



Minutes of the ECA Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting in Portugal, Ponte de Lima
1st & 2nd February 2025, 9:00 am

1/2025

Present members:

- President: Jean Zoungrana
- Vice Presidents: Andrej Jelenc
- Secretary General: Branko Lovric
- Board Members: Manuela Gawehn, Peter Karai, Geir Kvillum, Jovana Stanojevic, Ruud Hejiselaar
- ECA Communication and Partnership Manager Nina Jelenc
- Ivana Sundov

Absent members:

- Vice President: Miroslav Haviar

ITEM 1

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The President of the Portuguese Canoe Federation, Mr. Ricardo Machado, welcomed all Board members, expressing his appreciation for choosing Portugal as the host country and thanking the ECA for its continued collaboration. ECA President Jean Zoungrana then officially greeted the Board, acknowledging the warm welcome and excellent organization of the meeting before introducing the agenda.

PRESENTING THE AGENDA

1	Opening of the Meeting	J ZOUNGRANA
2	ECA Congress 2025 – Organization - Agenda	B LOVRIC J ZOUNGRANA
3	Member National Federations – confirmation	I SUNDOV/J STANOJEVIC
4	ECA elections	J ZOUNGRANA
5	Membership fees 2025- 2026	J ZOUNGRANA
6	Finance report 2023-2024	B LOVRIC
7	Provisional budget	B LOVRIC
8	Statutes changes – Request from Belgium	J ZOUNGRANA
9	Sport programme	J STANOJEVIC
10	ECA nomination / Logo	N JELENC J ZOUNGRANA

11	Athletes committee	J ZOUNGRANA P KARAI J STANOJEVIC
12	ECA Development programme	J ZOUNGRANA
13	Wildwater Canoeing development camp 2025	J STANOJEVIC/M GAWEHN
14	Canoe Marathon TIP camp 2025	J STANOJEVIC/R HEIJSELAAR
15	ECA headquarters location	J ZOUNGRANA
16	ECA Calendar and allocation of 2026 and 2027 ECA Championships	J STANOJEVIC
17	Other European Canoe competitions in 2025	J STANOJEVIC
18	ITOs for 2025 ECA Championships – validation	J STANOJEVIC
19	ECA Technical Committee members: Marathon, DragonBoat, Freestyle, Ocean Racing, Paracanoe, SUP - validation	J STANOJEVIC
20	Differences ECA to ICF rules	J STANOJEVIC
21	Neutral athletes and support staff at 2025 ECA Championships	J STANOJEVIC
22	Refugee Athletes at European Championships	J STANOJEVIC
23	ITO/Jury/ECA Staff Travel cost refund in 2025	I SUNDOV
24	Ukraine ITO costs	B LOVRIC/I SUNDOV
25	NFs Debts + Malta letter	B LOVRIC/I SUNDOV
26	Committees: Tourism committee name change / Sport commission	J ZOUNGRANA / J STANOJEVIC
27	ECA uniforms	J ZOUNGRANA
28	LA2028 New Olympic qualification system	P KARAI/J STANOJEVIC
29	ECA medals design	N JELENC
30	The date of next Board meeting	Board

The President proceeded with the meeting without any comments or alterations to the agenda.

ITEM 2

ECA CONGRESS 2025 – ORGANIZATION - AGENDA

The upcoming ECA Congress, scheduled for March 29, 2025, in Hungary, was discussed. The Board confirmed the program structure, including accreditation procedures and deadlines for delegate registration. A reminder will be sent regarding key deadlines, emphasizing that all necessary materials will be provided to the National Federations by February 12. The Board members agreed on the proposed Programme and Agenda, with some alterations. It was confirmed that only federations that have fully paid their fees will have voting rights. The voting system will remain the same as in previous years. Additionally, reports from Technical Delegates covering the past two years will be uploaded to the ECA website by early March and linked in the Congress presentation. Furthermore, the presentation will contain 2 slides per discipline made by TDs.

ITEM 3

MEMBER NATIONAL FEDERATIONS – CONFIRMATION

The Board discussed National Federations that have neither paid their membership fees for several years nor been active in competitions.

BM/1/2025.02.01. (unanimous)

As the current Statutes do not define procedures for such cases, it was agreed that Peter Karai will draft regulations outlining the process for suspension and expansion. Additionally, Branko Lovrić will contact the Montenegrin Olympic Committee to clarify the status of the Montenegro canoe federation.

