



Minutes of the Paddle Europe Board of Directors Meeting
Lausanne, Switzerland
28-29 March 2026

02/2026

Present members:

- President: Jean Zoungrana
- Vice Presidents : Moira Aston, Andrej Jelenc
- Board Members: Greg Smale, Manuela Gawehn, Stien Verlinden, Peter Karai, Geir Kvillum, Christian Jacobsen
- PEU Office: Jovana Stanojevic
- Guest: Thomas Konietzko, ICF President
- Absent: Vitor Felix, Monica Doria

ITEM 1

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The President, Mr. Jean Zoungrana, welcomed Board Members and guests, and thanked participants for attending in person.

ICF President Mr. Thomas Konietzko greeted the Board members and thanked them for continuous and evolving cooperation and its understanding of the process and changes ICF to implement. Mr. Konietzko provided PEU Board the updated information on the following:

- Observations related to leadership transitions within the Olympic Movement and implications for international federations
- 2032 Olympic Games Brisbane: overall sport program, cost of venues, complexity of competition, universality
- Long-term sustainability, legacy planning, and responsible governance.
- Importance of balancing values, political realities, and unity within the international paddling community.
- Emphasis on maintaining cohesion among diverse member federations despite differing political and cultural environments.

PEU President, Mr Jean Zoungrana continued with presenting an overview of President recent activities, strategic engagements, and governance matters.



The President further reported on the official Azerbaijan Visit and highlighted: Paddle Europe signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Azerbaijan Water Sports Federation in several areas of cooperation; high-level meetings with governmental representatives; the visit to venues and regions with potential for event organisation and sport development; meetings with athletes and coaches also took place as part of the programme.

In addition, the President reported on early discussions regarding a potential new sponsorship opportunity, originating from an ICF-led tourism partnership, with interest expressed in extending this cooperation to Paddle Europe.

The president also provided the information on Individual meetings with Board members to clarify objectives for the remainder of the year exchange views on organisational priorities and individual responsibilities.

Furthermore, President offered update on the **Events**: support to Kosovo to explore the inclusion of canoeing in the 2030 Mediterranean Games; European Multi-Sport Championships 2030, currently under consideration in Switzerland, in coordination with Swiss Olympic and partner federations and an update on preparations for Istanbul 2027, including a recent site visit, with further reporting planned.

Board was informed of progress under the ICF Innovation Fund, particularly regarding digitalization. The project is structured in **phases**, starting with website and branding integration, followed by data collection and longer-term digital infrastructure.

The President updated the Board as well on the agreement with ICF on TV rights, Headquarters in Lausanne SUI and Athletes committee.

The Board discussed governance matters in relation to the decision to establish the legal headquarters in Lausanne. It was noted that while the decision was taken democratically, differing views had been expressed prior to the vote, leading to a number of abstentions. These reflected concerns regarding long-term strategy, operational implications, organisational sustainability and statutes amendments rather than opposition to the need for a legal entity. The importance of focusing on implementation following a Board decision was underlined, with an emphasis on constructive cooperation, particularly with the ICF, to maximise institutional support and efficiency.

The Board discussed the role and integration of the **Athletes' Committee**, noting broad support for strengthening athlete representation within Paddle Europe governance. It was acknowledged that, as a newly established body, the Committee is at an early stage of development and is still clarifying its role, mission, and working methods following the initial election phase.



Overall, the Board considered the establishment of the Athletes' Committee an important and positive step towards ensuring athletes have a structured voice within Paddle Europe, with further development expected as the Committee matures.

The CEO, Ms. Jovana Stanojevic, reported that operations continue to be managed with a **very small structure**, substantial workload. Since last Board meeting priorities have remained unchanged. The headquarters transition is progressing, with positive developments, but slow. The **2025 external audit is expected to be positive**, subject to minor bookkeeping adjustments. Preparations for the 2026 European Championships and European Games are advancing, including confirmation of a new venue in Istanbul. Paddle Europe also participated in multiple EU project meetings, webinars, and ICF initiatives, with further details available in the written report.

PRESENTING THE AGENDA

	SATURDAY 28.03.2026	09:00-18:00
	MORNING	09:00-10:30
1	Opening of the Meeting	J ZOUNGRANA
	- President report	J ZOUNGRANA
	- Chief Executive Officer report	J STANOJEVIC
2	Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting - recording digital vote	BOARD
	FOR DECISION	
3	2025 Finance report	P KARAI, J STANOJEVIC
4	Financial regulations – update	P KARAI, J STANOJEVIC
5	Accreditation fee – use and process	P KARAI, G SMALE
	COFFEE BREAK	10:30-11:00
6	Participation fee	G SMALE, J STANOJEVIC
	- Discussion for 2027 and beyond	
	- Epinal request for 2026	
7	Rules – Ocean Racing	J STANOJEVIC, S VERLINDEN
8	PEU 2027 Congress date	J ZOUNGRANA
9	ITOs – Freestyle and Ocean Racing for information	J STANOJEVIC
	PEU HQ INAUGURATION AND LUNCH	12:00-15:00
	AFTERNOON	15:00-16:30
10	PEU & education – Initial ideas & direction	C JACOBSEN



