



**Minutes of the Paddle Europe Board of Directors Meeting
Online**

04/2026

18th June 2026 18:00 CET

Present members:

- President: Jean Zoungrana
- Vice Presidents : Moira Aston, Andrej Jelenc
- Board Members: Greg Smale, Peter Karai, Christian Jacobsen, Vitor Felix, Manuela Gawehn, Geir Kvillum (partial present)
- Athlete Representative: Monica Doria
- PEU Office: Jovana Stanojevic
- Absent: Stien Verlinden

ITEM 1

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The President opened the meeting, welcomed the Board members and thanked everyone for attending during a busy competition season. He noted that some Board members were also engaged in ongoing competitions and informed the Board that the agenda was expected to be limited.

In his report, the President updated the Board on the main information received from the ICF. He referred to the work carried out on the ICF governance review, including Paddle Europe's contribution to the proposed structure of the new governance model, the statutes and the Terms of Reference for Continental Federations and the Continental Board. The Board was informed that the ICF had taken Paddle Europe's proposals into account and that the creation of a Continental Board was included in both governance options under consideration.

The President informed the Board that the ICF Board had selected option two, with Continental Presidents represented in the Executive Committee, and that both options would be presented to the ICF Congress. He also reported that the ICF administrative contribution to Continental Associations would increase from EUR 15,000 to EUR 50,000 per year, while the development contribution would remain at EUR 21,000 per year.

Further updates were provided on the ICF Board meeting scheduled for 26 June, including the Brisbane 2032 Sprint Olympic programme, the ICF Congress in Oklahoma and the concerns regarding participation, costs and visa matters.

The President also referred to the upcoming in-person meeting of Continental Presidents, the EOC Congress attended on behalf of Paddle Europe by Moira Aston, the withdrawal of



Switzerland's bid for the 2030 European Multisport Championships with a possible interest for 2034, the start of the Paddle Europe competition season in Montemor-o-Velho and Lieksa, and the opening of the Swiss bank account.

The CEO presented a short report on the main ongoing office priorities, including the Swiss headquarters and office set-up, meetings with agencies, preparation and management of the 2026 competitions, and support to the Board, Committees and ITOs. She highlighted the high expectations placed on the office, the very limited human resources, the challenges of daily operations, the lack of direct control or insight over finances, and the need for a clearer definition of responsibilities. The Board was informed that the Swiss bank account had been opened, with further details to be presented under the Headquarters update.

PRESENTING THE AGENDA

1	Opening of the Meeting	J ZOUNGRANA
	- President report	J ZOUNGRANA
	- Chief Executive Officer report	J STANOJEVIC
	FOR DECISION	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	2.1 Lausanne 20260328-29	J STANOJEVIC
	2.2 Online 20260512	J STANOJEVIC
3	Statute changes for Tax exemption SUI	J STANOJEVIC
	FOR DISCUSSION	
4	Athletes committee road map	M DORIA
	FOR INFORMATION	
5	Financial report 2026	J STANOJEVIC / P KARAI
6	SUI Headquarters - updates	J STANOJEVIC
7	Board activity updates	Board
	Lieksa - FIN	A JELENC/ C JACOBSEN
	Montemor - POR	P KARAI / V FELIX
	Brisbane 32 Sprint Olympic programme	P KARAI
	EOC congress	M ASTON
	Communication – Meeting PEU-Azerbaijan	V FELIX
	Communication – social media process	J STANOJEVIC
8	Board meetings calendar	
9	Miscellaneous	Board

Without any comments or alterations to the agenda, the President proceeded with the meeting.



ITEM 2

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Lausanne 20260328-29

The CEO apologised for the delay in preparing the minutes of the Board meeting held in Lausanne on 28-29 March 2026, explaining that the amount of material and the need to review the recordings had made the process challenging. The minutes had been circulated to the Board by e-mail together with the invitation to the meeting. As no comments or proposed amendments had been received, the Board proceeded with the approval by anonymous vote.

BM/20/2026.06.18

The Board approved the minutes from previous in person meeting, held in Lausanne SUI 28-29 March 2026.

Votes: 9 in favour, 1 did not vote

2.2 Online 20260512

The CEO confirmed that the minutes of the online Board meeting held on 12 May 2026 had also been sent to the Board members by e-mail. No comments or proposed amendments were raised during the meeting and the Board proceeded with the approval by anonymous vote.

BM/21/2026.06.18

The Board approved the minutes from previous online meeting, held on 12 May 2026.

