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## STATE OF PLAY ON BOAT LICENSES AND ICC IMPLEMENTATION IN EUROPE

This note aims at presenting an overview of the regulatory state-of-play on boat licenses and the acceptance of the ICC – International Certificate of Competence in Europe. Since a couple of years, the European Boating Association (EBA) seeks to promote international boating tourism, mainly through the adoption of the ICC and / or of an EU document ensuring that boaters can move freely in the European Union.

This note will cover the following aspects:

1. Key elements on boat licenses and ICC in Europe
2. What is the International Certificate of Competence – ICC?
3. Overview of boat license / ICC requirements per country in Europe

### 1. Key elements on boat licenses and ICC in Europe

This survey shows that a form of boat license is required in at least 25 out of 30 European countries (with no information for Bulgaria and Slovakia). However, the requirements vary greatly with regard to the area of navigation, the distance from shore/shelter, the means of propulsion (sailing/motor boats), the boat's length and the engine's power. The age limits though not stated in the table vary from a country to another.

Today, 12 European countries of which 10 EU Member States<sup>1</sup>, Switzerland and Croatia apply the UN ECE resolution 40 and deliver the ICC. But the unequal implementation of UN ECE resolutions 13, 14 and 40 creates differences in ICC practices and acceptance. The differences in ICC implementation concern the scope (inland waterways only / inland waterways and sea), the types of boats (length, speed, power) and the interpretation of conditions for applicants (residence, nationality, language).

### 2. What is the International Certificate of Competence – ICC?

The origins of an International Certificate came about from the requirement to navigate the length of the Rhine and the Danube, and the need for reassurance that vessel operators were competent to ensure safety of navigation and protection of the environment as they moved from one country to another. As a result, on 29 January 1979, the United Nations Working Party on Inland Water Transport adopted **Resolution 14**<sup>2</sup> which recommended the introduction of a European document for an International Certificate (International Card) to provide those assurances. The Resolution was also intended to facilitate 'waterborne tourism'. Until then operators could well have been expected to produce competence certificates issued by each government whose waters they were on.

<sup>1</sup> Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovakia, UK

<sup>2</sup> UN Economic Commission for Europe Inland Transport Committee Working Party on Inland Water Transport Resolution 14 (revised) – International Certificate (international Card) concerning the Operators of Pleasure Craft



In the mid-nineties, the Working Group on Inland Water Transport considered that Resolution 14 needed updating and strengthening and on 16 October 1998 the Working Party adopted their revisions as **Resolution 40**<sup>3</sup>; which also replaced Resolution 14.

**Resolution 40** not only includes operators of pleasure craft bound for or on the inland and coastal waters of foreign countries, but specifically included bareboat charter vessels. Significantly, it also set out the nautical, regulatory and technical competency requirements to be achieved and a minimum age (16 years of age) for the issue of an International Certificate irrespective of individual national schemes. Resolution 40 also prescribes an updated model for the certificate to conform to.

The **International Certificate for Operators of Pleasure Craft** created in Resolution 40 is now more commonly referred to as the International Certificate of Competence (ICC). A government that has adopted either resolution may nominate competent authorities and/or approved bodies to issue certificates on its behalf to its nationals and residents for use on its registered craft. However, the ICC is only applicable where the visited country has adopted or recognises the ICC as a valid standard of competency.

Resolution 40 sets out requirements in its Annex I for issuing the ICC to country's nationals and residents. The holder of an official national certificate of competence can obtain an ICC without having to pass another examination. But in practice, countries such as Italy and Belgium do not issue ICC to their nationals, though they accept foreign ICC in their waters.

