

To all NCA officials and  
members of the  
Int. 2.4mR Class Association



Open letter to the membership

Dear members,

I am writing to politely ask you to consider me for President of the Int. 2.4mR CA. Before you vote, I would like to introduce myself and share my views on our beloved class.

#### Commitment

I began my sailing career in the Optimist dinghy almost 50 years ago. At 13, I switched to the Laser, to which I remained faithful for almost 20 years. During this time I also sailed Soling, H-Boat and various other boats. In 1997 I sailed a 2.4mR for the first time and was immediately hooked on the boat. In 1998 I bought my first 2.4mR and finished 8th at the World Championships in Tampere / FIN. In 1998 I decided to compete in the 2.4mR at the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney and won the gold medal. In London / Weymouth 2012, a silver medal was added.

I was one of the founders of the German NCA in 2001 with 2 used and 4 new boats. From the beginning I was board-member of the NCA and was twice EC officer of the Int. 2.4mR CA. Since this year I am supporting the board of the German NCA concerning international affairs and since this summer I am member of the World Sailing Athletes Commission. Furthermore, I am in charge of the Facebook activities of the German NCA.

#### Balance

Over the last 20 years we have experienced growth and contraction, the influence of the Paralympic Games and the transition to the class we are today. All of these influences are important elements for our class.

We have been highly recognized as an international class for many years around the world and are known for our openness, tolerance and also our natural interaction with sailors with disabilities.

In the early 2000s, our class was often known as the Paralympic class, which bothered me personally. However, we have left this status behind and now have many internationally successful sailors with and without disabilities in our class, which in turn make sailors from other classes curious.

In the winter/spring of 2019/2020, the cohesion of our class was put to the test. There were voices (few but loud) questioning the raison d'être of Para sailing in our class and risking a break with World Sailing and Para World Sailing.

Many of you know that I have massively opposed these voices and their intent. I was supported by many NCAs and sailors in our class and together we were able to at least maintain the status quo as the "chosen equipment" for Para events.

However, Para sailing is only one pillar of our class. We basically sail inclusively and at our regattas neither age, gender nor a disability plays a special role. Therefore, the strategy for the future of our class must be valid for all sailors.

Balancing the needs and desires of all sailors in our class must be paramount!

### Growth

I believe that growth is the most important issue for the preservation of the 2.4mR class. We must encourage participation in our regattas at all levels and welcome new members from around the world. We need to grow in all demographics: young and old, male and female, large and small, and most importantly in all regions of our international presence to keep the class alive.

In recent years, one nation (Austria) has newly joined our ICA but on the other hand, some have completely disappeared. The German NCA has been growing constantly for many years but in other countries the membership numbers are stagnating or even decreasing.

Due to the exclusion of sailing from the Paralympic Games, many sailors and nations have dropped out due to lack of financial support. But we also have to lament the loss of e.g. Denmark. Here the reason is not in the Paralympic sector.

This development poses great challenges for our class, which we will have to solve in the coming years.

As class president, I will focus on growth. I believe that with joint efforts we can get more boats on the starting lines again.

I want to increase collaboration with our NCAs and sailors and encourage more communication and coordination.

The EC of our class also needs to become more transparent and communicate more effectively directly with our members. Leadership does not always have the answers. Often the solutions come from within the class.

The more leadership communicates directly with members, the more important feedback we will receive in return. I promise to do my best to keep everyone informed and listen to the ideas and advice of our members.

But we will not develop through improved internal communication alone. We need to attract sailors from outside our class.

We can introduce our boats to sailors of other classes by trial sailing during our regattas or specially set up test events.

We can make boats available to well-known sailors for individual regattas, who report on us in their role as opinion leaders.

We can organize events for women or young people or try to appeal to certain groups with special classifications.

But no matter what we do - an important point is to report about us and our activities. Our public image has been significantly improved by the new and modern ICA homepage but our

activities in the social media area can still be significantly expanded in order to achieve a broader and more intensive visibility of our class.

Some NCAs have already held events for interested sailors and have also gained extensive experience with the "new media".

Now it is important that we collect and analyze this experience and pass on the results and recommendations to the entire class.

The EC of our class must coordinate these activities and be instrumental in their implementation.

I am convinced that we can do this!

Positive development on these fronts will create the momentum needed to move our class forward and keep it vibrant.

In summary: I will work to grow our class, maintain balance, ensure transparency, communicate effectively and prioritize our global development and presence.

Unfortunately, I have to address something else now.

For a year now, rumors and lies have been spread deliberately to discredit me.

It started when it was alleged that I wanted to persuade all regatta organizers in Germany and later worldwide to organize all regattas for OD boats only.

Since this spring, I have been accused of having financial interests in the Norlin MK III and of being financially dependent on the German Disabled Sports Association. Because of these dependencies, I would therefore put Para sailing above the interests of all sailors in our class. Furthermore, I would be part of a sailmaker mafia (no kidding!) that would discredit other sailmakers to dominate the market.

All these statements come from the same people who want to prevent by all means that I am elected to an official position of the NCA or the ICA.

I would like to make it clear at this point that I have no financial interest in building or selling the Norlin MK III, nor do I make my living from payments from the German Disabled Sports Association.

I earn my living as a self-employed project manager and consultant in the field of inclusive water sports and sports marketing.

Like many successful athletes, I have sponsors, suppliers and get discounts from various companies. These benefits are based on my performance in sports and have no sports political background.

The para sport and an associated OD regulation belong to our class. To deduce from this that I would convert the class into a pure OD class is completely absurd.

In a few weeks, you will vote on the future members of the EC and the presidency of our International Class.

I would be honored if you would vote for me as President of the Int. 2.4mR CA.

Thank you for your careful consideration. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at the following email address: [heikosail@me.com](mailto:heikosail@me.com)

Heiko Kröger