Votes: 9 in favour, 1 did not vote

ITEM 3

STATUTE CHANGES FOR TAX EXEMPTION

The CEO explained that the proposed statute changes were connected to the establishment of the Paddle Europe headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, and to the request submitted for Swiss tax exemption. The Swiss Tax Office had identified two conditions to be fulfilled in order to obtain the exemption, mainly related to employee taxes.

Amendment of the Statutes 12.71

Following consultation with a lawyer familiar with sport organisations and with the Lausanne office set-up, the first proposed amendment concerned the voluntary work of the Board of Directors and the addition of a sentence to the current wording of the Statutes. The Board proceeded with the vote on this first proposal.



BM/22/2026.06.18

The Board approved the amendemnet of the Statutes in article 12.71.

Votes: 9 in favour, 1 did not vote

Amendment of the Statutes 21.3 and 21.4

The CEO presented the second condition proposed for tax exemption, related to the existing Articles 21.3 and 21.4 of the Statutes. The proposal concerned relocation or dissolution, under which the remaining assets would be transferred to a Swiss institution that is tax exempt due to its public benefit or public service purpose and pursues a purpose similar to Paddle Europe.

It was noted that this wording was not required by Swiss law in general, but was a condition to continue the Paddle Europe tax exemption request.

The President recalled the previous discussion and confirmed his opposition to the proposed change, particularly because, in the event of relocation, Paddle Europe could lose all its assets and because the request appeared to go beyond the standard requirements of Swiss law. The President stated that the only point that could be further discussed would be the dissolution scenario, with remaining assets potentially transferred to the ICF, provided that the ICF is recognised as a non-profit and tax-exempt organisation.

The Board also discussed the financial implications of the tax exemption request, including the differences between Croatia and Switzerland in terms of VAT and employee-related taxes, and the possible impact on the financial support connected to the Olympic Capital office lease. The Board then proceeded with the vote on the second proposal.

BM/23/2026.06.18

The Board di not approve the amendemnet of the Statutes in article 21.3 and 21.4.

Votes: 5 not in favour, 3 in favour, 1 abstention, 1 did not vote

ITEM 4

ATHLETES COMMITTEE ROAD MAP

Monica Doria presented the Athletes Committee Road Map. She explained that the Committee had prepared a foundational document to guide the work of the current Committee and future Athletes Committees. The mission identified was to represent athletes, to be their voice within the organisation and to use the athletes' knowledge and position to help the sport grow and evolve.

The Road Map sets ambitious long-term goals for the next five to ten years, with three main priorities. The first priority is competition development, with the objective of making Paddle Europe competitions more athlete-centred, more attractive to spectators on-site and online, more interesting for commercial partners, and more memorable for everyone attending.



The proposals included stronger communication and promotional campaigns before events, more dynamic venue presentation, good speakers and entertainment, family-friendly activities, schedules adapted to maximise spectator attendance, improved athlete services such as food, nutrition and recovery areas, and stronger television and online production.

The second priority is to explore a multidisciplinary Paddle Europe event or festival where different disciplines could meet, compete, exchange knowledge and help build a stronger Paddle Europe community and identity. The third priority is to support athletes in combining high-performance sport with education and professional careers, including possible partnerships with universities and opportunities linked to Erasmus+ or similar programmes.

The Board welcomed the presentation and congratulated the Athletes Committee for the work carried out. Board members noted the strong alignment with Paddle Europe's strategic objectives, while also stressing that the proposals would require careful planning, involvement of organisers and National Federations, and an assessment of practical and financial feasibility. The Board also discussed that some matters should be addressed at ICF level, some at Paddle Europe level and some at national level.

The President concluded that the Road Map raised important strategic questions and deserved dedicated follow-up. It was agreed that the topic would be included in the next in-person Board meeting, with the objective of defining how to organise the work, including the possible creation of a dedicated working group and a concrete process to develop the proposals further.

ITEM 5

FINANCIAL REPORT 2026

The CEO presented the 2026 financial update in line with the financial reporting obligations to the Board. The Board was informed of the current balance against the approved budget, including income, expenses and the position as of 5 June. The amount remaining in the budget was reported at approximately EUR 119,000, with the note that the overall budget may be exceeded and will continue to be monitored.

The balances of the accounts in EUR, USD and other currencies were presented. The CEO also informed the Board that there were no outstanding debts from National Federations towards Paddle Europe, with the exception of one remaining amount from Plastex, which was expected to be paid the following week. The Board congratulated the CEO for the progress achieved in debt collection and for the clear financial overview.



It was clarified that the income related to the 2026 European Championships was not yet reflected, as no 2026 invoices had been issued at that point and the amounts had not yet been received in the bank account.