Alternatively, an ICC can be issued if the applicant is 16 or older, physically / mentally fit to operate a pleasure craft, and have successfully passed an examination to prove necessary competence. The examination consists in assessing sufficient knowledge of regulations for safe navigation on inland waters and/or coastal waters; and the ability to apply this knowledge in practice. The examination must be held with regard to the zones of navigation (i.e. inland waters and/or coastal waters) and must include at least one of the specific subjects: a) sufficient knowledge of regulations (CEVNI, COLREG); b) ability to apply the nautical and technical knowledge in practice; and c) conduct under special circumstances (i.e. ensuring safety on board) – See the detailed content of Annex I in Resolution 40 (footnote 3).

The current situation is confusing and does not augment boating tourism in Europe. The position of the European Boating Association (EBA) is to recommend that all governments follow the lead taken by those that have adopted Resolution 40 so far, that they recognise it as an acceptable standard in its own right and notify the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe accordingly. In addition, EBA considers that standards set out in the UN ECE resolution 40 provide a reasonable and appropriate level of competence for day sailing with due regard to the safety of navigation and crew and the protection of the environment. Some governments however are still discussing whether the ICC may or may not fit into their own national schemes.

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<sup>3</sup> UN Economic Commission for Europe Inland Transport Committee Working Party on Inland Water Transport Resolution 40 – International Certificate for Operators of Pleasure Craft.

See text in [English](#) and [French](#) – More on [www.unece.org](http://www.unece.org)



### 3. Overview of national requirements on boat licenses and ICC acceptance in Europe

P = power; L = length

Country	Regulations on boat licenses	ICC acceptance
Austria	Compulsory motor license if P > 4.4 kW and for electric boat with P > 500 W Also according to the length and type of boat Recognition of foreign licenses	YES Resolutions 13, 14, 40 applied
Belgium	No compulsory license for sea-going navigation (either sailing or motor) Compulsory license for inland waterways when L > 15m or speed > 20 km/h (no matter what the propulsion mean is)	NO Resolutions 13, 14 applied ICC is accepted from foreigners, but not issued to Belgian nationals
Bulgaria	NO	NO Resolution 14 applied
Croatia	Compulsory license for all means of propulsion if L > 2,5 m OR P > 5 kW 5 types of licenses: - A for L = 6 m, P = 8kW, navigation = 6 miles from coast - B for L = 12 m or 15 gross tons - C for 20 gross tons - For larger boats, 2 licenses for "yacht master" A & B	YES Resolution 13 and 40 applied Resolution 14 NOT applied
Cyprus	Compulsory driver license for high speed vessels with L equal or < 15m and speed > 15 knots	NO

Czech Republic	<p>3 types of licenses for seagoing vessels with L= 24m:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A for ocean (no limitations)</li> <li>- B for offshore, navigation = 200 miles,</li> <li>- C for coastal waters, navigation = 10 miles, L &lt; 12m</li> </ul> <p>I license for inland waterways for vessels up to L = 20m, P &gt; 4kW and sail area &gt; 12m<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Resolutions 13, 40 applied</p>
Denmark	<p>Compulsory license for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- planing powerboats</li> <li>- vessels with P &gt; 18.64 kW (25 HP)</li> <li>- vessels with L &gt; 15m</li> </ul> <p>Voluntary license for users of other boats, the sailboat certificate is approved to powerboats</p>	<p>NO</p>
Estonia	<p>Compulsory license if L &gt; 7m, P &gt; 10 kW, Distance &gt; 5 nautical miles from coast</p> <p>Degree in certificates, according to experience</p> <p>Boaters are unsatisfied with the system</p>	<p>NO</p>
Finland	<p>NO</p>	<p>YES</p> <p>Resolution 14 applied</p> <p>State examination for ICC</p>
France	<p>No license for sailing and motor boats with P &lt; 4.5 kW</p> <p>Compulsory motor license if P &gt; 4.5 kW (6 HP), incl. PWC</p> <p>3 types of licenses for sea-going motor vessels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Carte Mer</i> for day navigation, max 5 miles from shelter, P btw 4.5-37 kW (50 HP)</li> <li>- <i>Permis Mer Côtier</i> for day (and night navigation if P &gt; 37 kW), max 5 miles from shelter</li> <li>- <i>Permis Mer Hauturier</i> for day / night navigation, all distances, all</li> </ul>	<p>NO</p> <p>Resolution 40 under consideration</p> <p>Resolutions 13, 14 applied <b>only for inland waterways</b> (both issued and accepted). Therefore, only craft of max L = 15 m, carrying fewer than 15 persons, and designed to travel normally at max speed 20 km/h (referred to as “narrowboats”) can travel freely on French waterways (except Rhine</p>

