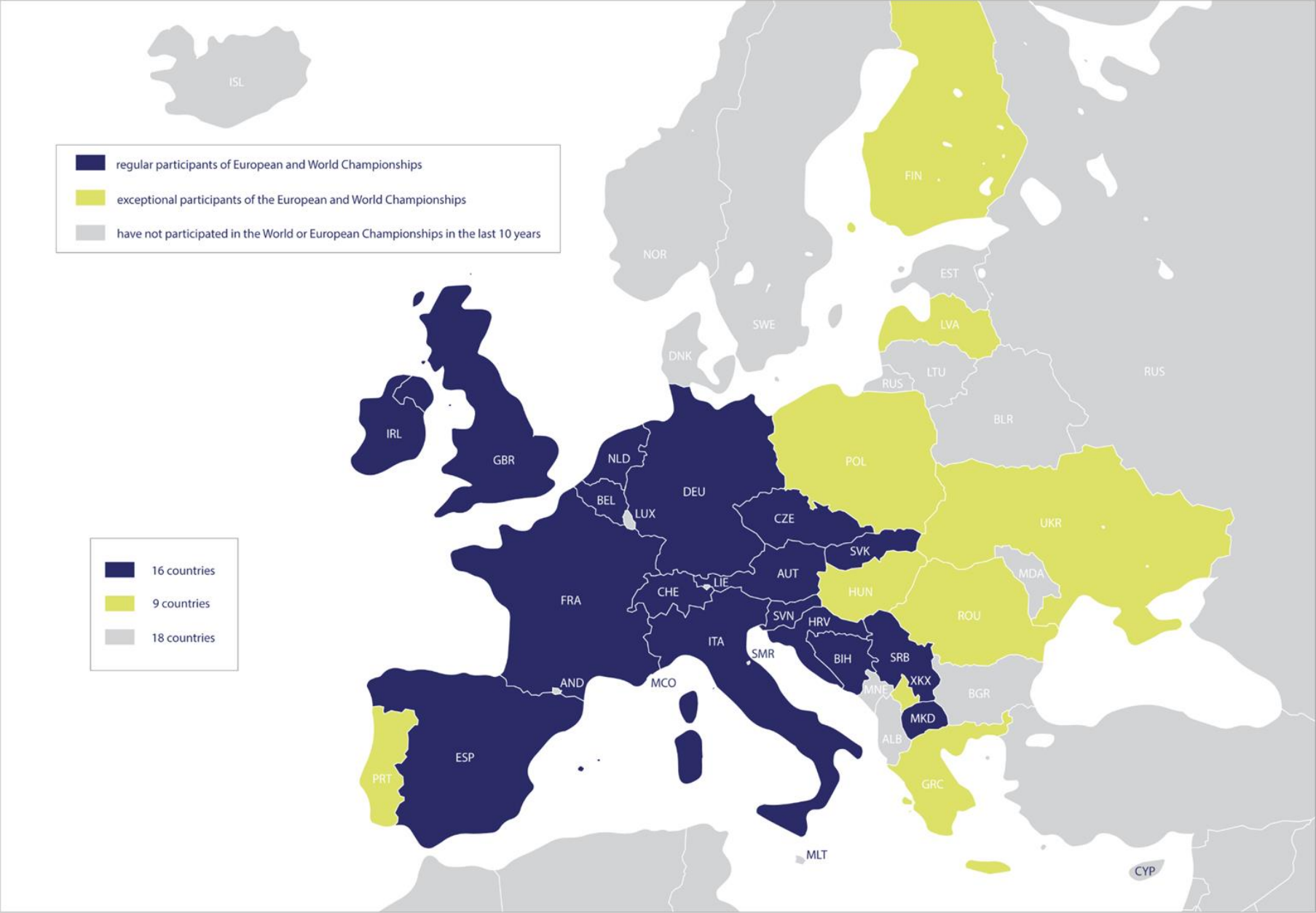
### Our strengths

- the potential for sports development in several countries due to their historical participation
- several countries with a strong wildwater base that can produce inspirational athletes and coaches

### Our Weaknesses

- little domestic support for non-Olympic paddling sport
- little awareness of wildwater sport in general
- lack of coaches

# Participation of European National Federations in the European or World Championships in the last 10 years





# EVENTS & CALENDAR





# EVENTS & CALENDAR

## IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR EVENTS AND CALENDAR

### OUR PRIORITIES

- International sharing of the downriver competitions and events
- Watch out for the same dates of Juniors&U23 slalom & sprint events as well as the wildwater events
- Develop Master's Events - keeping people in the sport as well as sharing and developing our club and coaching network.
- Develop Junior open events
- Support the organisers with the communication and proper feedbacks
- Preparation of racing standards for the development of new competitors as well as for gaining more attraction for spectators

### ACTIONS

- Create a cloud file with the events → **work on it together in the community**
- Reviewing the timing of international events → **communicate with slalom and sprint organisers**, use the opportunities in autumn and spring also
- Support the **Master's Championships** + organise together with Junior&U23 European Championships the **open race for juniors**
- Creation of a forum for current and future event organisers **to share experiences, technical plans and know how**
- **Focus on two major developmental branches** that are relevant to any future event. Explanation and more information on the next slide

### Our strengths

- skills of the technical delegates
- number of ECA Cups races

### Our Weaknesses

- lack of organizers
- poor communication with slalom and sprint canoeing when creating the calendar

# EVENTS AND CALENDAR

two major developmental branches  
standards at the events

## TIP Development Program

- equipment rental
- coaching support
- transport support at the racing venue
- inclusion of TIP competitors
- establishing links for the future
- any other help on the spot  
(catering/accommodation if needed)

