



**MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
HELD ONLINE
11 December 2025**

INTERNATIONAL CANOE FEDERATION (ICF)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Overview

This was the fourth meeting of the ICF Board of Directors in 2025, held online on 11 December 2025. A quorum was formed in line with the ICF Statutes, with 30 Board members.

Agenda

1. Housekeeping
2. Quorum
3. ICF President Welcome
4. Canoe Slalom Olympic Qualification System, Los Angeles 2028
5. Para Canoe Paralympic Qualification System, Los Angeles 2028
6. Organisational Review
 - 6.1. ICF Governance Structure
 - 6.2. ICF Statutes, rules, and policies
7. Next meetings
8. Other Business
 - 8.1. ECA Headquarters in Lausanne
 - 8.2. 2026 ICF Competitions Allocation (online vote results)
 - 8.3. 2026 ITOs Nominations (online vote results)
 - 8.4. 2026 Canoe Polo Competition Rules Appendices
 - 8.5. ICF Medical and Anti-doping Committee Road Map
 - 8.6. 2025 Canoe Slalom World Championships – Final Report
9. Closing Remarks



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Participants:

Thomas Konietzko	TK	President	GER
Richard Pettit	RP	Secretary General	GBR
Cecilia Farias	CF	Vice President	ARG
Lluís Rabaneda i Caselles	LRC	Vice President	ESP
Jean Zoungrana	JZ	European Canoe Association President	FRA
Prashant Kushwaha	PK	Asian Canoe Confederation President	THA
Toshi Furuya	TF	Canoe Sprint Committee Chair	JPN
Sebastian Brendel	SB	Athlete Committee Chair	RSA
John Edwards	JE	Paracanoe Committee Chair	CAN
Ruud Heijsselaar	RH	Canoe Marathon Committee Chair	NED
Greg Smale	GS	Canoe Polo Committee Chair	GBR
Terry Best	TBE	Canoe Freestyle Committee Chair	GBR
Noémi Horváth	NH	SUP Committee Chair	HUN
Jane Gibson	JG	Medical and Anti-Doping Committee Chair	GBR
Li Xin	LX	Treasurer	CHN
Marian Sârbu	MS	Canoe Ocean Racing Committee Chair	BEL
Richard Fox	RF	Canoe Slalom Committee Chair	AUS
Olubunmi Ola Oluode	OO	Continental Representative - AFR	NGR
Dr. Luk Wai-Hung	LWH	Dragon Boat Commission Chair	HKG
Victor G. Ruiz	VR	Continental Representative - PAM	PUR
Peter Karai	PK	Continental Representative - EUR	HUN
Andrej Jelenc	AJ	Continental Representative - EUR	SLO
Martha Hernandez Sanches	MHS	Continental Representative - PAM	MEX
Manuela Gawehn	MG	Wildwater Canoeing Committee Chair	GER
Ahmed Mahamoud Abdoukader	AMA	Continental Representative - AFR	DJI
Maree Burnett	MB	Oceania Canoe Association President	NZL
Danielle Woodward	DW	Continental Representative - OAM	AUS
Moiri Aston	MA	Continental Representative - EUR	IRL
Budiman Setiawan	BS	Continental Representative - ASI	INA

Not present:

Luciano Buonfiglio	LB	Vice President	ITA
Joao Manuel Da Costa Alegre Afonso	JDC	Confederation of African Canoeing President	STP
Sebastian Gomez	SG	Pan American Canoe Federation President	URG
Shao Yaping	SY	Continental Representative - ASIA	CHN

1. Housekeeping

- TK opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introduced new members: the recently elected ACC President, Prashant Kushwaha and the Chair of the Athletes Committee, Sebastian Brendel.
- TK highlighted to the members that this meeting will focus on the presentation of the organisational review and presentation and voting on the Canoe Slalom and Paracanoe qualification systems for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

2. Quorum

- A quorum was formed in line with the ICF Statutes, with 30 Board Members present.

