

The EMH Newsletter

#1/July26

<http://emh-org.com>

office@emh-org.com



European
Maritime
Heritage
- - - - -

In this issue

This is the first newsletter, a communication channel for members of Europe Maritime Heritage. This issue covers the following topics:

[EMH General Assembly 2026](#)

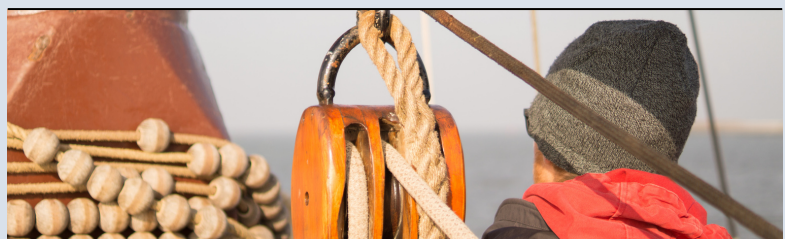
[Save Rafael Verdera's mooring!](#)

[Traditional Ships and ES-TRIN](#)

[New safety requirements on inland waterways](#)

Contribute

[Promoting the
future of maritime
heritage](#)



[_Send your news if you want us to publish them in the next newsletter:](#)

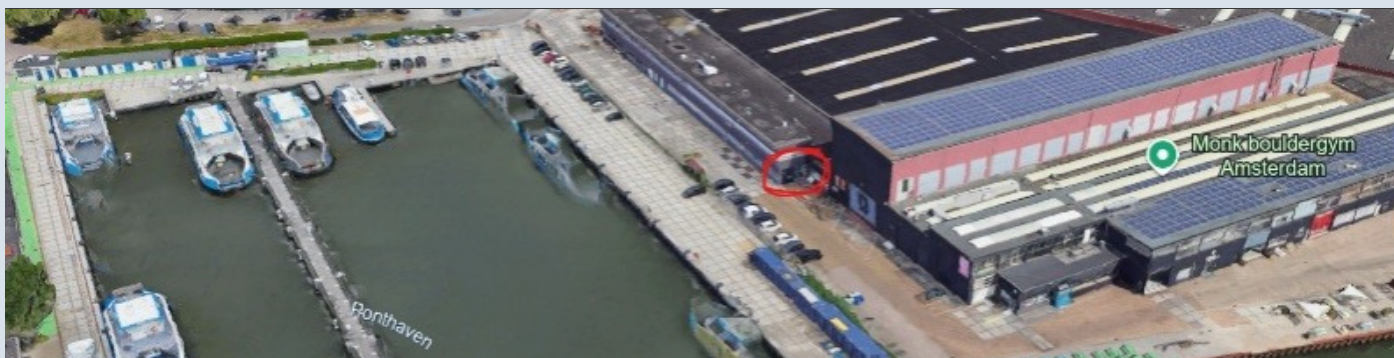
[Click here for content and technical details.](#)

[_Follow us in our website: <https://emh-org.com/>](#)

[_You can also follow us in our channels: \[Facebook\]\(#\) \[Linkedin\]\(#\) \[Instagram\]\(#\) \[Youtube\]\(#\)](#)

[_Contact us in: \[office@emh-org.com\]\(mailto:office@emh-org.com\)](#)

[_You can also contact us and subscribe or unsubscribe
these newsletters through our webform: <https://emh-org.com/contact/>](#)



EMH General Assembly 2026

General Assembly / Record of annual meeting 2026
Scott Pereira and Paul van Ommen

The 2026 General Assembly of European Maritime Heritage (EMH) was held in Amsterdam for a day of discussion, decision-making and knowledge exchange. Representatives attended both in person and online, reflecting the organisation's commitment to broad participation across Europe.

The meeting opened with a tribute to longtime EMH member Thomas Hoppe, whose recent passing was marked with great respect. Members then welcomed a new organisation from Spain, AEBEC, strengthening EMH's growing European network, and elected Kjartan Fonstelien to the Executive Board.

Discussions focused on the future of the organisation. A renewed website, revised membership procedures and a stronger focus on communication are intended to increase EMH's visibility and impact.

The General Assembly also approved amendments to the EMH Statutes and agreed to wind up the inactive EMH Foundation, allowing the organisation to simplify its structure and focus its efforts where they matter most.

Following the formal meeting, participants took part in two seminars on the certification of traditional ships under ES-TRIN and lessons learned from recent accidents in the traditional fleet. The day concluded with an informal reception, providing an opportunity for members to exchange ideas and strengthen cooperation.



Save the Rafael Verdera's mooring!

Mallorca appel / Heritage harbour, AEBEC,
Scott Pereira

Statement on behalf of **Iñaki Arizmendi**, the current owner and Captain of the **Rafael Verdera**. As part of the family that has stewarded this vessel for decades, I'm reaching out to your organization to present the situation of this ship. Built in 1841, it is the oldest active vessel in the Spanish fleet and a benchmark of European maritime heritage.

It is important to emphasize that the Rafael Verdera holds the official status of **Historic Vessel, certified by the Directorate General of the Spanish Merchant Marine (DGMM)**.

