
Wind and Watersport Vlaanderen – National Authority for IRC in Belgium

1. Certificates issued:

In 2019 the number of certificates decreased to 57 (-10 or -15% - dd 5 september 2019)
In 2018 we issued 67 certificates, in 2017 49, in 2016 48.
So numbers are generally stable.

80% of the certificates are issued by the Belgian National Authority, WWSV. 11 out of 57 certificates came through Belgians who demanded their certificate directly at UNCL. It was the goal that all Belgian demands came through WWSV, some boats ask a certificate without valid sailnumber – this is issued by Belgian Sailing.

2. Comments:

57 boats is not what we hoped for – a lot of initiatives were taken to promote the system and to help the owners to an optimised certificate. Information sessions, free sail measurements and a discount on the certificate for boats participating in enough events of the local sailing series, ONZK.

15 boats have an endorsed certificate (16 in 2018).

25 boats didn't revalidate their 2018 certificate (21 WWSV and 4 UNCL) which is a lot.

5 new certificates were issued for WWSV and 5 via UNCL.

11 boats have a fixed harbour abroad (mainly France) – only one boat with foreign sailnumber (Ballerine FRA Halftonner) registered with WWSV.

9 halftonners in 2019 compared to 15 in 2018 (due to no HTCC)

Belgian boats like to compete in foreign waters. In the Fastnet 2019 13 Belgian teams participated. Other popular regatta's are North Sea Regatta, Cowes Week, Ramsgate Week, Spi Ouest France, IRC Nationals and some races in the Med (les Voiles de Saint Tropez). Three Belgian boats participated in the AZAB (Azores and back)

IRC fleets in Belgium suffer from competition of local measurement systems (CR) and Osiris. The number of certificates in Cruiser Rating decreased to 170 as compared to 250 in 2018. Lots of clubs organise local regatta's with own rating system and the biggest club regatta with regularly over 50 boats use the French OSIRIS. Popular winterraces in Zeeland use another local system.

Local races have more succes than championships. The number of boats in the local championship Open North Sea Championships is stable but low. People tend to stay in their club for informal racing and events.

3. General situation in Belgium

A lot of boats qualify to ask for an IRC certificate but prefer to use other local systems (Cruiser Rating, Osiris/HN, unmeasured). Regatta's in clubs use the alternative rating formula's and gather bigger fleets – up to 50 and more. Regatta's in IRC attract specialised fleets. These boats also compete in international competitions in the UK, France, Netherlands. Only few Belgian boats are known to have an ORC certificate or do compete in this system (for example Scheveningen, Breskens, Stellendam – Holland)

BEL IRC is the organisation of the IRC owners and keeps a yearly information session. This year we saw more activity in boats looking for optimalisation of their rating. 4 boats where weighed, a number of test certificates were issued and the number of modifications was stable. The informative sessions are good but only attire confirmed IRC sailors. The formula of the Open North Sea Championships has been reviewed but didn't generate the desired effect.

The need for national IRC measurers is obvious. We'd like to attend or organise a clinic with UNCL or RORC in 2019/2020.

The contact with UNCL is of excellent quality and we'll continue to promote IRC with our sailors.

Report / Carl Sabbe – BEL IRC – Luc Geirnaert – WWSV