

Growth and Development of Yachting main discussion at ICOYC Regional Conference

The 5th International Council of Yacht Clubs (ICOYC) European Regional Conference, hosted by the Royal Malta Yacht Club concluded successfully following an intensive two days of fruitful discussions.

The Conference hosted delegates from some of the most prestigious European Yacht Clubs that form part of the Council, whose mission is to foster close relations, at Flag Officer and General Management level, between leading yacht clubs around the world.

Representatives from Germany, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Italy and the United Kingdom, as well as a guest delegate from the United States, attended what was described as a productive weekend where they had the opportunity to engage in discussions, networking and think tank exercises.

"This Conference was an excellent opportunity for the Royal Malta Yacht Club to engage in fruitful discussions and exchange of ideas, from which we believe the Club will be able to further improve its operations and what it offers to its' members" commented Godwin Zammit, Commodore of the Royal Malta Yacht Club.

The Conference agenda saw local speakers contribute to the key areas of discussion, which included youth engagement, the growth of the J70 Class popularity as well as Club Management and the role of the volunteer versus the employed paid professional. Lengthy discussions also took place focusing on the traditional ways of communication and how social and digital Media are becoming an integral part of the way Clubs communicate to further strengthen their reach with members.

A challenge faced by all Clubs is Membership. Delegates discussed the various drives being undertaking to recruit younger blood to leadership positions without letting go of the traditions that is the essence of long established Clubs that form part of the Council.

The decision of the International Paralympic Committee to exclude sailing from the 2020 Games and onward was criticised by delegates. Many yacht clubs operate sailing programs for persons with a disability and results show that being active in such sports is exceptionally helpful for these persons to develop new skills away from their everyday life on dry land. The delegates agreed that they would work towards the possible reintroduction of sailing as a Paralympic sport for the 2024 Games.

"The Royal Malta Yacht Club did an outstanding job as a host. The delegates enjoyed exceptional hospitality and organisation, both from a discussion perspective and the social events. On behalf of the ICOYC, I would like to thank Commodore Godwin Zammit, the Club's Committee, members and staff for making this conference a success in every sense." said Gero Brugmann, Vice President of the ICOYC.

The 5th ICOYC European Region Conference was supported by Yachting Malta.