This legal status directly links us to the commitments of the **Faro Convention** regarding the social value of heritage.

Our relationship with the EMH has a long history based on shared goals. The Rafael Verdera had the honor of being the **host vessel and venue for the EMH meeting in Palma de Mallorca in 2005**, reinforcing our family's commitment to the protection of living maritime heritage.

A example of the Blue Economy and the values of the European Green Deal, promoting traditional navigation with low environmental impact.

Trajectory, Sustainability, and Conservation

Model: The recent history of this vessel has been tied to our family since **1985**, when it was acquired by my husband, Miguel Ángel Arizmendi. For four decades, we have fully and privately managed its maintenance. Currently, after our son Iñaki took over the management and command, we are in a negotiation process with the Port Authority of the Balearic Islands (APB) that compromises the vessel's operational stability.

The Rafael Verdera is managed under a **self-financing and sustainability model**. Our commercial local passenger activity is the sole source of income that allows us to fund the maintenance of a 185-year-old wooden ship. This project is a real-world example of the **Blue Economy and the values of the European Green Deal**, promoting traditional navigation with low environmental impact. This preservation work has been carried out exclusively with our own resources, the support of our passengers, and **sea lovers**, without ever receiving public or private subsidies.

Our proposal seeks the full integration of the vessel into the new redevelopment of the Paseo Marítimo in Palma. The Rafael Verdera is not just a boat, but a living heritage that

↑ Continued from previous page

must merge with the current remodeling, providing the historical, cultural, and sustainable value that a project of this scale requires. To this end, a mooring that guarantees its visibility and safety in the center of the port is indispensable. Only by maintaining this strategic location can we ensure the commercial activity that finances its conservation, proving that professional exploitation and the protection of a certified historic monument are two sides of the same reality, necessary for the cultural and green

dynamism of the port. However, the current proposal from the APB does not seem to respect the framework of **Royal Decree 784/2021 on Historic Vessels**, attempting to apply standard commercial conditions. The possibility of relocation to peripheral areas of the port would hinder access for citizens and tourists, breaking the social bond with the community and condemning the vessel to an invisibility that would lead to its economic ruin.

Save the Rafael Verdera's mooring!

Our Request:

Given the relevance of the **Rafael Verdera as the oldest active vessel in the Spanish fleet and a certified Historic Vessel**, we formally request:

1. A letter of institutional support

addressed to the APB and the Government of the Balearic Islands, stating that the protection of a certified historic vessel implies ensuring the visibility and operational conditions necessary for its sustainability within the city's new urban project.

2. Guidance on the appropriate channels to inform relevant European institutions in the fields of culture and the environment about this situation.

EMH response:

Leonardo Garcia de Vincentiis (President of our new member AEBEC) and our EMH President, Joao de Almeida have been in touch with the Palma port authorities to make a strong case in support of the Rafael Verdera

Traditional Ships and ES-TRIN

Progress with ES-TRIN

Hendrik Boland



History

The establishment of the ATV (Advisory body for Traditional Vessels) Foundation has quite a history behind it. In fact, it began with the entry into force of the Inland Navigation Act in 2009, which itself is an implementation of European Directive 2006/87/EC. According to Article 7 of the Inland Navigation Act, vessels (with a length of 20 m or more or a block volume of 100 m³ or more) navigating inland waterways must have a valid Inland Vessel Certificate on board. Since the expiry of the relevant transitional arrangement in December 2018, this also applies to pleasure craft. This means that pleasure craft of those dimensions are not permitted to sail without an Inland Vessel Certificate. Use as a houseboat or scrapping are often the only remaining options. However, a 'traditional vessel' can obtain an Inland Vessel Certificate with deviating regulations, allowing it to continue sailing with that vessel.

Initiative

Even before the expiration of the transitional arrangement, the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) gave a presentation to a delegation from the Federation of Maritime Heritage Netherlands (FVEN) in early 2018. In it, the ILT requested the FVEN to consider the establishment of an ATV foundation. This foundation would need to be recognized by the ILT as an "expert for traditional vessels" authorized to provide advice on 'traditional vessels'. As early as March 2018, the FVEN declared its willingness to take up this request. A working group was established, which presented its initial proposals in December 2018. After discussing these with the ILT, the final proposals followed in February 2019.

↑ Continued from previous page

Commencement of activities

Following the notarial incorporation, the appointment of board members and experts, the adoption of the 'Regulations for Implementation', and recognition by the ILT, the ATV foundation was ready to launch in late 2020 / early 2021.

Even before the ILT's recognition, the first vessel presented itself for assessment: the replica Witte Swaen. Subsequently, eight vessels were assessed in the period 2021–2022, six of which received the designation 'traditional vessel'. In addition, many owners requested information about the activities of the ATV.

Stagnation

In 2023, a stagnation occurred that lasted until early 2025. Due to this stagnation, a number of vessels that had registered with the ATV were temporarily put 'on hold'. The reason was not that the ATV could not assess the vessels, but rather that the follow-up procedure could not be carried out. This was because the ILT and the inspection bodies appeared to have insufficient experience. Since it concerned a new procedure, it would have to become clear in practice whether the procedure needed to be further tightened. The ILT wanted to be present during this process to learn from practice and, if necessary, adjust the working method based on the experiences.