	<p>P types</p> <p>3 certificates for inland waterways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- S for "sport boats"</li> <li>- C for max L = 15 m (equivalent to ICC)</li> <li>- PP for L &gt; 15 m</li> </ul>	<p>and Moselle rivers) with ICC.</p> <p>On offshore waters, the documents referred to in maritime conventions or bilateral agreements will continue to be required.</p>
Germany	<p>No license for sailing and motor boats with P &lt; 3,68 KW Compulsory license for motorized boats if P &gt; 3.68 kW 2 types of licenses with theoretical and practical examination for inland waterways and coastal waters</p> <p>3 levels of compulsory certificates for inland waterways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- L &lt; 15m (Amtlicher Sportbootführerschein-Binnen)</li> <li>- L &gt; 15m &lt; 25m (Sportschifferpatent)</li> <li>- L &gt; 25m &lt; 35m (Schifferpatent C)</li> </ul> <p>4 levels of certificates for coastal waters/sea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic license for motorized boats with P &gt; 3,68 kW (Amtlicher Sportbootführerschein- official license/mandatory)</li> <li>- Coastal waters (Sportküstenschifferschein - official license / NOT mandatory)</li> <li>- Sea (Sportseeschifferschein - official license/NOT mandatory)</li> <li>- Offshore/Open Sea (Sporthochseeschifferschein - official license/NOT mandatory)</li> </ul>	<p>YES</p> <p>Resolutions 13, 40 applied ICC is accepted on German inland waterways for boats of max L =15 m</p>
Greece	<p>Compulsory license for all means of propulsion if P &gt; 18.64 kW (25 HP) Heavy theoretical and practical training since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 Recognition of foreign licenses</p>	<p>NO</p>
Hungary	<p>4 different compulsory licenses for sea-going vessels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cat IV for navigation up to 3 NM</li> <li>- Cat III for navigation up to 12 NM</li> <li>- Cat II for navigation up to 200 NM</li> </ul>	<p>NO</p> <p>Resolutions 13, 14 applied Long experience with ICC for Danube</p>

	<p>- Cat I with no limitation for navigation Upgrading to a higher category is based on experience Cat I-II require a ROC</p> <p>Compulsory license for inland waterways for boats with L = 20m. Boats with sails &gt; 10m<sup>2</sup> or P &gt; 4 kW need ICC.</p>	
Ireland	NO	YES – Resolution 40 applied ICC issued only to Irish nationals or residents
Italy	<p>Compulsory license for PWC Compulsory licence for sailing and motor boats (L = 24m) if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Navigation &gt; 6 miles from shelter</li> <li>- Navigation &lt; 6 miles but P &gt; 30 kW</li> </ul> <p>2 types of license:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Navigation &lt; 12 miles</li> <li>- No limit to navigation</li> </ul>	<p>NO</p> <p>Resolution 14 applied ICC is accepted for foreign boaters ICC is not issued to Italians</p>
Latvia	<p>Compulsory license for both sailing and motor boats 3 types of licenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coastal</li> <li>- High / deep seas</li> <li>- Specific zones: Channel, North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea</li> </ul>	NO
Lithuania	<p>Compulsory license for motor boats No license for sailing boats</p>	<p>YES Resolutions 13, 40 applied</p>
Luxembourg	<p>Compulsory license for craft with L &gt; 7m and/or P &gt; 7.35kW Inland waterways: <i>Permis fluvial</i> for a boat max L = 20m Coastal waters: <i>Permis côtier</i> for a sea-going non-habitable boat of max L = 7m, max 3 miles from coast</p>	YES – Resolutions 13, 40 applied

