



## **EBA Position Statement Requisition of Club Land for Other Use**

### **Executive Summary**

Recreational boating clubs are essential to communities and to ensuring the future of all forms of Recreational Boating<sup>1</sup>. The European Boating Association<sup>2</sup> (EBA) is concerned for the future of the activities it represents as club premises come under threat.

To landowners Recreational Boat Clubs are often seen as ‘just another tenant’, but the benefits they bring to local communities and to their members should not be overlooked in favour of financial gain, when considering changes of use for land currently occupied by recreational boating clubs.

### **Background**

Most recreational boating clubs have existed for decades and some a century or more. When they were founded recreational boating activities were considered a positive culture activity for the people living nearby. Creating recreational boat harbours opened up undeveloped areas near to water suitable for such activities and provided a place for participants to gather. Clubs were often supported by local authorities in order to develop leisure opportunities.

The land that recreational boating clubs are using was very often given to the club free of charge or the club was given a long-term lease contract that was affordable for the club and its members in recognition of the perceived importance for local residents. Work in the club was usually done on a voluntary basis by the members and all but the largest club are normally operated on a not-for-profit basis.

### **Modern Pressures**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has brought with it many pressures both on public finances and on natural resources. With the increased need for housing, the premium sites clubs have been occupying have become in demand. As a result, in recent years clubs have found themselves facing significant rent increases and landowners have sought to reclaim the land used by clubs, resulting in clubs having to move premises or close.

## Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Recreational Boating

Being close to the water is a relaxing and restorative pastime. A study by the University of Exeter Medical School found that those living close to or within 1 km of water are 22% less likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety.

In general, recreational boating is a good form of exercise. It also allows participants to spend time outdoors and to connect with nature. It provides participants with a break from our hectic everyday lifestyle and getting afloat can provide a much-needed change in perspective.

Learning a new skill allows you to momentarily leave your comfort zone and immerse your thoughts on the experience of being out on the water. Trying out new activities on the water is also a great way to join new social circles and form new friendships. Most recreational boating participants gain a sense of community from participation. Tight-knit communities form in boating clubs and marina and harbour areas. Socialising with other recreational boaters, exchanging stories and experiences resulting many lasting friendships.

People can only benefit from these health and wellbeing advantages if opportunities to participate in recreational boating are maintained.

## The EBA Position on Requisition of Club Land for Other Use

Access to recreational boating facilities is vital for the EBA's members (and those people who they represent) to be able to continue their recreational boating activities and is essential if people are to enjoy the health benefits of recreational boating.

The EBA urges national and local governments not to view recreational boating clubs as being suitable land for re-development (e.g. for residential or commercial purposes) and not to approve re-development schemes that would result in the loss (or degradation) of recreational boating facilities. The social impact and the damage such re-development could have on the local community should not be overlooked or undervalued.

The EBA urges landowners considering increasing rents payable by recreational boating clubs or evicting clubs from premises they occupy to consider the impact on those clubs and on the health and wellbeing of club members.

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### <sup>1</sup> Recreational Boating

The EBA is the European representative organisation for recreational boating.

There is no general consensus as to the terminology used to describe the types of boat used for "recreational boating", with expressions such as "recreational craft" or "private pleasure craft" being used to describe only subsets of such types of boat for the purposes of specific pieces of EU legislation. "Recreational boating" also includes the use of beach- or slipway-launched water toys such as wind surfers, sailing dinghies, inflatable boats and personal watercraft.

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Boats used for “recreational boating” may be small or large, propelled by sail and/or power and used on inland waters and/or at sea. “Recreational boating” at sea can range from close-to-shore to trans-oceanic.

“Recreational boating” also includes the use of such boats privately owned and operated by the owner, hired (on bareboat or skippered charter) or used to provide a service (such as training or race participation).

In the context of this document, therefore, the EBA considers “recreational boating” to mean using boats that are designed or adapted for sport or leisure, whether propelled by sail and/or power, for the purposes for which they are designed or adapted.

## Notes

### **<sup>2</sup> European Boating Association**

The European Boating Association, Europäischer Sportschiffahrtsverband, Association Européenne de Navigation de Plaisance, is a civil, not for profit association of recreational boat users’ organisations, founded in 1982, and established as an Unincorporated Association whose members agree to be governed by its constitution. The EBA member organisations (see <http://www.eba.eu.com/participantorgs>) collectively represent in excess of 1.5 million recreational boaters and an estimated 20 million active participants.

The purpose of the EBA is to represent the mutually agreed common interests of national recreational boat users’ organisations in Europe, and in particular to:

- Coordinate and develop recreational boating activities in Europe by exchange of information, and action on matters of mutually agreed common interest.
- Promote the practice of all activities on the water, promoting and exchanging knowledge and experience between recreational boat users’ organisations in Europe.
- Represent EBA members in environmental, regulatory and technical matters affecting their safe enjoyment of recreational boating activities on the water.
- Encourage the safe, unhampered and environmentally sustainable use of recreational boats on all European waters.
- Provide the link between the European institutions and EBA Members for consultation and information on proposed EU directives and regulations.
- Provide the link between other relevant global and regional organisations and EBA Members.