ITEM 4

ECA ELECTIONS

The Board has reviewed the received nominations for Vice-President, Board members, and ICF Board representatives based on the invitation sent out on the 25th of November 2024. However, no female candidates have been nominated for the ICF Board.

BM/2/2025.02.01. (unanimous)

The Board agreed to seek official support from National Federations to encourage female candidates for this position.

ITEM 5

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2025- 2026

The Board discussed a proposal to categorize membership fees based on the ICF classification system. The financial impact of this system on the ECA budget was reviewed, ensuring both sustainability and accessibility. The final proposal will be presented and decided upon at the Ordinary Congress.

ITEM 6

FINANCE REPORT 2023-2024

The Board was presented with the financial reports for 2023 and 2024, noting that funds allocated for the development plan were not utilized. Since there were no further comments, the financial report for Congress will be updated with final adjustments. Additionally, the Board reviewed the invoice to the ICF for the development program, has not been sent. Expenses for 2024 related to Dallenwill and Skopje were confirmed, while records for 2023 will be rechecked.

ITEM 7

PROVISIONAL BUDGET

The Board was presented with the provisional budget for the next two years, 2025 and 2026. It will be updated with some alterations and provided with the materials for the Congress.

ITEM 8

STATUTES CHANGES – REQUEST FROM BELGIUM

The Belgium Royal Federation proposed that Technical Chairs should be elected by the Congress rather than appointed by the Board, as outlined in the current Statute, with final confirmation by the Board.

BM/3/2025.02.01. (unanimous)

After analysis and discussion, the Board decided to uphold the existing Statute on this matter.

ITEM 9

SPORT PROGRAMME

The Board was presented with the updates and final version of the Sports program. The Board reviewed updates, minor adjustments were made to the competition formats and qualification criteria. Additionally, new medical and anti-doping policies were introduced to align with international standards. The final version of the whole document will be prepared and sent to NFs by the 12th of February.

ITEM 10

ECA NOMINATION / LOGO

The Board was presented with an updated logo as part of the proposal to rebrand the European Canoe Association as "Paddle Europe." The Board discussed the broader implications of this change, including the need for a new website domain, email domain, and other administrative updates.

BM/4/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

To ensure sufficient time for a smooth transition, the name change will take effect in 2026, with final approval planned at the 2025 Congress.

ITEM 11

ATHLETES COMMITTEE

The role and structure of the Athletes Committee were reviewed, with the Board reaffirming its function as a key representative body for athletes.

BM/5/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

A call for applications will be issued, allowing National Federations to nominate their candidates for all disciplines for athlete committee members. The election for Olympic disciplines will take place during the European Championships in Sprint and Slalom, where participating athletes will cast their votes via an online questionnaire. The voting system will be made easily accessible through QR codes displayed throughout the venue.

ITEM 12

ECA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Board was presented with the implementation plan for the ECA Development Programme for 2025 and 2026. The program focuses on key areas, including the approval

of the Sports program by Congress, new approaches to engaging member federations, enhancing competitions and events, establishing exchange programs for coaches, organizing training camps during European Championships, participation in EU projects, and promoting recreational activities.

BM/6/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

As part of the initiative, the Board has decided to organize multiple training camps in the following disciplines: Sprint, Slalom, Marathon, Wildwater, Canoe Polo, and Dragon Boat. The details will be discussed and confirmed with the Organizing committees.

ITEM 13

WILDWATER CANOEING DEVELOPMENT CAMP 2025

The Board was presented with the organization of a Wildwater Development Camp in Mezzana, Italy, from May 31 to June 8, 2025, coinciding with the Wildwater Senior European Championships. Invitations will be sent to National Federations from countries in the early stages of Wildwater development. Each nation may send up to two athletes, ensuring gender equality.

BM/7/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

The estimated cost of the program and the proposal were accepted by the Board.

ITEM 14

CANOE MARATHON TIP CAMP 2025

The Board was presented with the Canoe Marathon TIP 2025 program, which is planned to take place in Ponte de Lima, Portugal, from May 29 to June 8, 2025. The program aims to identify and support talented athletes and coaches from nations new to the Canoe Marathon, providing them with the necessary training and competition experience.

