

November 2023 – October 2024: Report from Dimitris Dimou, Chairman of the ERSC, member of the EQ and WSCC Cross Representative to the ERSC

The two main areas of activity of the Equipment Rules Sub-Committee are the Class Rule approvals (new classes' rules and changes to existing WS classes' rules), and the development and updating of the ERS. The former is also connected with the Standard Class Rules (SCR) project, which includes the updating of the template.

In the past year the quarterly class rule change approval procedure was disrupted because of the Olympic Games and the involvement of the staff members there. The second quarter period was changed and requests were limited. It doesn't seem to have caused serious problems but in the future it may be avoided if the staff involvement with the Olympics is more limited. In general the system is working well with only a handful of cases where there are delays, mainly because of the late response of classes. However, the contribution of the ERSC members is becoming very limited because of other commitments, outside of the subcommittee task list. This is something which must be addressed when the next ERSC will be formed, to include enough members which have both the experience and the time availability to work in the class rules approval process. The same applies to the cross representatives from other committees. During the last year the work of the subcommittee was performed by only one third to one quarter of the members. This is not sustainable: it is causing delays in our response and overloads those members who are willing to contribute their time.

Having gone through a large number of class requests since 2021, it is clear that in too many cases the SCR template has not been followed properly and those deviations from the standard had been approved in the past without a serious reason to justify them. This is especially true for "championship rules" which should have been in a separate document, but are usually found instead as a "section H Appendix". All such cases were handled by instructing these classes to remove all these parts from their class rules and create championship regulations/manuals instead. And there are still some class rules in the non-SCR format, with contradicting measurements and specifications which are not easy to spot because of the format and structure they have. To avoid problems and the confusion caused by the above, it is imperative that a full scale review plan of all existing class rules must be executed in the coming years, to clean up all issues and to ensure the uniformity which was the primary reason behind the adoption of the ERS/SCR format. The ERSC keeps indicating any issues discovered during the rule change review process, asking the respective classes for corrective action at the earliest opportunity. However many classes are not willing to go through this process and the problematic areas simply stay in place. The WS can always withdraw its approval when something is not following the current standards or the regulations and the class agreements. This must be a strategic decision to be taken by the EQ and WS, and class rules have to be reviewed automatically every 10 years. And for sure in each Olympic year all classes must be requested to self-review their rules with regards to the new RRS and ERS coming into effect right after. We are already late for the 2025-2028 cycle but nevertheless this work must be carried out as soon as possible.

The ERS development project has been concluded and the new rule book is ready with only a handful of typos to be corrected.

The SCR template review and updating is the final task of the ERSC until the end of its term. The target is to apply the experience gained after 20 years of SCR class rules and improve the basic templates with new items or updated standard text for certain rules. The instructions documentation will be also updated and improved. However, it is also important to create a new system for the handling of new class rules or transformations of old format class rules to the SCR. This is a very time consuming task which requires a highly experienced reviewer team from the WS/ERSC side. And the persons who will prepare the draft from the class side must have experience and do their best not to deviate from the template and to use proper language. This is not a job to be taken lightly, and the wordsmithing must be of high quality, detailed and strict. Otherwise we will keep getting class rules which are not clear or which include items not suitable for such a document, and future ERSC members will keep making the same comments as in this report.

Finally, the ERSC will update the two Guides for Certification and Equipment Inspection, and it should at least start work on standard WS Event Equipment Regulations and on modern, efficient and effective equipment control schemes as per its terms of reference. The last two tasks must be done together with the WS Technical Department, and the work should be done on a broader scope than just only for the Olympic events.