

During a traditional curry dinner, the organisers of Kieler Woche



set the course for the future of the 129 year-old sailing event on Friday the 18th of November in the club's historic "Kaisersaal", with the Kiel Yacht Club inviting sponsors, partners and representatives of the fellow organising clubs from the areas of sports, economy and politics.

The focus will be on innovation and the European Sailing Circuit (ESC).

The organisers of Kieler Woche have been working on the European Sailing Circuit and the inclusion of the new Olympic sailing disciplines ever since this year's event. Their aim is to remain innovative and, through the ESC, to offer competitors attractive events with manageable travel expenses. Not being part of the Sailing World Cup opens up new doors for Kieler Woche. Bending to demands in terms of sponsoring (right up to title sponsoring) or adjusting the time periods (including having to change the date of Kieler Woche) is neither possible nor desirable for Kiel. Even in its 130th year, Kieler Woche carves its own path.

"The Sailing World Cup isn't really suitable for a traditional event such as Kieler Woche. We would have had to offer six days of regattas for the Olympic classes, scaring off other non-Olympic classes. But we really can't let that happen, therefore we have simply not submitted an application in the first place", said Chief Race Director Jobst Richter of Kiel Yacht Club regarding the World Cup, which as of 2013 will no longer take place in Kiel. This year has shown how few competitors followed the World Cup regattas around the world. The ISAF has also given up holding the award ceremony for the World Cup winners at the end of Kieler Woche, due to a lack of assets.

It is doubtful that the number of participating competitors will rise if the ISAF Sailing World Cup only makes two stops in Europe and wants to visit all five continents as of 2013. While the destinations in Asia, Africa/Middle East, the Americas and Oceania are not yet fixed, the European stops will be Hyeres/France and Mallorca/Spain, due to the necessary timeframe. Kiel was not an option.

"We want to assist the ISAF, but in any case we will continue to organise Kieler Woche ourselves", commented Sven Christensen of Kiel Yacht Club and Point of Sailing, the agency

marketing Kieler Woche.

Although Kiel sees good chances of preserving its status in the sailing world even without the World Cup, a power struggle with the ISAF should, however, be avoided. "If World Cups in other continents are set on the date of Kieler Woche or on a date too close to it, then there would be a cannibalisation effect", said KYC foreign secretary Dirk Ramhorst.

Alongside the ESC, Kiel also has plans for providing an outlook on future Olympic Games in 2012: "Experience what Rio 2016 has to offer in Kiel, 2012". It is under this premise that the new Olympic disciplines will find their place at Kieler Woche 2012 (16 to 24 June). From catamaran sailing (only removed from the programme for 2012) and women's skiff (following the women's Match Race/unique for the 2012 Olympics) right up to surfing disciplines (possibly including kiteboarding), everything that will be sailed at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) should be offered in Kiel. -- Hermann Hell

Regatta Dates Kieler Woche 2012 - 16 -24 June

www.kieler-woche.de