The training camp is expected to run for approximately four days before the competition, from June 2 to June 8. National Federations that have not previously participated in the ECA Marathon European Championships, or athletes who have only recently begun competing in marathon events, are eligible to apply. The program is open to athletes aged 15 to 23 (born between 2001 and 2009).

BM/8/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

The Board approved the proposal and estimated cost of the program.

ITEM 15

ECA HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

The Board was presented with the conditions for relocating the ECA headquarters to Vaires-sur-Marne, France, highlighting the benefits of improved administrative support and the establishment of a European training centre.

BM/9/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

After reviewing the financial and logistical considerations, the Board approved the relocation.

ITEM 16

ECA CALENDAR AND ALLOCATION OF 2026 AND 2027 ECA CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Board reviewed and confirmed key dates and locations for the 2026-2027 ECA competition calendar.

The European Youth Olympic Festival in Skopje, Macedonia, was confirmed for July 21-24, 2025.

The Multi-Sport European Championships were proposed to take place between July 30 and August 9, 2026, in a decentralized format if the event goes ahead. The Canoe Sprint European Championships will be held in Montemor, Portugal, but scheduling complications were noted due to overlapping events, including the Mediterranean Games and the Sprint World Championships. If the Multi-Sport Championships do not proceed, alternative dates for Sprint will be discussed.

BM/10/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

For the 2026 European Championships, the Board allocated venues as follows:

Slalom Senior: Ivrea, Italy

Slalom Junior: Epinal, France

Freestyle: Lieksa, Finland

Stand-Up Paddling (SUP): Decision postponed until June 2025

Wildwater Junior: No bids received

For the 2027 European Championships, the following decisions were made:

Sprint Senior & Paracanoe: pending the event's inclusion in the European Games

Sprint Junior: decision postponed until June 2025

Slalom Senior: Krakow, Poland

Slalom Junior: vacant, no bidding documentation submitted; bid process to be reopened

Wildwater: no bids received

Marathon: Mirandela, Portugal

Canoe Polo: no bids received

Dragon Boat: decision postponed until June 2025

ITEM 17

OTHER EUROPEAN CANOE COMPETITIONS IN 2025

The Board discussed other European Canoe competition formats when the ECA name and logo are used, and coordination within the official ECA calendar. Additionally, it was noted that some disciplines are using the ECA Cup series as part of the development program.

BM/11/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

The Board agreed to further investigate the current situation across all disciplines, identify the differences, clarify ECA's role, and create a policy for 2026 competitions and beyond.

ITEM 18

ITOS FOR 2025 ECA CHAMPIONSHIPS – VALIDATION

The Board was presented with the list of International Technical Officials for the upcoming ECA Championships.

BM/12/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

The nominations for Sprint, Wildwater, Marathon, and Dragon Boat were accepted, while the Canoe Polo decision was postponed. The list for Slalom was approved, but the Board noted the need for better country balance in future selections to ensure fair representation across nations.

ITEM 19

ECA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: MARATHON, DRAGONBOAT, FREESTYLE, OCEAN RACING, PARACANOE, SUP - VALIDATION

The Board was presented with technical committees across disciplines. The committees for Paracanoes and Freestyle remain incomplete, as official letters from some National Federations are still pending.

BM/13/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

The Board approved the establishment of the ECA Recreational Committee, which will focus on developing educational and recreational programs to expand participation in paddle sports. The committees for Ocean Racing, SUP, Dragon Boat, and Marathon were confirmed with valid nominations from National Federations.

ITEM 20

DIFFERENCES ECA TO ICF RULES

The Board was presented with the rule differences in Sprint, Slalom, and Marathon disciplines. A situation was observed with Canoe Polo Clubs Cup, where rules exist but have not been formally provided to the Board or approved. It was emphasized that aligning ECA rules as closely as possible with ICF regulations, with only minor differences, when necessary, is the preferred approach.

BM/14/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

The variations in Sprint and Slalom were noted as minor, while Marathon introduced new formats for the Marathon Clubs Cup, which was accepted by the Board.

ITEM 21

NEUTRAL ATHLETES AND SUPPORT STAFF AT 2025 ECA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Responses have been received from all organizers. The next steps will involve communicating the details to National Federations and the ICF.

BM/15/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

Athletes recognized as neutral athletes will be allowed to participate in the following ECH: Canoe Slalom, Paris; Canoe Marathon, Portugal; Dragon Boat, Italy; Wildwater, Italy; Canoe Sprint Jun&U23, Romania; Canoe Slalom Jun&U23, Slovenia.

