



Centre for
**Strategy & Evaluation
Services**

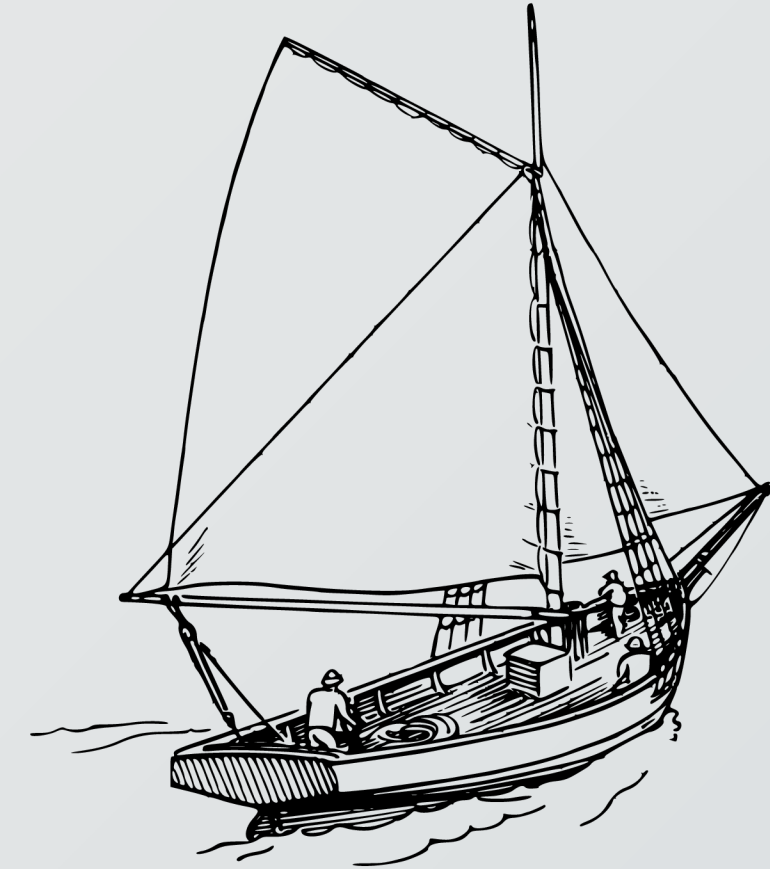
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Evaluation Study of Directive 2013/53/EU on Recreational Craft and Personal Watercraft

Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and
SMEs



Summary of the presentation



Study aims and scope

Reminder of the RCD's objectives

Key evaluations considerations

Simplified tasks overview and timeline

Key points stemming from literature review and stakeholder interactions so far

How your organisation can assist in the process

Study aims...

Primarily, to assess the extent to which the Directive has achieved its **original objectives**.

The study will provide:

- Primary and secondary data to **answer the evaluation questions** across the 5 key evaluation criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value);
- An assessment of the RCD's **fitness for purpose** under the relevance criterion pertaining to environmental issues;
- An estimation of the **costs and benefits** from the implementation of the RCD, and examine the scope for simplification and administrative burdens reduction.

... and scope

Timeframe: period since January 2014 (year before RCD's entry into force), to end of 2024.

Geographic: European Economic Area (EEA), which includes the 27 Member States and three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) and Türkiye.

Overview of the RCD's objectives

GENERAL

Ensure free movement and functioning of the internal market

Ensure health and safety of persons and protection of the environment

SPECIFIC

Prevent fragmentation of the internal market caused by different national requirements

Protect vulnerable enterprises, in particular SMEs, from worsening their market position

Improve the environmental performance of recreational crafts entering the EU market

Provide stakeholders with legal certainty regarding the requirements for recreational crafts

Ensure compliance of products entering the EU market and safety for customers

OPERATIONAL

Revise limits for exhaust emission

Revise limits for noise emissions

Revise safety characteristics of recreational crafts

Introduce mitigating measures for the most vulnerable market operators in the EU

Align with the New Legislative Framework

Key evaluation considerations

How far are **sector-specific concepts** (e.g. post-construction assessment (PCA), major craft modification, watercraft built for own use, watercraft identification number) subject to **divergent interpretations among MS and stakeholders**?

How far are **novel watercrafts and new propulsion technologies** (hydro-foiling crafts, amphibious crafts, electric propulsion system, hybrid propulsion systems, propulsion by hydrogen, by solar system, remote propulsion, ...) creating challenges and opportunities?

Are the **current environmental and circular economy-relevant provisions up-to-date and fit for purpose**?