	FOR DISCUSSION	
11	PEU Headquarters update	J ZOUNGRANA / J STANOJEVIC
	- Legal Lausanne SUI	
	- MOU with AZE NF – development and communication	
	COFFEE BREAK	16:30-17:00
	FOR INFORMATION	
12	Road map - update	J ZOUNGRANA / BOARD
13	Bidding process	G SMALE / J STANOJEVIC
	SUNDAY 29.03.2026	09:00-12:00
14	ICF Organisational review – update	G SMALE
15	Jury Duties - Proposition	S VERLINDEN
16	Neutral Athletes – update	J STANOJEVIC
17	PEU Erasmus+ projects	J STANOJEVIC
18	PEU Human resources – external consultant	J STANOJEVIC
	COFFEE BREAK	10:30-11:00
19	2026 European Championships update	J STANOJEVIC
20	PEU insurance	J ZOUNGRANA
21	MISCELLANEOUS	BOARD
	- PEU letter to ICF – Jury costs	A JELENC
	MEETINGS	BOARD
22	Board meetings: calendar 2026	J ZOUNGRANA
	Other meetings:	
	LUNCH	12:00

The agenda was slightly adjusted to accommodate guest presence at the start of the meeting. Without any further comments or alterations to the agenda, the President proceeded with the meeting.

ITEM 2

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Recording of the digital vote

In accordance with the Statutes, the Board may take decisions between meetings by digital vote via email (Art. 11.62).

The digital vote was initiated due to the necessity to approve the minutes of the previous online Board meeting (01/2026) in a timely manner, in order to initiate the process of the relocation of the headquarters to Lausanne.



The decision became effective on the date the digital vote was completed on 9 February 2026 and is hereby formally recorded for formal and administrative purposes.

BM/09/2026.09.02

The Board approved, unanimously, the minutes from previous meeting, held online on 26 January 2026 including the amendments made in accordance with the comments received from Board members.

Votes: 11 in favour

ITEM 3

2025 FINANCE REPORT

The Board reviewed the 2025 financial position, noting that income and expenditure remain unchanged from the January report. The 2025-2026 budget was planned with a deficit, reflecting increased activity levels and staffing compared to previous years. Income rose significantly versus 2024, as did expenditure, due to expanded operations. The external auditor has indicated a positive opinion, subject to minor bookkeeping adjustments.

The establishment of the Finance Committee and improved reporting were highlighted as key steps toward greater transparency.

It was agreed that an annual report should be published and include a brief descriptive and visual introduction outlining Paddle Europe's activities and organisational context, followed by the financial figures. This approach is intended to better contextualise the numbers, highlight the scope of work delivered, and represent a first important step toward improved transparency and communication.

BM/10/2026.03.28-29

The Board approved, unanimously, the 2025 accounting reports.

Votes: 9 in favour

The Board was further informed of financial position as of 15 March 2026, outstanding debts of its members, current cash position, including balances held in different currencies and funds held externally in relation to television rights.

ITEM 4

FINANACIAL REGULATIONS

The Board reviewed the PEU Financial regulations document. Two amendments were proposed:



- The inclusion of accreditation fees to article 4.2 as per the Board previous decision
- Modification of article 4.4 as follows:
If a National Federation has not paid its debts – particularly, but not exclusively included in Regulation IV – by the due date, the athletes from that National Federation shall be ineligible to take part in any European championships or in any other European international competitions or activities organised under the jurisdiction of the ECA/PEU (**in any discipline**), until all outstanding fees have been paid.

BM/11/2026.03.28-29

The Board approved, unanimously, updated Financial Regulations document.

Votes: 9 in favour

ITEM 5

ACCREDITATION FEE – USE AND PROCESS

The Board has extensively discussed the naming of the new fee highlighting and communication to the member National federation as crucial.

The review will be made at the last Board meeting in 2026 with actions defined for 2027.

ITEM 6

PARTICIPATION FEE

6.1 Discussion for 2027 and beyond

The Board discussed the overall participation fee structure currently applied across different disciplines and championships. It was noted that participation fees are collected by the Organising Committees and represent a package of services provided to athletes and teams, including venue access, training facilities, transport where applicable, medical services and operational support during the event.

The Board further agreed that a wider review of participation fee structures and event classifications for 2027 and beyond should be undertaken.

6.2 Epinal OC request for 2026

The Board reviewed the request submitted by the organisers of the 2026 Slalom Junior & U23 European Championships in Epinal to increase the participation fee from EUR 160 to EUR 190.