ITEM 22

REFUGEE ATHLETES AT EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Board discussed the participation of the refugee athletes at European Championships. It included an overview of the current ICF regulations and statistics on how other European sports handle refugee athletes.

BM/16/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

After discussion, the Board agreed to allow refugee athletes to participate in non-qualification events. The Board reserves the right to define its position for qualifying competitions for the Olympic and Paralympic Games based on the qualification system proposed by the ICF.

ITEM 23

ITO/JURY/ECA STAFF TRAVEL COST REFUND IN 2025

The Board discussed the travel policy for International Technical Officials (ITOs) and jury members, emphasizing the need for clearer guidelines and cost control.

BM/17/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

It was agreed to align ECA's policy with ICF's approach, covering plane tickets and car travel costs calculated per kilometer. Local airport transfers will be reimbursed, while other expenses such as parking and tolls will not be covered.

To streamline the booking process and ensure financial oversight, TravelPerk will be used as the official platform for flight reservations. A fixed reimbursement rate per kilometer will be introduced, with final details to be confirmed after consultation with ICF.

ITEM 24

UKRAINE ITO COSTS

The Ukrainian Federation submitted a request for a partial write-off from their ITO travel cost invoice.

BM/18/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

After deliberation, the Board approved the one-time write-off, considering the exceptional circumstances. However, it was emphasized that all future financial obligations must be met in accordance with ECA regulations.

ITEM 25

NFS DEBTS + MALTA LETTER

The Board reviewed the status of outstanding debts from National Federations. While only unpaid membership fees up to and including 2024 will impact voting rights at the Congress, it was noted that some federations have ongoing financial obligations to ECA that remain unsettled.

BM/19/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

A reminder will be sent to all federations outlining their outstanding debts. To ensure clearer financial procedures moving forward, regulations will be prepared to define the handling of unpaid invoices related to ITO costs, medal fees, and other financial commitments.

The Board also reviewed a letter from the Malta Canoe Federation regarding their financial situation. After consideration, it was confirmed that they must settle their 2024 membership fee, with further discussions to follow as needed.

ITEM 26

COMMITTEES: TOURISM COMMITTEE NAME CHANGE / SPORT COMMITTEE

The Board discussed the proposed name change for the Tourism Committee to better reflect its role and responsibilities. Additionally, the establishment of an ECA Sport Committee was proposed. The committee will serve as an advisory body for the development of ECA sports disciplines, ensuring alignment with ICF regulations and supporting future event planning. Further details on its structure and responsibilities will be finalized in upcoming meetings.

BM/20/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

After review, it was agreed that the Tourism Committee will be renamed Recreational Paddling Committee, aligning with international trends and emphasizing its focus on non-competitive paddling activities.

ITEM 27

ECA UNIFORMS

The Board reviewed the updated ECA uniform design, ensuring consistency across official events and representations. The new uniforms will reflect ECA branding and identity, maintaining professional standards. Final adjustments to design elements and suppliers will be made before production begins.

ITEM 28

LA2028 NEW OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

The Board discussed the announcement of the new Olympic qualification system and its impact on European countries.

BM/21/2025.02.02. (unanimous)

It was agreed once the qualification system is approved by the ICF, the ECA will provide guidance and support to its National Federations to help athletes and teams navigate the new system effectively. Further clarifications from the ICF will be requested, and updates will be communicated to all stakeholders.

ITEM 29

ECA MEDALS DESIGN



The Board reviewed the new ECA medal design for upcoming championships. The proposed designs were evaluated based on aesthetics, production feasibility, and alignment with ECA's visual identity. Minor modifications were suggested, and the final

version will be approved after adjustments. Production timelines and distribution logistics were also discussed to ensure medals are ready for upcoming events.

ITEM 30
THE DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

The Board discussed possible dates for the next meeting, considering key upcoming events and the availability of members. A final decision on the exact date and location will be confirmed after consultation with all Board members.

The President concluded the meeting, noting that the two days of in-depth discussions and deliberations led to important decisions while also highlighting the work that still lies ahead for ECA. He expressed his gratitude to the Board members for their contributions and to the Portuguese Canoe Federation for their hospitality and support in hosting the meeting. With no further business on the agenda, the meeting was officially adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Branko Lovric	Jean Zoungrana
	
ECA Secretary General	ECA President