

ICF Ordinary Congress
Rome, Italy
4-6 November 2021

Name of the BoD Member: Thomas Konietzko

Function on BoD: Vice President in charge for Flatwater disciplines

1. Major events since last ICF Congress

As the responsible Vice President for the Flatwater disciplines, I participated in all World Championships and almost in all Worldcups in all disciplines since the last Congress in 2018. Especially the World Championship in Sprint and Olympic qualification in Szeged was organized on a particularly high level. The Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo shows under special circumstances an outstanding level. For the first time in our history, we had gender equity in terms of participation and events and the new Olympic events for Canoe women took place on a high level. Para had one more race as 2016 and improved in general the performance of the competitors. As a result of the Corona pandemic, all planned World Championships in Flatwater disciplines except one Sprint World Cup in Szeged had to be cancelled in 2020. I would like to highlight that for the first time a World Cup in Dragon boat in China and an ICF SUP World Championship took place in 2019. With the SUP World Championship 2021 in Hungary we were able to present the sport on a completely new level. I would like to thank all the organizers of all our events for the professional and high class events and especially the organizers who organized events during the pandemic under difficult conditions.

2. Tasks undertaken since the last ICF Congress

The focus of my work in the Canoe Sprint discipline was together with the Sprint Committee to improve the sport presentation in Sprint and to introduce new and exciting competitions. The Mix events were well received by the athletes and spectators. We are working together to make the long distance more exciting for spectators. With the addition of the Super Cups, in 2018 in China and Russia, 2019 in China and 2021 in the USA, we were able to integrate a new competition format that has attracted many new spectators and strengthened our presence on television. In particular, the audience figures in China and Russia were outstanding.

With regards to the Board decision to introduce XT Slalom in the Olympic program 24 and the for the Games 2020 introduced opportunity for double starts an adaption of the distances in some Sprint events for 2024 was necessary.

With the decision of the Chinese NOC to assign Dragon Boat to the Chinese Canoe Federation in the future and the World Cup held there in Linyi 2019, we were able to improve our position in Dragon Boat.

In SUP, we were able as ICF to organize in China an ICF World Championship for the first time in 2019. While we still had to convince the athletes to participate, we were able to reach such a high level at the latest with the 2021 World Championships in Hungary that the majority of the top elite athletes recognize the level of our competitions and we can maybe one day return to the system proven in our other disciplines, if necessary, with a qualification and entries via the NF`s. This has as well improved the development of SUP activities in the countries under the responsibility of Canoe NF`s.

I tried and could achieved to take part on almost all Sprint Committee and SUP Commission Meetings as well as on the Marathon Committee Meetings and Dragon Boat Commission meetings. Finally, 4 Flatwater Commission meetings took place to discuss crossover issues. It has been important to me during my tenure to discuss overlapping issues with all Flatwater disciplines

3. Issues and Main Points for the function since last ICF Congress

Development of new Sprint competition formats and events to attract more audience

Significant improvement of the Sports presentation in Sprint

Improving our position and perception especially on the Asian and American market.

Try to use synergies between the Flatwater disciplines.

Assistance in the conclusion of a TV contract with CCTV to cover better the Chinese market.

Lobbying by several visits of NF`s for improvements of relationships and the position of our sport within their NOC

Implementation of various initiatives to improve the equipment situation in several countries

Strengthening the ICF position in SUP sport by supporting and accompanying various measures and helping to organise two World Championships.

Met organizers around the world to bring new sports venues on the map of Canoeing.

I tried to create with regular Flatwater Commission meetings a closer cooperation between all the Flatwater Committees

I hold several talks with the IDBF and ISA leadership to improve cooperation – unfortunately only with a little success

4. Future Initiatives and recommendations to be considered

As I am ending my term of Vice President and will not be running for this office again, I can only make recommendations to my successor on what is important for the future from my point of view

- ***We need to become more flexible in the distance and the format and in the way we are running our competitions in all Flat-Water disciplines***
- ***We have to be open minded according to the coming discussions about the future Olympic Program. Therefore, we have to put our focus on supporting and developing our Non-Olympic disciplines***
- ***We must continue to work on the inclusion of Canoe disciplines in big Multi Sport events like Beach Games or Commonwealth Games or Continental Games***
- ***In the future, we should be more diplomatic in our dealings with other IF`s who are covering the same disciplines to avoid public disputes.***
- ***We need to involve and to participate our NF`s in the future more in strategic decisions***

Finally, I would like to thank my President, the Board and all those involved in the disciplines for their support and dedicated work.