

WORLD SAILING - INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS COMMISSION
Report to the Special Regulations and Oceanic & Offshore Committees
October 2022

Members of the Commission have this year continued to monitor regulatory and technical developments in international fora – mainly the committees and working groups of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and the European Boating Association (EBA). We've intervened and sought support from States and other organisations for World Sailing's interests, wherever there's been the potential for new restrictions on racing, cruising, sailing and other recreational craft.

Nothing has emerged since last Conference that would yet directly affect the construction, equipment or operation of yachts and other sport and leisure craft. These are the main areas of concern we focussed on at our 22 October meeting:

- The IMO's level of ambition for more and tougher environmental protection and decarbonisation measures is – understandably - trending upward. Stronger **GHG reduction** strategies are being proposed; **marine plastic litter** regulations are extending to smaller (fishing) vessels; the **Polar Code** will apply to non-SOLAS vessels including pleasure yachts over 300 tons; the **Ballast Water** Convention is up for review and undoubted toughening; further guidance is being issued on the **Anti-fouling** Systems Convention; and the entire Mediterranean Sea will in 2025 become the world's fifth **Emissions Control Area** for sulphur oxide. Sailing vessels are exempt from almost all of these rules for now, but the trend for more universal application is clear. Furthermore, attention is being drawn increasingly to the looming challenge of **end-of-life disposal of GRP** boats, which could clearly affect the sailing community.
- On maritime safety, we've been actively engaged in work to develop a future Code for **Marine Autonomous Surface Ships** that takes proper account of the risk of collision with small, inconspicuous craft; we're campaigning for new rules on the reporting, tracking and recovery of the thousands of cargo **containers lost overboard** every year; we've engaged with the Chair of the IMO's Navigation working group to press for more consistent national rules allowing free passage for small craft through **windfarms**; and we've updated WS's avidly sought guidance to yachts transiting areas of high **piracy** risk.
- Finally, the Commission has (against substantial opposition) persuaded ISO Technical Committee 188 to review yacht construction standards in relation to **keel fatigue**, and to keep improvement measures for **safety lines, harnesses and tethers** on its agenda.

This year's meeting also featured some strategic consideration of the Commission's approach and tone in representing WS's interests in the regulatory space. In seeking to stave off disproportionate and harmful impacts on sailing, there would be merit in proactive proposals to achieve regulatory intent in alternative ways. A great example of this was the WS-led Polar Yachting Guide, intended to meet the spirit of the IMO's stringent Polar Code in a manner

proportionate to the scale of the vessels addressed, and the risks to the environment. The MCA's Large Yacht Code, providing a proportionate equivalent to the SOLAS Convention for superyacht construction and equipment, was another, globally respected example.

There might be scope for applying a similar approach in the way we respond to future regulatory challenges in environmental protection and sustainability matters.

On a related matter, we also agreed to reach out to the International Windship Association to explore possible areas of shared interest connected with this new slant on environmentally responsible vessel operations.

Alan Massey
Chair, International Regulations Committee
World Sailing