In addition, a number of questions emerged during the 2021/2022 period as a result of the work:

- What is to be understood by 'the chosen historical date'?
- What emission requirements must engines of 'traditional vessels' and 'replicas' meet?
- What is to be understood by 'demonstration purposes'?
- Must all deviations from the standard regulations be included in the Inland Waterway Vessel Certificate?
- Which regulations apply when sailing with passengers on board 'traditional vessels'?

Traditional ships cannot comply with modern regulations without destroying heritage.

Traditional ships should sail actively: no income no upkeep 'no trips, no ships'

There will be numerous new old ships after the transition period:

replicas

restorations

spirit of tradition

change of function (e.g. from cargo to passenger ship)

Continued below ↓

↑ Continued from previous page

Three problems currently:

1. What is meant by "is operated for demonstration purposes in particular"?

Activities that keep knowledge, craftsmanship and seamanship alive, which are connected to the reconstruction, maintenance and the operation of vessels with traditional craft.

2. The engine

- the vessel already has a valid inland navigation vessel certificate and keeps its certificate; Transitional provisions are then applicable to the vessel, in particular those relating to Article 9.01(2) on emissions requirements.
- the vessel has no valid inland navigation vessel certificate, but the engine was already on board on the selected historical date; Then, transitional provisions are not applicable to the vessel; however the engine can be accepted subject to a derogation in accordance with Article 24.01.
- the vessel has no valid inland navigation vessel certificate, and the engine was not on board on the selected historical date; Then, transitional provisions are not applicable to the vessel. The vessel must comply with the current emissions requirements.
- Replicas of traditional vessels are always "new constructions" (no previous certificate) and the engines on board these vessels must always comply with current emission requirements.

3. Passengers

Traditional craft must not create a competitive situation with passenger vessels. They can undertake activities relating to "demonstration purposes", which must be included in the operations concept referred to in Article 24.02(2)(b).

In order to avoid unfair competition with passenger vessels, the recommendation could set a maximum number of persons apart from the crew. A solution similar to the one foreseen for passenger sailing vessels in Article 20.02 of ES-TRIN could be considered (i.e. "maximum permissible number of passengers not exceeding L_{WL} ").

After twenty years the first traditional vessel is certificated thanks to all the efforts in the Netherlands.



New safety requirements for traditional sailing vessels on inland waterways

Legal / Navigation / Traditional Sailing

Paul van Ommen

Several discussions during the **CESNI committee meeting** in Strasbourg were relevant to owners of traditional sailing vessels. The Dutch delegation presented the broad outline of a revised chapter for sailing vessels (Chapter 20). The September meeting will be used to further develop the proposal in more detail.

The revision of the chapter was prompted by a series of accidents involving the rigging of traditional sailing vessels. **The Dutch Safety Board** investigated these accidents and issued recommendations for ship operators, inspection bodies and the government.

The technical requirements themselves will not change significantly. Instead, they will become more precise and leave less room for interpretation, which was identified as one of the causes of shortcomings in the certification process. In addition, a rig book will become a new requirement.



Continued below ↓

↑ Continued from previous page

The rig book was proposed by the BBZ, as it forms part of the industry standard that was developed in the aftermath of the accidents. **A rig book describes the vessel's rigging in detail.** All components are listed and documented, including, where applicable, dimensions, safe working loads, installation dates, product certification and manufacturer information. It can be compared to a technical drawing and specification of a building.

The rig book also includes a planned maintenance schedule, a log of maintenance carried out, inspection records for critical parts of the rigging, the findings of those inspections, and any required follow-up actions.

Its format is not prescribed. Operators may use a sophisticated maintenance management system such as Marad, or simply keep a well-organised notebook. **Naval architect Marijke de Jong**, one of the driving forces behind the efforts to improve procedures and knowledge relating to traditional rigs, has developed a practical rig book template in Excel.

From an operator's perspective, the biggest challenge will be to consistently record all changes and maintenance carried out on the rigging. This is often perceived as an administrative burden.

More Information:

What is CESNI?

The European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation was set up in 2015 in order to adopt technical standards in various fields, in particular as regards vessels, crew and information technology. The respective regulations at the European and international level, including those of the European Union and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), may refer to these standards with a view to their application.

[+INFO](#)

Europe inland waterways

The EU's inland waterways stretch over 42,286 kilometres and are a key means of connecting seaports, cities and industrial centres. Transport by inland waterways is energy-efficient and almost congestion-free.

The most recent and important European Union legislation on navigable inland waterways is Directive (EU) 2025/2482, which entered into force on January 1, 2026. This regulation completely updates the framework for River Information Services (RIS).-

[+INFO](#)



RAFAEL VERDERA

Living history of the sea

The Rafael Verdera, built in 1841, is the oldest active vessel in the Spanish fleet and a benchmark of European maritime heritage.



European
Maritime
Heritage

— — — — —

The EMH Newsletter

EMH - European Maritime Heritage
Aambeelstraat 20, 1021KB Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