## Spectator attractiveness

- working live results
- split times on classic races (at least 2 of them)
- split times on sprint races (at least 2 of them)
- digital results screen in the racing area
- all of this above in the live stream
- 2-3 camera's views from the classic races
- 2-3 camera's views from the sprint races
- post-race interviews with the winners also in the live stream
- high quality sports photography
- good and active commentator on the site

### Where and how to cut the costs for all of this above?

- **ICF and ECA medals:** event organizers have to buy expensive medals from ICF and ECA, wouldn't it be better to change the medal buying policy?
- **Concerts in the evenings on the racings days:** consider whether it is worthwhile to organise an evening programme at events during race days
- **Opening Ceremony:** competitors do not enjoy long opening ceremonies, prepare a quick simple low cost program for spectators and competitors
- **Gifts for competitors:** competitors don't have to get much, they don't have to get free t-shirts, welcome gifts or anything like that. It's extra service that's easy to skip



# VENUES & EQUIPMENT





# VENUES & EQUIPMENTS

## DEVELOP THE PLACES TO PADDLE FOR OUR DISCIPLINE

### OUR PRIORITIES

- Keep the competitions on the natural wild water rivers
- More races in more venues across Europe. This includes bringing in new venues and working to regain access to venues that have been lost over the last 20 years
- Increase the number of high difficulty (Grade II/IV) in wildwater races
- Increase the availability of the "Formula One" composite race boats

### ACTIONS

- Brainstorm about the **spring/autumn time for organizing** the proper **wildwater events** and begin **the adaptation** of global warming
- Get **feedback from athletes, clubs and national federations** on potential new and reactivated venues for investigation - are they going to be able to organize events there? + **historic venues overview**
- Find **new possible venues in development countries**
- Develop a shared **transport/ sharing/ exchange network for composite boats**
- Try to distribute **the cups and championships in the form of a circuit** to limit distance differences for **sustainable reasons**

### Our strengths

- using the full potential of wild water rivers
- using the artificial water courses
- helping the areas thanks to sport tourism
- light boats and paddles
- not much racing equipment is needed (like slalom gates, racing lines, etc.)

### Our Weaknesses

- emerging drought and global warming
- in many cases poor access to the river and race sections (long car journeys from the finish to the start)
- possible end of composite boats



# ATHLETES-JUDGES-REFEREES- OFFICIALS-COACHES-VOLUNTEERS- ORGANIZERS





THE JUDGES-REFEREES-OFFICIALS-COACHES-ATHLETES -VOLUNTEERS - ORGANIZERS - AT THE CENTER OF OUR PROJECTS

## OUR PRIORITIES

- Find new organiser / help existing organiser
- Increase number of ITOs
- Increase the number of Coaches
- Increase the availability of good quality wildwater-specific coaching material
- Improve Athlete Feedback
- Improve communication between the ECA and the individual federations
- Encourage volunteers

## ACTIONS

- Starting **webinars** or observer programs **for organisers**
- Extending the **webinars for ITO + attract people**
- Creating **list of coaches** for development activities who will **be available at international events**
- Develop **Online Coaching resources** (via Jamie Christie materials, GB), follow the **job-shadowing** scheme and **exchange programs of coaches**
- Develop new **Athlete Feedback Processes** and communications processes („Voice of the Athlete“)
- Start **sharing meeting reports publicly** on the web for all to read and be **more transparent**
- **special thanks/certificate** from ECA for volunteers at international events

## Our strengths

- few nations with good and self efficient organizers
- number of judges
- many volunteers who work for the love of sport

## Our Weaknesses

- the number of officials
- little communication between posts
- little number of coaches in federations



# RULES & REGULATIONS





# RULES & REGULATIONS

## IMPROVE OUR RULES AND REGULATIONS

### OUR PRIORITIES

- Simplifying and better communicating our competition rules
- Simplifying and improving our race calendar planning process
- Simplifying and improving the geographical coordination of our race calendar planning and in-year race organisation and management

### ACTIONS

- **Working together with ICF WW Committee** on rules evaluation process
- Review number of events per competition
- Increase **the number of local and regional series** to minimise traveling
- Provide a **framework for lead clubs** to develop local race series

### Our strengths

- traditional sport with simple and clear rules
- same rules like on the ICF level
- changes are going hand in hand with ICF

### Our Weaknesses

- lack of innovation strategy
- mostly European Sport, so the number of participating countries from different continents is small



# MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ECA





## ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE

### OUR PRIORITIES

- Maintain a simple, responsive and flexible structure of ECA WW committee
- Continue close collaboration with ICF WW Committee
- Develop the use of Social Media to improve communications within the sport and to the wider community
- Link to other disciplines

### ACTIONS

- Building of a committee 3 to 4 people with athletes rep and organiser inside - definition of skills
- Definition of the duties and responsibilities
- A specific focus on the use of enabling technologies to help develop our sport - open communication platform
- ECA sport commission - calendar coordination across disciplines



# ACTION PLANNING





# ACTION PLANNING

## 2025

- ECA WWC Committee member duties
- Strengthen networking (athletes, coaches, organisers, clubs, federation)
- Coaches course in conjunction with ICF
- ITO's education in conjunction with ICF
- Organiser forum
- More ECA Cup venues as base to organise competition on higher level
- Evaluation of new race formats – test events
- Increase number of NF in WWC European Championships to 18

## 2026

- organise together with Junior&U23 European Championships the open race for juniors
- Combination medal K1/C1
- Increase number of NF in WWC European Championships to 20
- Continue: networking, coaches and ITO's education

## 2027

- Review ECA WW Committee member duties
- WWC Master European Championships
- Review number of events during European Championships
- New race format (i.e. relay)
- Increase number of NF in WWC European Championships to 22

## 2028

- Increase number of NF in WWC European Championships to 24
- Adaption number of events during European Championships





**ECA**

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