



ECA

WILDWATER CANOEING



SPORT PROGRAM

WILDWATER CANOEING



ECA Wildwater Canoeing Committee

WILDWATER	Mail
Chair and ECA Board member Manuel GAWEHN (GER)	manuela.gawehn@canoeicf.com
Alexandra PLACHTOVA (CZE)	alexandra.plachtova@canoeicf.com
Ljubomir SPASIK (MKD)	ljubomir.spasik87@gmail.com
Martin VESEL (SVK)	contact@martinvesel.com
Fabienne HABRIOUX (FRA)	fabienne.habrioux@gmail.com

ICF Wildwater Canoeing Technical Committee

WILDWATER	Mail
Chair and ICF Board member Manuel GAWEHN (GER)	manuela.gawehn@canoeicf.com
Alexandra PLACHTOVA (CZE)	alexandra.plachtova@canoeicf.com
Annalena KUTTENBERGER (SUI)	annalena.kuttenberger@canoeicf.com
German JIMENEZ PRATS (ESP)	germanjp@gmail.com
Giulia Formenton (ITA)	giuliaformenton16@gmail.com
German JIMENEZ PRATS (ESP)	germanjp@gmail.com
Rafael Giroto (BRA) – advisor	presidencia@canoagem.org.br
Tim Novak (SLO) – advisor	tim.klemen@gmail.com
Peter Schofield (GBR)	peter.schofieldwwr@gmail.com

PRESENT OUR DISCIPLINE

- Definition
- History & Evolution
- Community

STRATEGY

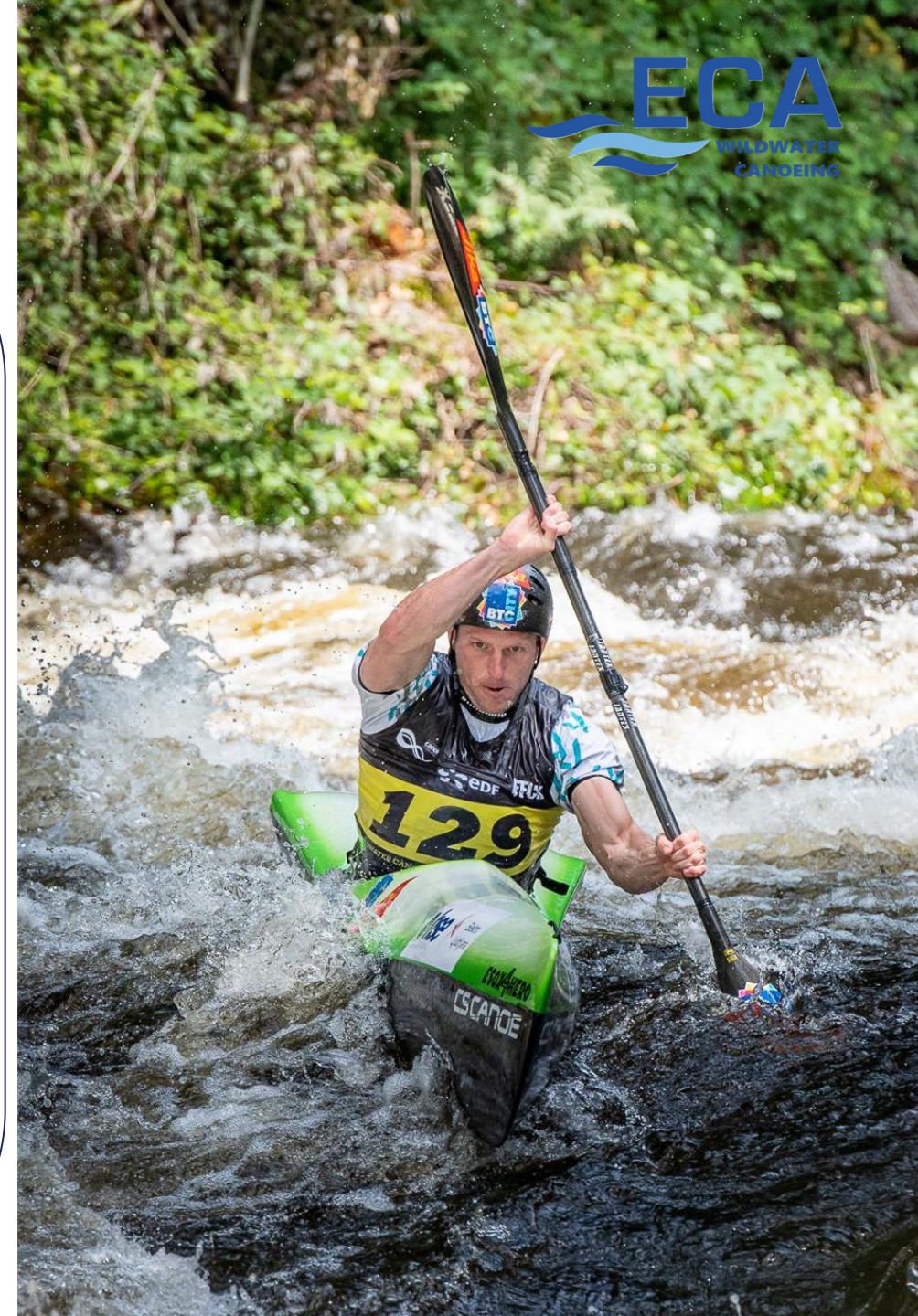
- SWOT Analysis
- Diagnosis of selected topics
- Action Planning