The organisers explained that the bid had originally been prepared by a previous management team and that the current organisers inherited a significantly different financial situation and operational budget.

It was further noted that the event is primarily supported by local and regional authorities, without direct national federation financial support.



The Board continued to review the detailed analysis of the Bid and request of the PEU Slalom Committee and their standpoint on the matter which stated that such increase at this point in time is not preferable and committed to find other ways together with OC to raise more funds.

Mr. Jean Zoungrana declared a conflict of interest and therefore will not participate in the voting.

BM/12/2026.03.28-29

The Board has not approved, by simple majority, the request of the organisers of the 2026 Slalom Junior & U23 European Championships in Epinal to increase the participation fee from EUR 160 to EUR 190.

Votes: 8 not in favour, 1 conflict of interest declared

ITEM 7

RULES – OCEAN RACING

The Board reviewed the proposal for Ocean Racing Rule changes upon the recommendation of the technical committee and adopted the following decision:

BM/13/2026.03.28-29

The Board approved, unanimously, the updated Ocean Racing rules that were aligned with ICF Rules for 2026 season maintaining the 5 nations rule for the European Title.

Votes: 9 in favour

ITEM 8

PEU 2027 CONGRESS DATE

The Board discussed proposal of the date and the program for the 2027 PEU Congress and adopted the following decision:

BM/14/2026.03.28-29

The Board approved, unanimously, the date of the 2027 PEU Congress to be Saturday, 3 April 2027 with the accompanying program:

- Thursday 1 April : Arrival of the PEU Board and Office
- Friday 2 April: PEU Board Meeting, Arrival of the NF delegates
- Saturday 3 April: PEU Congress
- Sunday 4 April: PEU Board meeting (morning), Departure of the delegates / PEU Board meeting

Votes : 9 in favour



ITEM 9

ITO – FREESTYLE and OCEAN RACING

The Board reviewed the proposed ITO allocations for the 2026 European Championships in Freestyle and Ocean Racing upon the recommendation of the Technical committee Chair.

BM/15/2026.03.28-29

The Board approved, unanimously, Freestyle and Ocean Racing ITO lists for 2026 European Championships with no raised objections to the nominations presented

Votes: 9 in favour

ITEM 10

PEU & EDUCATION – Initial ideas and direction

Christian Jacobsen introduced initial reflections regarding the development of a Paddle Europe education framework.

Two key area were identified for discussion:

- PEU strategy for education
- EPP and the PEU: What How When (common strategy for EPP)

Discussions focused on the potential role of Paddle Europe in supporting knowledge transfer between national federations, event organisers and technical experts. Board members exchanged views on possible education areas, including event organisation, governance support, coach and official education, risk management and organisational development.

The importance of building practical tools and educational resources that could support both developing and established federations was underlined.

Furthermore, EPP was explained more in detail and key questions raised of the role of Paddle Europe without weakening the grassroots of co-creation culture that defines EPP group; what would be the governance model and how EPP methods and experience can be introduced into broader agenda. Different models were then discussed.

The Board also discussed the possibility of integrating education-related activities within Erasmus+ and other externally funded projects, while acknowledging that priorities and available resources would need to be clearly defined.

The discussion was considered as an initial strategic exchange, with further work and concrete proposals to be developed in the coming months.



Upon the proposal of the President, a working group was formed to continue developing the strategy. The working group consists of Board members: Christian Jacobsen, Andrej Jelenc and Stien Verlinden, with possibility to include external consultants if needed.

ITEM 11

PEU HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

The President and CEO provided an update regarding the establishment of the legal headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. The Board was informed that the transition process is progressing positively and that the necessary administrative and legal procedures are ongoing.

The Board also received an update regarding the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Azerbaijan Water Sports Federation. The cooperation framework includes potential support for development initiatives in Eastern Europe, training camps, coach education activities and communication opportunities connected to the future slalom venue in Baku.

Board members discussed the importance of ensuring clear communication regarding the objectives and scope of the collaboration, while maintaining alignment with Paddle Europe's strategic priorities and values.

ITEM 12

PEU ROAD MAP UPDATE BOARD MEMBERS

The President presented an update on the ongoing work related to the Paddle Europe strategic road map and organisational review process.

Board members exchanged views on governance structure, rule-making procedures, cooperation with the ICF and the role of continental associations within the wider international paddling structure.

Particular attention was given to the simplification of rules and policies, harmonisation of procedures across disciplines and the importance of improving communication and consultation with national federations.

The Board acknowledged the importance of ensuring that future reforms remain practical, transparent and aligned with the long-term development objectives of Paddle Europe.



ITEM 13

BIDDING PROCESS

The office provided the overview of the new Bidding process launch and the process of communication to potential Bidders used. An overview of the received bids in Sprint and Slalom was also shared.

