
Wind and Watersport Vlaanderen – National Authority for IRC in Belgium

1. Certificates issued:

In 2022 the number of certificates was stable but still low – with 47 by the Belgian Authority WWSV and 12 directly via UNCL/RORC. Still no revival and very few new boats in the fleet. The initiative in two big clubs with IRC Go works well. In Ostend 25 regular participants got a IRC Go rating while the club in Nieuwpoort got 60 users in the second season of IRC Go. People are generally pleased with this simple approach.

Several international events required Endorsed certificates : EC IRC Breskens and Half Ton Classics Cup Cowes. This led to the weighing of 8 boats and the measurement of 18 sets of sails for participating boats (both from Holland and Belgium). UNCL came down to Belgium with their team to give a formation for Belgian IRC Measurers on the 19th March 2022 (Ludovic Abovillier, Gery Trenteseaux, Claude Charbonnier)

Other measurement systems in Belgium are Cruiser Rating with 150 certificates in September 2022 which is still lower than pre-covid. ORC is not in use in Belgium. Some boats sailing in Holland may have an ORC certificate. A consistent trend towards monotype sailing – J80 and SB20 – is confirmed nationally – internationally a similar trend is visible with Cape 31 and others.

2. Comments:

In 2022 everything seemed to go back to normal with a full racing calendar, locally as well as internationally. Local racing is very popular but boats don't move to other clubs, very often with simplified rating system, such as IRC Go or Cruiser Rating. Half of the Belgian IRC fleet sails internationally. Races as IRC Nationals, Ramsgate Week, Cowes Week, North Sea Regatta, Van Uden Reco, EC IRC Breskens are popular and some teams score well. In the Med a small number of Belgian boats participate in IRC.

Local races have more success than championships or series. 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 with higher numbers in participation. The end of the season race "the Antwerp Race" hopes to have 150 participants with between 25 and 30 racing in IRC – the biggest part of the fleet going for the local Cruiser Rating.

3. General situation in Belgium

A lot of boats qualify to ask for an IRC certificate but prefer the use other local systems (Cruiser Rating, IRC Go, unmeasured, SER). 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 optimisation of their rating with the international championships in view. The information sessions are good but only attire confirmed IRC sailors, even though they were held online. The formula of the Open North Sea Championships has been reviewed but didn't generate the desired effect yet. The Open Belgian Championship and the Antwerp Race are still on the planning. A new trend is the popularity of winter sailing in the secluded waters of Zeeland (Holland).

A confirmed trend is the fleet of J/80's in Nieuwpoort with up to 20 boats appearing for local racing. Some of them are looking for participation in international regatta's such as Dutch Open, Spi Ouest, Crouesty, Europeans and Worlds. A lot of sailors look at this formula, rather than handicap sailing in IRC. These sailors are crew "lost" for IRC teams. The advantage is that one-design boats attract more youngsters and talented sailors. A trend which we welcome too in IRC Boats.

International success for Belgian Teams.

Moana (First 47.7 – BEL 4701) was overall winner in the Europeans IRC in Breskens while Picsou (Dehler 29 – BEL 9009) took the title in IRC 3 and Njord (A 35 - BEL35080) took silver in IRC 2. Ramsgate week was won by Tontin (A35- BEL3537) and Cowes Week in IRC1 was won by Moana. In the Med teams as Balthasar (Swan 50), Samantaga (Swan 45), Xpresso (JPK1030) and Banzai (TS42), Morpheus (Sydney 43) , Desiree (Dehler 39) are active teams. In 2023 10 to 15 boats will apply again for the Fastnet Race.

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

4. Suggestion to rule changes

For an endorsed certificate all sails have to be measured. On the IRC certificate, only the largest sails are rated. The measurement of all sails seems normal for unique sails (e.g. main sail) and for sails of similar size (e.g. jib 1 and jib 2), but it feels useless for sails that are clearly of a smaller size (e.g. jib 3 and 4, staysail, heavy weather spi). Could the endorsement procedure not be simplified by giving a clearer definition of which sails have to be measured, and which sails not? We will always have to count on the honesty of the sailors, even with endorsement and measurement of all sails, because nobody can prevent that the sailors will bring other sails than those mentioned on the certificate. This can only be detected by inspecting the sails that are carried on board during the race.

IRC certificates 2022

ALEGRIA	BEL3901	39971	44697	2022	1.072	
ALEXANDRA	BEL13	42508	44736	2022	1.105	
ANDANTE IV	BEL555	45089	44686	2022	1.165	
ANTILOPE	BEL4343	35220	44685	2022	1.07	E
AZAWAKH	BEL12345	39775	44792	2022	1.042	E
BELLAQUAINE II	BEL5211	33695	44589	2022	0.984	E
BOUNTY	BEL1882	45785	44785	2022	1.162	
CAMINATA	BEL4711	35388	44697	2022	0.959	
CANJOTTO	BEL151	44487	44686	2022	1.009	
CARAMEL	BEL798	47327	44602	2022	1.072	
CIAO	FRA39498				1,067	
DESIREE	BEL212	44295	44634	2022	1.035	
DJINN	BEL11111	40077	44720	2022	1.093	
FARTHER BRUIN	BEL1633	123	44783	2022	0.906	E
GENERAL TAPIOCA	BEL7548	22333	44650	2022	0.955	
GENTE DI MARE	BEL222	47297	44685	2022	1.019	
HALF MOON	BEL680	24903	44783	2022	0.929	
HIGH FIVE	BEL55555	47962	44726	2022	1.019	
HIGH FIVE SH	BEL55555	47961	44789	2022	1.033	
INDEPENDENT BEAR	BEL299	8488	44726	2022	1.121	
J-SEA	BEL262	47891	44694	2022	1.046	E
JUGGERNAUT	BEL147	44536	44797	2022	0.997	E
LECAS	BEL629	44438	44725	2022	0.864	
MAGIC WIND	NED7965				1,157	
MORNING BREEZE	BEL993				0,896	
MOANA	BEL4701	28572	44762	2022	1.11	E
MONAQUA	BEL1082	11284	44797	2022	1.067	E
MORPHEUS	BEL733				1,164	
MR SANDMAN	BEL3515	44439	44693	2022	1.06	
MR SANDMAN	BEL6659	48121	44819	2022	1,013	
NJORD	BEL35080	34909	44692	2022	1.022	E
NORTH SEA 3	BEL503				0,949	
PICSOU	BEL9009	34338	44790	2022	0.932	E
PINTA 42	BEL5355	38923	44785	2022	1.106	E
PROPAGANDA 3	BEL1888	45966	44672	2022	1.007	
RAGAZZA IV	BEL9852	17195	44818	2022	1.078	E
RED CLOUD	BEL8500	28895	44704	2022	0.955	
SERENDIPITY	BEL202	14478	44725	2022	1.093	
SNELLE VLIET	BEL16500	38619	44783	2022	1.081	E
SOULMATE	BEL164	47896	44699	2022	1.025	E
TASMAN	BEL3100	45091	44783	2022	0.991	E
THE BIG PICTURE	BEL5522				0,944	
TONTIN	BEL3537	34237	44715	2022	1.021	E
ZARAFa	BEL7712	9179	44692	2022	0.998	E