The President noted that Paddle Europe had been operating from reserves while waiting for the Swiss bank account process to be completed. The detailed realisation of income and expenses was made available in the meeting folder for Board members wishing to review the information in more detail.

ITEM 6

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

The CEO provided an update on the Swiss headquarters process. The UBS bank account in Switzerland had been opened, with accounts established in Swiss francs, Euros, US dollars and British pounds. The next steps are to access the accounts and arrange the transfer of assets from Croatia to Switzerland.

The CEO explained that VAT registration is required before issuing invoices, but this process depends on having a contract or agreement for the office space. The tax exemption process remains linked to the office support and the VAT registration process. The accountant will handle the VAT registration remotely once all required documents are available, although a delay was noted because the accountant was unavailable until 22 June.

Regarding the office space, Paddle Europe was still waiting for feedback from the ICF, Olympic Capital and the building owners. The decision taken earlier in the meeting on the statute changes may affect the next steps and could cause a small delay.

Moiria Aston asked about the letter sent to Thomas Konietzko and ICF. It was noted that no formal response had yet been received, although the President had been contacted and informed that additional time was needed to provide an answer. A reminder may be sent if necessary.

ITEM 7

BOARD ACTIVITY UPDATES

Montemor-o-Velho - Sprint, Paracanoe and Masters Championships

The Board reviewed the 2026 Paddle Europe Sprint, Paracanoe and Masters Championships held in Montemor-o-Velho. The event was considered an outstanding success, especially given the severe floods that affected the venue only a few months earlier. The Board recognised the efforts of the Portuguese Canoe Federation, the Municipality of Montemor-



o-Velho and all partners involved in restoring and improving the venue in time for the Championships.

The event was highlighted as the first European Championships staged under the Paddle Europe name and as a strong launch for the new brand. Participation was high, with around 600 athletes and 39 countries involved. The Board noted the first integration of Masters events within the Sprint Championships programme, the inclusion of Paracanoe innovations such as the K2 Mixed event, and the presence of Special Olympics / intellectual impairment demonstration races.

The Board also welcomed the wider inclusivity and sustainability elements of the event, including the involvement of the Athletes Committee members in medal ceremonies, the use of recycled banners to create team-leader bags through a social skills programme, the tree initiative for medal winners, and the sustainability assessment coordinated by Ms Stien Verlinden before and after the event.

The new Paddle Europe medals, athlete-name engraving and overall communication were very positively received. A behind-the-scenes documentary was also being prepared to show the work carried out by the people behind the event.

Lieksa - Freestyle Championships

Andrej Jelenc and Christian Jacobsen reported on the 2026 Paddle Europe Freestyle Championships in Lieksa, Finland. The venue was located in a natural setting and required a largely temporary set-up, which demanded significant work from the organisers. The event included 10 nations, 6 disciplines and around 60 volunteers, with a strong local freestyle community supporting the organisation.

The Board noted the positive atmosphere, good on-site English commentary and the commitment of the small organising team. Some technical challenges occurred, especially with internet connection and judging software in the remote location, but these were managed and improved during the event. The simple set-up was considered appropriate for the size and character of the discipline, and the athletes benefited from being accommodated in the same location.

The Board agreed that Paddle Europe should follow up with the Finnish Federation and the local organisers, as the event may help encourage future events in Finland, possibly also in other disciplines. It was also suggested that Paddle Europe should further reflect on the role of the jury and on how ceremonies and protocols can be adapted to the culture and needs of each discipline.

The event was streamed on Paddle Europe YouTube with English commentary, and a sustainability survey was also carried out.



Brisbane 2032 Sprint Olympic programme

Peter Karai presented an update on the discussions around the Sprint Olympic programme for Brisbane 2032. He underlined that this is one of the most important current topics for canoeing and explained that the IOC will base its decisions on data, indicators and global appeal rather than only on tradition or internal preferences.

The Board was informed that the IOC evaluates sports through a set of indicators, with a strong emphasis on digital and media performance, global appeal, commercial value, innovation, storytelling and formats attractive to younger audiences. Canoeing performs strongly in areas such as ticket sales and athlete participation, but weaker in several digital/media indicators.

The Sprint Olympic programme working group is composed of 10 members, with strong European representation. The working group agreed in principle that innovation is needed, that all Sprint events should be considered at 500 metres, and that the mixed long-distance relay tested in Montemor-o-Velho could be a potential innovative format. However, the working group remained divided on the K4, K2 and relay options, and several programme options remain under consideration.

The Board discussed the risks and opportunities linked to these options, including universality, quotas, global reach, venue considerations, shared venues with rowing and the need to protect the strategic interests of the sport. It was noted that the IOC evaluation framework would be published after the IOC session and that a final decision on the Brisbane 2032 programme is expected later in 2026 or early 2027.