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



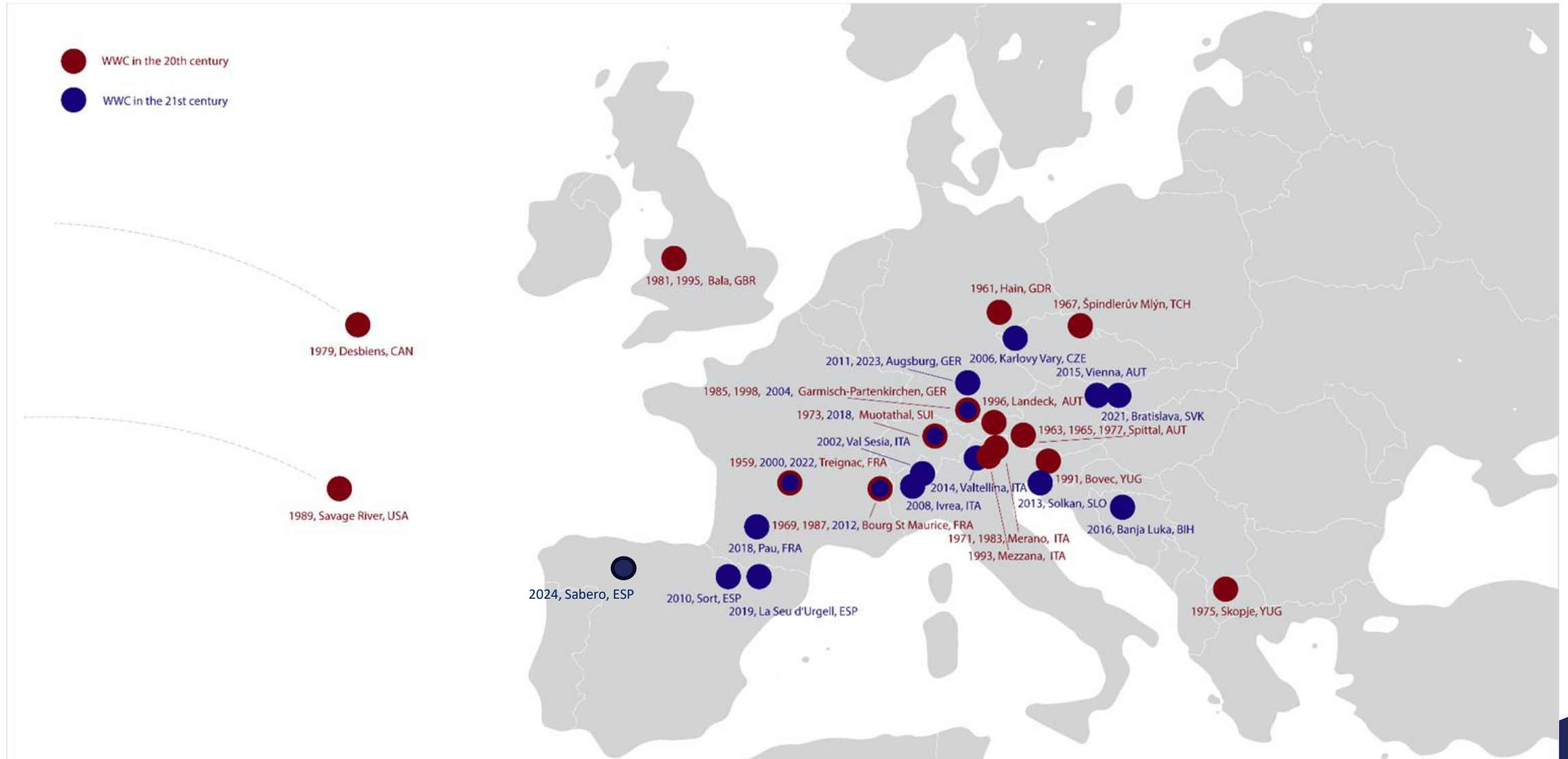
20th century 21st century

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

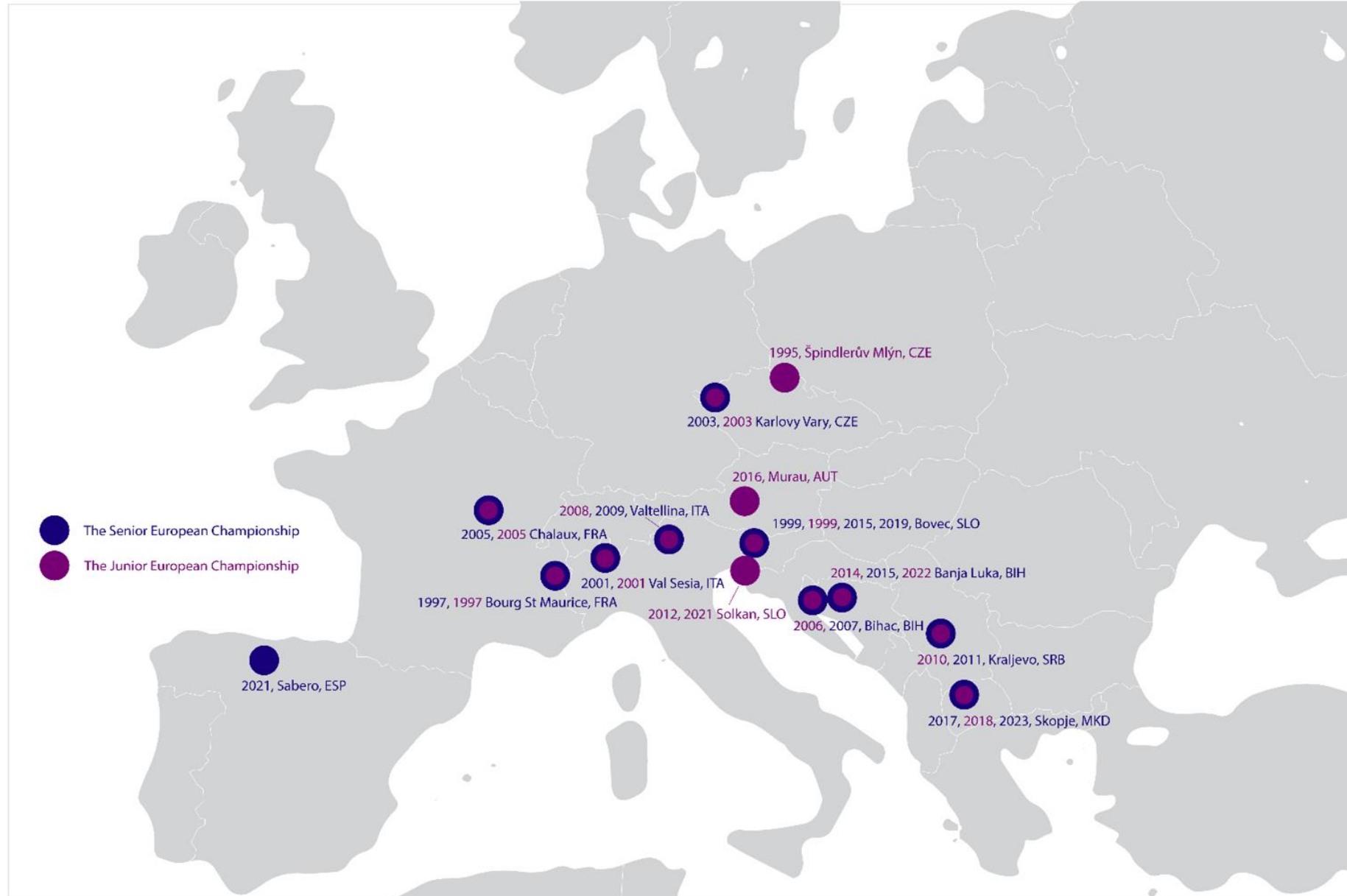


The History of European Championships

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	2007	Bihac	BIH
2006	Bihac	BIH	2009	Valtellina	ITA
2008	Valtellina	ITA	2011	Kraljevo	SRB
2010	Kraljevo	SRB	2013	Bovec	SLO
2012	Solkan	SLO	2015	Banja Luka	BIH
2014	Banja Luka	BIH	2017	Skopje	MKD
2016	Murau	AUT	2019	Bovec	SLO
2018	Skopje	MKD	2021	Sabero	ESP
2021	Solkan	SLO	2023	Skopje	MKD
2022	Banja Luka	BIH	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