3. ICF President Welcome

- TK announced that the Sprint Qualification System was approved by the IOC Executive Committee on 10 December 2025, with only minor wording changes, reflecting the dedicated efforts of all working group members.

4. Canoe Slalom Olympic Qualification System, Los Angeles 2028

RF presented the Canoe Slalom Olympic Qualification System for Los Angeles 2028.

Decision: The BoD voted unanimously in favour to submit the Canoe Slalom Olympic Qualification System for Los Angeles 2028 to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

5. Para Canoe Paralympic Qualification System, Los Angeles 2028

JE presented six recommendations for the LA 2028 Para Canoe Qualification System:

- JZ expressed concerns about the tight calendar for the European Continental Championships, stressing the need for events before the end of May.
- JE and the Board agreed that, pending IPC approval, continents may discuss and determine dates that align with the qualification framework.

Decision: The BoD voted unanimously in favour to submit the Paracanoe Paralympic Qualification System for Los Angeles 2028 to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

6. Organisational Review

- TK reiterated that the purpose of this session was to inform the Board about outcomes from organisational review discussions, particularly structural and governance changes.
- No decisions were to be made; instead, comments, suggestions, and questions would be collected for detailed discussion at the next in-person Board meeting. He emphasised that it is now important to listen to all stakeholders also in two Town hall meetings with NF representatives and gather opinions before the board makes its final decision.

6.1 ICF Governance Structure (Group 5)

Mike Chamber (MC), appointed chair of Group 5, presented the proposed new governance model, shifting from a vertical structure to a horizontal, more agile and modern framework with:

- Executive Committee
 - Council
 - Sport Board
 - Athletes' Board
 - Continental Board
 - Development Board
- The Congress remains the supreme authority, electing key leadership positions.
 - Responsibilities and composition of all bodies (Executive Committee, Council, Boards, Medical & Anti-Doping Commission, Finance/Audit/Risk Commission, Technical Committees, Integrity Unit) were outlined.

Comments from the BoD:

- CF requested that all questions and comments be compiled and shared before town hall meetings (These will be scheduled before the first Board Meeting in 2026 and are to engage with all NFs to present the Organisational Review). She noted the importance of allowing significant structural changes when necessary and the importance of the experience and opinions from within the group and canoeing community to be the main driver for the final proposal.
- JE suggested adding a preamble explaining the goals and rationale behind the restructuring. MC agreed and will be added.
- JZ emphasised the need to define the organisation's core pillars (national federations, continental federations, disciplines, community, infrastructure).
- He also asked for clarity on the political role of independent members (6), balance of power between continents and disciplines, and how collaboration will function in the new horizontal structure.

Next Steps:

- The online form for submitting comments, questions, and proposals will be sent by ICF staff on 15 December.
- Board members are invited to submit written comments and questions by 18 January.
- Town hall meetings will take place in advance of the first Board Meeting of 2026.
- All submissions will be compiled into a publicly accessible file to ensure transparency and facilitate meaningful discussion at the town halls and the next BoD meeting.

6.2. ICF Statutes, rules, and policies (Group 1)

Greg Smale (GS), appointed chair of Group 1 presented ICF Statutes, rules, and policies across 12 proposals.

- Simplifying competition rules into two levels:
 - Common Rules
 - Sport-Specific Rules (Eliminating Principle Rules)
- Requiring Congress approval for changes to Chapter 1 (Common Rules).

- Introducing a standardised online form for rule-change proposals.
- Reducing and clarifying the number of Congress types.
- Proposed removal of proxy voting, noting mixed opinions within the Board.
- Formalising Continental Associations' roles within the Statutes.
- Replacing free membership categories with the option for low-fee memberships.
- Creating a centralised Integrity Unit covering ethics, safeguarding, compliance, and disciplinary procedures.
- Filling gaps in policies such as anti-corruption, conflicts of interest, human rights, transgender guidelines, legacy planning, and emergency event protocols.
- Establishing which policies should be global and which may be continent-specific.