The President stressed that Paddle Europe should seek a clear strategic vision and not rely only on isolated figures or short-term programme options.

EOC Congress

Moirá Aston reported on the European Olympic Committees Congress, which she attended on behalf of Paddle Europe. She informed the Board that planning for the European Games in Istanbul was progressing well and that many sports are expected to use the event as part of their Olympic qualification pathway. Germany has expressed interest in hosting the 2031 European Games, while the European Youth Olympic Festival was reported for Antwerp in 2029 and Latvia in 2031.

Ms Aston highlighted the discussion around the next Erasmus+ programme, with a large overall budget and a focus on learning opportunities, capacity building, athlete and volunteer mobility, and partnerships at national level. She also noted the importance of strengthening dialogue with rowing, particularly around shared venues and innovative uses of facilities in line with the IOC's direction to avoid single-use venues.



The Board was informed that the 2027 EOC General Assembly will take place as a one-day event in Istanbul on 15 June, before the European Games opening ceremony. It was also reported that the 2030 Youth Olympic Games format is under review and that further information will be provided once the strategy is clearer.

Ms Aston further noted some external confusion between Paddle Europe and other organisations using the word “Paddle”, which reinforced the need to explain the Paddle Europe identity clearly.

Communication - meeting with Azerbaijan

Mr Vitor Felix and the President reported on the meeting with the Secretary General of the Azerbaijan Federation concerning communication support. Azerbaijan informed Paddle Europe that a new English-speaking communication resource, with television/media experience, had been recruited to support Paddle Europe’s social media and website work. The person is not from canoeing and was expected to need time to understand the organisation and the disciplines.

The CEO noted that Paddle Europe had not been involved in the recruitment process and expressed concern about onboarding someone from outside the sport in the middle of the competition season. She will contact the person once the relevant details are provided, assess how the cooperation can work and report back to the Board.

The meeting with Azerbaijan also touched on development opportunities under the Memorandum of Understanding. Azerbaijan is organising a competition in October and proposed the possibility of hosting a training camp for young athletes and, potentially, developing a junior Sprint cup concept from 2027. The Board noted that any event involving countries from outside Europe would need careful consideration regarding the title, status and competition rules, so that it is not presented as a European title if non-European teams participate.

It was also noted that Paddle Europe will prepare its own World Canoeing Day content for 26 June, including the planned behind-the-scenes video.

Communication - social media process

The Board discussed the need for better coordination of Paddle Europe social media posts, particularly now that several people have access to the official channels. The discussion followed an example where two posts on the same topic were published close together without coordination.

Board members agreed that Paddle Europe should not be afraid to publish content regularly, especially around events, as social media algorithms do not necessarily show all posts to all followers. At the same time, it was recognised that a minimum process and guidelines are needed to avoid duplication and to keep official channels coherent.



The CEO will prepare a process document with practical guidelines and options for sharing content, including possible use of a shared folder and/or sending material to the media team by WhatsApp or e-mail.

Board members were reassured that content sent to the media team can be reviewed, improved where necessary and published quickly.

ITEM 8

BOARD MEETINGS CALENDAR

The Board reviewed the proposed calendar for the remaining 2026 Board meetings.

The next online Board meeting was confirmed for 10 September 2026, with the invitation to follow.

The December online meeting was considered straightforward in terms of availability.

The November in-person Board meeting remains to be finalised. The CEO reported that the online availability form showed that it will be difficult to have all Board members present on the same date, and that three Board members had not yet completed the form.

The President proposed postponing the final decision until all replies are received and, if necessary, deciding the date by e-mail.

The Board also discussed the requirements for hosting the in-person meeting.

Possible hosting options, including Denmark and Ireland, were mentioned, with visa requirements also to be considered before a final decision is taken.

ITEM 9

MISCELLANEOUS

Under miscellaneous, Ms Moira Aston raised a practical question regarding her role as chair of the jury for the ICF Junior and U23 Slalom World Championships in Krakow, noting that she had not yet received sufficient information about the event, the jury composition or practical arrangements. The President advised her to contact the relevant ICF contacts directly, and Greg Smale offered to follow up with Head of Sport in ICF.

The Board also noted that Board members representing Paddle Europe at events may be asked to carry out opening or closing ceremony duties if the relevant Paddle Europe representative is not present, and should be prepared for such situations.



The President thanked the Board members for their participation and contributions throughout the meeting. With no further points raised under any other business, the meeting was adjourned at 21:00 CET.

Jovana Stanojevic,
Paddle Europe CEO

Jean Zoungrana
Paddle Europe President