

Dear Sailors and Friends !

First of all I will say thanks a lot to all IECU Council members . You are all doing a great job for the class .

During the passed year we had a Council meeting in connection with the Princess Sofia Cup in Palma. Mick Mainemare and Paul Depoorter were anyway present and we got the opportunity to prepare the IECU development paper which since then has been widely discussed and commented and conclusions of which we will draw here today. Normally we communicate daily via e-mail and telephone but we were glad to get together and do this important bit of work.

This is the first AGM after not being being a class in the Olympics. It is not nice to sit here and say these words but it is reality. I will prefer to look forward , and be optimistic. Some sailors have left the class to start a new Olympic campaign in a class their federations want them to be in. I wish them all good luck, they will always be our friends .

In Europe a lot of new young sailors have shown up. At the Youth Europeans a month ago in Norway there were about 190 young sailors. As far as I know this is a new record. In general I have the impression that our class is doing very well in Europe.

In Asia I hope, and expect, the Worlds 2005 to be the starting shot for a big fleet and organisation. I was very happy to hear from our friend and medal winner at the Olympics, Maiko Sato, that in Japan they will keep the class running.

Argentina and Brazil I know will go on with the Europe. They are organizing a South American championship. I hope many sailors outside South America will take part, and will with interest follow the development .

My concern is what will happen in North America and Down Under. Even if we are not Olympic, I believe there is a great need for our class . Everyone of us know how wonderful and fun to sail the boat is. But the most important is that the Europe dinghy is the natural and perfect boat to continue after the Optimist . The Europe in its turn is a good stepping stone later in life go to other classes.

Here in the middle of these quite unique Worlds, I must say I am disappointed over the ones who in 2002 voted for Rizhao, but never showed up in China.

Our economy is as you may have seen, not very good this year. But in all business there is good and less good years. This year was as expected to be a bad year. IECU have not panicked. We will observe the development, and be ready for more changes if necessary .

Everyone is talking about lobbying. And that the board must do that if we want to be back in the Olympic family . Believe me, we do not have a chance if you all do not start to lobby with people in your countries who have important contacts and can influence the election . The Council alone can not get us back .

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