Comments from the BoD:

- CF noted that some continents (e.g., COPAC) already have clearly defined responsibilities and recommended reviewing existing documents.
- She highlighted the importance of strengthening safeguarding policies. Clarified that sanctions must be assigned by the responsible group, not by individuals.
- TK asked whether policy unification was intended across continents.
- GS confirmed that some policies should be global while others may allow regional flexibility.

No objections were raised, and members recognised the extensive work involved. Further discussion will continue at the next Board meeting.

7. Next Meeting

- The next BoD meeting will take place in Baku, 11–15 March 2026.
- The draft agenda was presented.

8. Other Business

8.1. ECA Headquarters in Lausanne

TK proposed offering office space to the European Canoe Association (ECA) within the ICF office in Lausanne.

TK asked if any members objected to continuing discussions with ECA.

No objections were raised.

8.2. 2026 ICF Competitions Allocation (online vote)

COMPETITION	START DATE	END DATE	COUNTRY	LOCATION
2026 ICF CANOE OCEAN RACING WORLD CUP MADEIRA	May 1, 2026	May 3, 2026	Portugal	Madeira
2026 ICF CANOE MARATHON WORLD CUP BAZHONG	30 May, 2026	31 May, 2026	China	Bazhong

2026 ICF WILDWATER CANOEING WORLD CUP DUNAREMETE	June 5, 2026	June 7, 2026	Hungary	Dunaremete
2026 ICF WILDWATER CANOEING WORLD CUP BRATISLAVA	June 13, 2026	June 14, 2026	Slovakia	Bratislava
2026 ICF CANOE FREESTYLE WORLD CUP KRAKOW	June 15, 2026	June 21, 2026	Poland	Krakow
2026 ICF CANOE FREESTYLE WORLD CUP MILLAU	June 22, 2026	June 27, 2026	France	Millau
2026 ICF WILDWATER CANOEING WORLD CUP MEZZANA	June 25, 2026	June 28, 2026	Italy	Mezzana
2026 ICF SUP WORLD CUP AGIOS NIKOLAOS	September 20, 2026	September 23, 2026	Greece	Agios Nikolaos

2027 ICF CANOE SLALOM WORLD CUP PRAGUE	June 4, 2027	June 6, 2027	Czechia	Prague
2027 ICF CANOE SLALOM WORLD CUP AUGSBURG	June 11, 2027	June 13, 2027	Germany	Augsburg
2027 ICF CANOE SLALOM WORLD CUP LEE VALLEY	August 13, 2027	August 15, 2027	United Kingdom	Lee Valley
2027 ICF CANOE SLALOM WORLD CUP PAU	August 20, 2027	August 22, 2027	France	Pau

Decision: The Board voted in favour of the 2026 ICF Competitions Allocation.

8.3. 2026 ITOs Nominations (online vote results)

- A discussion followed on gender equity and continental representation in ITOs and athlete participation.
- CF emphasised the urgency of achieving 50/50 gender balance, and the need for comprehensive long-term planning across ICF activities
- The Sports Commission will analyse participation data and present an improvement plan in Baku.

Decision: the BoD voted in favour of the 2026 ITOs Nominations.

8.4. 2026 Canoe Polo Competition Rules Appendices

Decision: The BoD voted in favour of the 2026 Canoe Polo Competition Rules Appendices.

8.5. ICF Medical and Anti-doping Committee Road Map

- JG presented the roadmap, detailing initiatives on athlete safety, medical standards, research, and guidance on sensitive topics.
- Work is underway to publish accessible health and well-being resources on the ICF website.



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Decision: The Board unanimously endorsed the roadmap.

8.6. 2025 Canoe Slalom World Championships – Final Report

- RF presented the final report, highlighting legacy benefits, community engagement, sustainability initiatives, and media impact.
- The BoD commended the event and its contributions.

9. Closing Remarks

- CF reminded BoD of the upcoming sustainability webinar and encouraged full participation.