Board members noted the increasing operational and financial challenges faced by organisers, particularly regarding participation fees, delivery standards and alignment with ICF requirements. It was acknowledged that organisers are increasingly comparing the operational expectations and financial conditions between ICF and continental events.

The Board also discussed the importance of strengthening cooperation with the ICF Events Department, particularly in relation to Olympic qualification events and venue inspection procedures.

It was agreed that the bidding process and related documentation should continue to be reviewed in order to ensure greater clarity, sustainability and consistency for future organisers.

ITEM 14

ICF ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW UPDATE

Greg Smale updated the Board on the ongoing ICF organisational review process and recent discussions held within the working groups.

The Board was informed of proposals related to governance reform, rule structures, voting systems and consultation processes with national federations. Discussions included the possibility of simplifying rule structures by integrating common rules within individual discipline rulebooks and introducing a more standardised process for future rule change proposals.

Board members expressed the importance of ensuring that the review process delivers meaningful and practical reforms, while maintaining transparency and effective engagement with member federations.

ITEM 15

JURY DUTIES PROPOSITION

The Board discussed operational matters related to Jury duties and travel arrangements during European Championships.



Attention was drawn to the need for clearer procedures regarding local transport, logistical support and communication with Jury members and International Technical Officials.

The Board acknowledged that further analysis and practical recommendations would be required in order to improve consistency between organisers and disciplines.

ITEM 16

NEUTRAL ATHLETES UPDATE

The CEO informed the Board of the feedback received from organisers of the 2026 European Championships regarding the participation of neutral athletes from Russia and Belarus under the ICF neutral athlete policy.

The Board noted that the majority of organisers confirmed their acceptance of neutral athletes in accordance with the ICF framework and national legal requirements. It was highlighted that certain organisers may require additional procedures or consultations with governmental authorities.

The Board further noted that the 2026 season will continue to follow the ICF neutral athlete policy.

ITEM 17

PEU ERASMUS + PROJECTS

The CEO informed the Board that Paddle Europe had recently joined several Erasmus+ project applications and partnerships, as follows:

- DECK UP – project focused on sustainability as phase 2 of the successful DECK project. Paddle Europe participating as associated partner.
- PADDLE IN - project focused on inclusive pathways for grassroots paracanoe development in Europe, involving several international partners including universities, national federations, ICF and IPC; Paddle Europe participating as partner.
- PADDLE EDU – education-oriented project led by the Croatian Canoe Federation. Paddle Europe offering institutional support.

The Board discussed both the opportunities and administrative workload associated with Erasmus+ projects, noting the importance of ensuring realistic operational capacity and appropriate external support where necessary.



ITEM 18

PEU HUMAN RESOURCES - EXTERNAL CONSULTANT

CEO provided current analysis of the human resources engaged by PEU with emphasis that the PEU Strategic plan, its objectives and daily operations are sustainable with a single person.

The Board acknowledged the importance of identifying competent external expertise where required, while ensuring that financial and operational responsibilities remain sustainable for Paddle Europe.

The Board mandated CEO to identify such external consultants and engage them as appropriate.

ITEM 19

2026 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS UPDATE

The CEO provided an update on preparations for the 2026 European Championships across disciplines. The Board was informed that preparations are progressing positively overall, while certain organisers continue to face financial and operational challenges. Particular attention was given to participation fee structures, operational delivery standards and coordination with local organising committees.

The Board also noted the continued cooperation with organisers and technical committees in preparation for the 2026 season.

ITEM 20

PEU INSURANCE

The President introduced a discussion regarding Paddle Europe insurance coverage and related organisational responsibilities.

The Board exchanged initial views regarding existing insurance arrangements and the possible need for further review in relation to events, officials and organisational liability.

It was agreed that additional analysis and information would be required before any further decisions are proposed.



ITEM 21

MISCELLANEOUS

Vice President Andrej Jelenc raised the issue of Jury-related costs and correspondence addressed to the ICF competitions.

The Board discussed the increasing operational costs linked to Jury and officiating duties and the importance of maintaining constructive dialogue with the ICF regarding shared responsibilities and future financial sustainability.

No formal decision was taken under this item.

However, PEU representatives to ICF Board will raise the topic at the upcoming meeting of the ICF Board of Directors.

ITEM 22

NEXT MEETING

The President presented the proposed calendar of Board meetings and related activities for the remainder of 2026 and beginning of 2027 leading to PEU Congress.

The Board agreed that future meeting dates would continue to be coordinated in line with major Paddle Europe and ICF events and operational priorities.

The Board further noted that additional online meetings of working groups and committees may be scheduled when required.

With no further business on the agenda, the President concluded the meeting at noon.

Jovana Stanojevic,
Paddle Europe CEO

Jean Zoungrana
Paddle Europe President