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## **Wind and Watersport Vlaanderen – National Authority for IRC in Belgium**

### 1. Certificates issued:

In 2023 IRC Belgium registered 6 new certificates, made 32 revalidations, 8 modifications and 12 Single Event Ratings. These numbers are weak but stable in time. Belgian boats are active in Belgium, England and France but some also compete in the Med. A Fastnet year always brings some extra dynamics as 13 Belgian boats took the start in Cowes on the 22th July. Best finisher was the Swan50 Balthasar finishing 7<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> in class. The Halfton Class went to their Half Ton Classic cup in Norway but that generated three endorsed certificates only.

The dynamic of IRC Go is good in two major clubs along the Belgian Coast : the Royal North Sea Yacht Club in Ostend and Royal Yacht Club of Nieuwpoort (KYCN). Perfect system for both club- and recreational regatta's – up to 50 boats at the start competing with combination of regular IRC and IRC Go. People appreciate the simplicity but for as far as optimisation most don't care too much.

People make active use of the support given by the Belgian IRC Authority (WWSV). Boats are weighed for free, measurements session for sails are offered and with the use of free Single Event Ratings we try to introduce more people into IRC racing.

Other measurement systems in Belgium are Cruiser Rating with 175 certificates in September 2023 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 and J24 – is confirmed nationally – internationally a similar trend was visible with Cape 31 (2022) and others.

### 2. Comments:

In 2023 everything seemed to go back to normal with a full racing calendar, locally as well as international. But the levels of participation are low. Local club racing is popular but boats don't move to other clubs, very often with simplified rating systems, such as IRC Go or Cruiser Rating. Half of the Belgian fleet sails internationally. Races like Cowes Week, North Sea Regatta, Van Uden Reco are popular and some teams score well. In the Med a small number of Belgian boats participate in IRC. A Fastnet Year always generates some new certificates. Few crews look at the calendar of RORC races. The race classic Oostende-Ramsgate in the month of May scores best on the calendar.

Local races have more success than championships or series. The number of boats in the local championship Open North Sea Championships is decreasing year after year and is now very low. The formula will be evaluated for 2024. 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 30 and 45 racing in IRC (also from Holland) – 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 of 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 some activity in boats looking for optimisation of their rating with the Fastnet race in view. The informative 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. 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.

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

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

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
ZARAFI	BEL7712	9179	44692	2022	0.998	E