- Are current **exhaust and noise emission limits** relevant, effective, and efficient?
- Are current **exhaust emission requirements** sufficiently incentivising the manufacturing of low/zero-emissions watercrafts?
- Technical feasibility for **further reducing emissions of marine propulsion engines**.
- Possible alignment with stricter **international environmental and emissions rules**?
- Introducing requirements for **evaporative emissions and fuel systems**.
- Impact of **watercraft design categories on consumer information and on manufacturers**, in particular SMEs.
- Product lifecycle issues - **reusability and recyclability of materials (plus use of environmentally-friendly materials)**.

Simplified tasks overview and timeline



Key points stemming from research to date

The RCD is generally regarded as a well-functioning and established piece of legislation.

Major industry stakeholders describes it as “overall fit for purpose”.

No stakeholders believe it requires a fundamental redesign.

On Major Craft Conversion (MCC):

- Potential risk for misunderstandings, high costs and barriers to innovation if not limited only to “true substantial changes”, such as change of propulsion type or changing motorboat to a sailing boat (i.e. creating a new product).
- Important to define a clear scope of MCC for operations made during the use phase of watercraft.
- Some countries reported problems with identification of MCC (also with major engine modification).

Key points stemming from research to date

Post-Construction Assessment (PCA):

- There are no particular problems with PCA interpretation, except in cases when used by private importers or those converting craft.
- Preliminary evidence of difficulties to ensure that modifications are compliant using PCA relying upon harmonised standards, for instance for limited availability of documents (e.g. DOC, old standards).
- Some countries highlighted how PCA is appropriate for regulating secondhand watercraft from EU and third countries lacking CE marking, EU Declaration of Conformity or technical file.

Declaration of Conformity (DOC):

- Possible different usage of DOC: should it be kept available for the lifetime of the watercraft or only when placing the craft on the market?
- Importance of DOC for customs purposes, but any issues arise in the process?

Manufacturer Identification Code (MIC):

- Possible need for clarification of the Directive especially regarding duplication of MICs by third countries.
- Importance of Market Surveillance and uniform application across countries to ensure smooth and effective assignment process for MICs.

Key points stemming from research to date

“Product/Watercraft Built for Own Use”

- No major issues identified at the moment.
- There are different practices across countries (e.g. mandatory boat registration required, checklists to identify purpose of the boat, etc.).
- Importance of notified bodies to inform individuals using boats imported from third countries of their statutory obligations.

RCD Design Categories:

- No specific issues identified at the moment.
- Users might get confused around wind speed of Beaufort scale and gust speed, or around significant wave height.
- Weaknesses of the design categories were highlighted in previous studies (e.g., “unequal distribution of the market share” among categories), but recommending against adding additional sub-divisions to the categories.

Key points stemming from research to date

Dismantling and Recycling of Boats:

- Provisions of EU Waste Framework Directive relevant to recycling of fibre-glass composites from recreational craft.
- For the sector, boat-building materials such as wood, steel and aluminium suitable for recycling, challenge comes with composites.
- Several initiatives exist in EU MS to increase circularity of materials in recreational-craft industry, especially on re-use of fibre-glass composites.

Novel Watercraft and Propulsion Technologies:

- Relative lack of consumer demand for non-ICE-powered craft as well as lack of standardisation activities for innovative technologies.
- There might be higher manufacturing costs for such crafts compared to ICE-powered craft, including for marine battery packs.
- In some countries, market surveillance authorities seem to encounter challenges in verifying if installed or adapted engines comply with exhaust-emission limits.

Key points stemming from research to date

Noise- and Exhaust-Emission Regulation:

- Significant reduction in emissions of engines with RCD.
- Challenges might arise in absence of a dedicated procedure to test hybrid propulsion engines.
- Lack of monitoring and reporting emission inventories separately for recreational crafts at MS level.

Market surveillance

- No infringement cases seem to have been brought against MS regarding the products under RCD scope.
- Market surveillance calls for sufficient resources to be able to carry out roles and prevent variation in levels of surveillance across MS to ensure non-compliant products are not on the market.
- Limited data and information provided by notified bodies across the EU.
- Sector's characteristics in some countries (e.g. small family businesses, personal watercraft built as single products) make it harder to ensure compliance).

Participating in the interview programme - we will contact you, or drop an email to our team:
mwhittle@cses.eu, lmarcholin@cses.eu and ldouville@cses.eu

By sharing data, reports and studies
(in all EU languages)

How you can assist us in this study

By responding to the targeted survey, just launched and running throughout October 2025

By sharing the targeted survey with other relevant stakeholders in your countries and organisations, to ensure a large and representative response rate