galasport

vy kraj

9

BRITISH
CANOEING

HAWK NEW
MODEL

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**

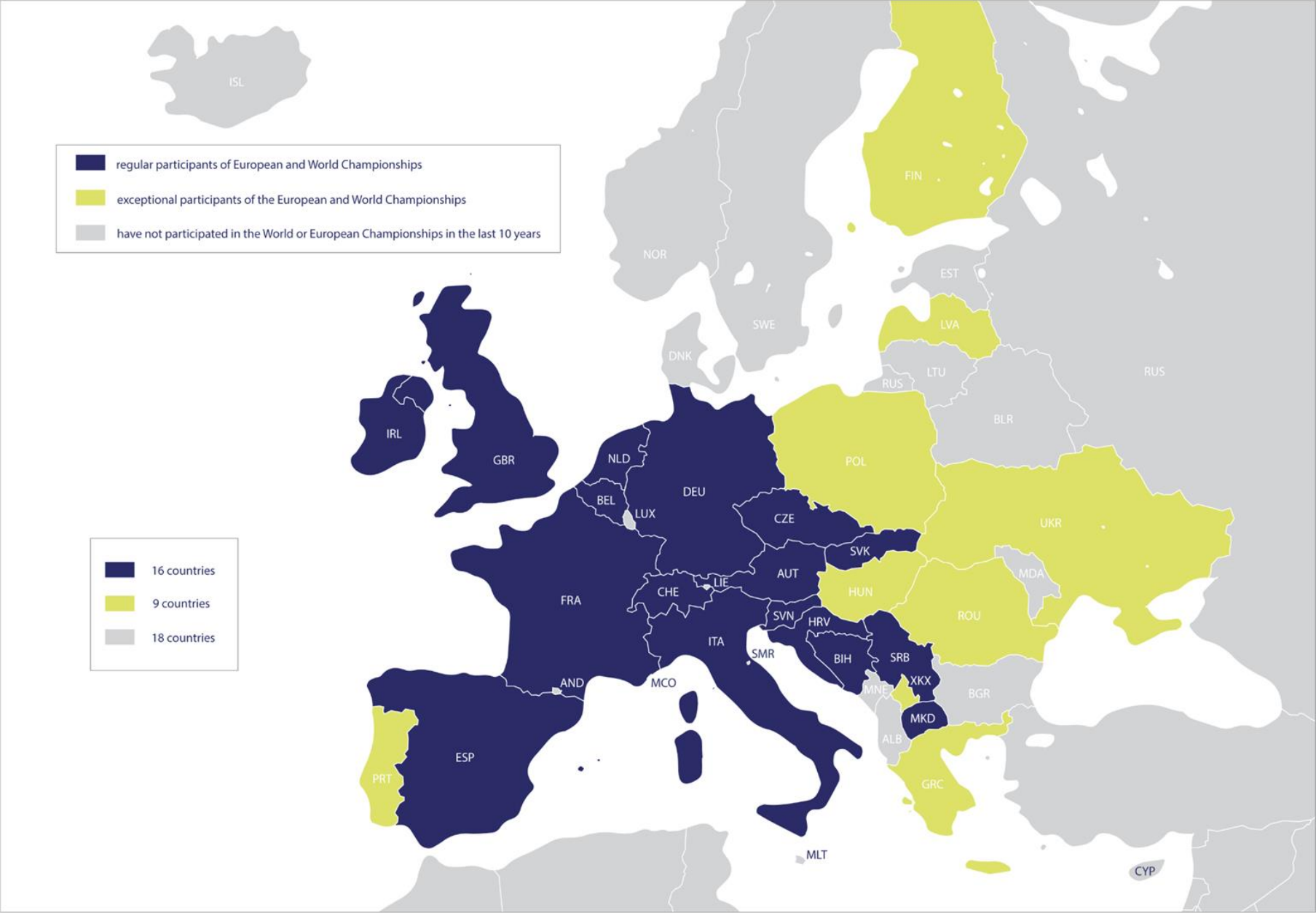
Our strengths

- 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

**WILDWATER
CANOEING**