	High seas: <i>Permis mer</i> for sea-going boat of max L= 24m	
Malta	Compulsory license for mechanically driven small craft with P = 74.57 kW (100 HP) From 2011, compulsory license for P = 22.37 kW (30 HP) Compulsory course on Basic Seamanship & Safe Boathandling	NO
Netherlands	No compulsory license for sea-going navigation (either sailing or motor)  Compulsory license for inland waterways when L > 15m OR speed > 20 km/h (no matter what the propulsion mean is)	YES  Resolutions 13, 14, 40 applied for inland waterways
Norway	From 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2010, compulsory licensing system for all boat drivers born on or after 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1980 and for all boats when L > 8m (26ft) or P > 18.64 kW (25 HP)	NO
Poland	6 types of licenses for sailing boats 6 types of licenses for motor boats  According to type of boat and navigation (distance from coast)	NO  Resolution 14 applied Resolution 13 under consideration
Portugal	6 types of driving licenses: - Carta de Principiante (Beginner's Card) for daylight navigation up to 1 NM from coast, on boats L = 5m and P = 4.5 kW - Carta de Marinheiro (Sailor's Card) for ages of 14 to 16, daylight navigation up to 3 NM from coast and 6 NM from a shelter, on boats L = 5m and P = 22.5 kW - Carta de Marinheiro (Sailor's Card) for ages of 18 +, in daylight navigation up to 3 NM from coast and 6 NM from a shelter, on boats L = 7m and P = 45 kW - Patrao Local (Local Skipper) for navigation up to 5 NM from coast and 10 NM from a shelter - Patrao de Costa (Coastal Skipper) for navigation up to 25 NM from the coast	NO

	- Patrao de Alto Mar (Deep Sea Skipper) without navigation limits	
Romania	Compulsory boat license	NO – Res. 13, 14 under consideration
Slovakia	No information	YES – Resolutions 13, 40 applied
Slovenia	Compulsory license if L > 3 m OR P > 3.7 kW	NO
Spain	<p>4 types of compulsory licenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capitán de Yate: no limits to navigation and boat's length</li> <li>- Patrón de Yate: navigation up to 60 NM and max L = 20m</li> <li>- P.E.R.: navigation up to 12 NM and max L = 12 m</li> <li>- Navegación Básica: navigation up to 5 NM and max L = 8m for sailing boat / L = 7.5m for motor boat</li> </ul> <p>Since 2002, any of the 4 licenses can be used for PWC or the dedicated PWC license</p> <p>No license required for sailing boats L &lt; 5m and motorboats L &lt; 4m and P &lt; 11.03 kW for daylight navigation and within limits set by the local authority</p> <p>Foreigners sailing under Spanish flag can use the equivalent license of their home country</p>	NO
Sweden	Compulsory <i>skipper's license</i> (both theoretical and practical examination) for all boats (called <i>ships</i> ) with L > 12m AND beam > 4m	NO
Switzerland	<p>2 types of licenses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A for motor boats with P &gt; 6 kW</li> <li>- D for sailing boats having a sail area &gt; 15 m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	<p>YES</p> <p>Resolution 14 and 40 applied</p> <p>ICC is delivered to holders of Swiss licenses A and</p>

	Holder of A license can navigate a sailing boat if only using engine propulsion	D, for people going abroad on a motor boat with P = 6 kW or sailing boat with max 15 m <sup>2</sup> sail surface
United Kingdom	NO  Though recommended, Certificates of Competence are not required for boats with L < 24 m	YES – Resolutions 13, 40 applied  ICC is issued by RYA and BWSF to UK nationals or residents only