



# ***ITALIAN FEDERATION'S APPROACH TO INTEGRATE COASTAL ROWING INTO THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF A NATIONAL FEDERATION***



**Coastal Rowing is especially popular Italy and in the last 10 years it has had an incredible development.**

**We have been asked from Fisa to provide a description about how we approached this, when it was initiated and how it works.**

**The development of Coastal Rowing in Italy has been a gradual process. The fundamental phases were three.**

**From 1996 to 2004** – First approach, clubs' spontaneous activity, coast to coast tours, first recreational races.

**From 2005 to 2010** – Development of the discipline, regulation, purchase of boats, organization of the first National Championships, organization of the first World Coastal Rowing Championships hosted in Italy.

**From 2011 to the present** - qualitative and quantitative growth, increase of the coastal rowers, birth of new clubs, traditional rowers are converted to coastal rowing, organization of a World Coastal Rowing Championships with the highest standards, significant competitive results.

## Brief history – from 1996 to 2004

Italy «imported» Coastal Rowing from France, where the discipline was born in the 80's.

Given the geographical proximity to France the first region of Italy to develop Coastal Rowing was Liguria.

In 1996 an Italian crew tried the first adventure on a coastal rowing boat on the cross-navigation of the French Atlantic coast from Imperia to Brest.

Master rowers from Imperia and Sanremo were very active in *coast to coast* races with the French coastal rower friends.



At the beginning, the promotional, touristic potential and recreational aspect certainly prevailed, and above all, the overwhelming relationship between *ROWER-SEA-NATURE*.



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But in a nation featuring over seven thousand miles of coast, was immediately clear that Coastal Rowing could be an important magnet to attract new people to rowing and this is what actually happened.



Rowing along a sea coast and out into the sea or inland on some lakes and rivers where the water tends not to be flat was actually one of the fastest growing communities of rowers in Italy.

## From 2005 to 2010

At this point additional boats were absolutely needed to further develop and sustain the growth of Coastal Rowing



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In 2005 thanks to the support of a private banking foundation that believed in the “touristic” potential of Coastal Rowing, seen as vehicle to promote the beauty of the Liguria coast, invested 100.000 € in a sponsorship to purchase 12 coastal rowing boats and associate its brand with an ecological sport.



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These boats have been absolutely important for the further activities of the local clubs and for the organization of the first National Championships and are still in use.



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# Actions

In these years Coastal Rowing expands in other Italian region especially Friuli, Tuscany, Campania, Puglia and Sicily.

Also the agonistic profile of the discipline starts taking shape and the number of promotional competitions and maritime raids increased significantly.

In the next few years first promotional competitions started and the Italian Federation issued the first Coastal Rowing regulations and safety rules, and organized all coastal rowing regattas in a single calendar of promotional races

In the meantime Fisa indicated the development of Coastal Rowing as the route to follow and in 2006 established the first edition of the ***World Rowing Coastal Championships for clubs***.

The Italian Rowing Federation started finding ways to develop this important discipline growing so fast and encouraged it through several actions in support of clubs.

We appointed a Coastal Rowing Coordinator to give guidelines to clubs and to coordinate the Italian clubs' activity abroad and we started making some promotions to enable clubs to purchase more boats.

Because Coastal Rowing quickly developed in many parts of Italy **more coastal rowing boats were needed from clubs.** In **2007** the Italian Federation decided to help clubs with a project called **“Operation Coastal Rowing”** aimed to encourage the practice of coastal rowing through the delivery of a financial contribution for the purchase of 14 boats ( 8 4x + and n.6 2x) to the clubs participating in the 3 major national coastal rowing regatta of the year taking into account the final ranking. The Federation made a **special deal with an Italian boat builder** and paid directly to the boat builder a quota of the final price on behalf of the beneficiary clubs.

*In 2006 the first edition of the National Coastal Rowing Championships combined with an international regatta open to all foreign crews was organized at the Sanremo Rowing Club.*

*This initiative was successfully repeated in 2007 and 2008*





In 2008 Sanremo hosted the second edition of the World Rowing Coastal Championships, registering the participation of 485

rowers, 171 crew, 110 clubs representing 16 nations (CRO, CYP, DEN, FRA, GER, GB, HUN, IRE, ITA, MON, NZ, POL, ESP, SWE, SWI and USA).



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Hosting a World Coastal Rowing Championships in Italy was surely the best possible spot for the development this discipline in our country



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*Especially between 2007 and 2011, but also up to the current years, many clubs that had a very little activity at olympic rowing level found a new vital lymph with Coastal Rowing, that could be easily practiced daily and was funny and entertaining.*

*During these years Coastal Rowing has registered the birth of new Clubs in Italy, the constant increase of the participants, the number of races and the fleet of boats, also thanks to the promotions to purchase boats and investments supported by the Federation, as it was during the 2010 Italian Championships and the 2011 World Championships hosted again in Italy.*



## From 2011 to the present

*A significant milestone for the development of Coastal Rowing in Italy has been certainly the organization of the 2011 World Coastal Rowing Championships in Bari.*



*It was a big success!*

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Also in this occasion a promotion regarding the purchase of new boats and new oars has been strategic to better integrate Coastal rowing in the daily activities of clubs.

The Federation has purchased at its own risk 24 new coastal rowing boats at very competitive price necessary for staging the Championships, and sold them after the Championships to the Italian clubs at a very competitive price that they couldn't obtain individually.

*It was an effort but this helped a lot the development and the practice of Coastal Rowing especially for small clubs that have no financial resource to invest in equipment*

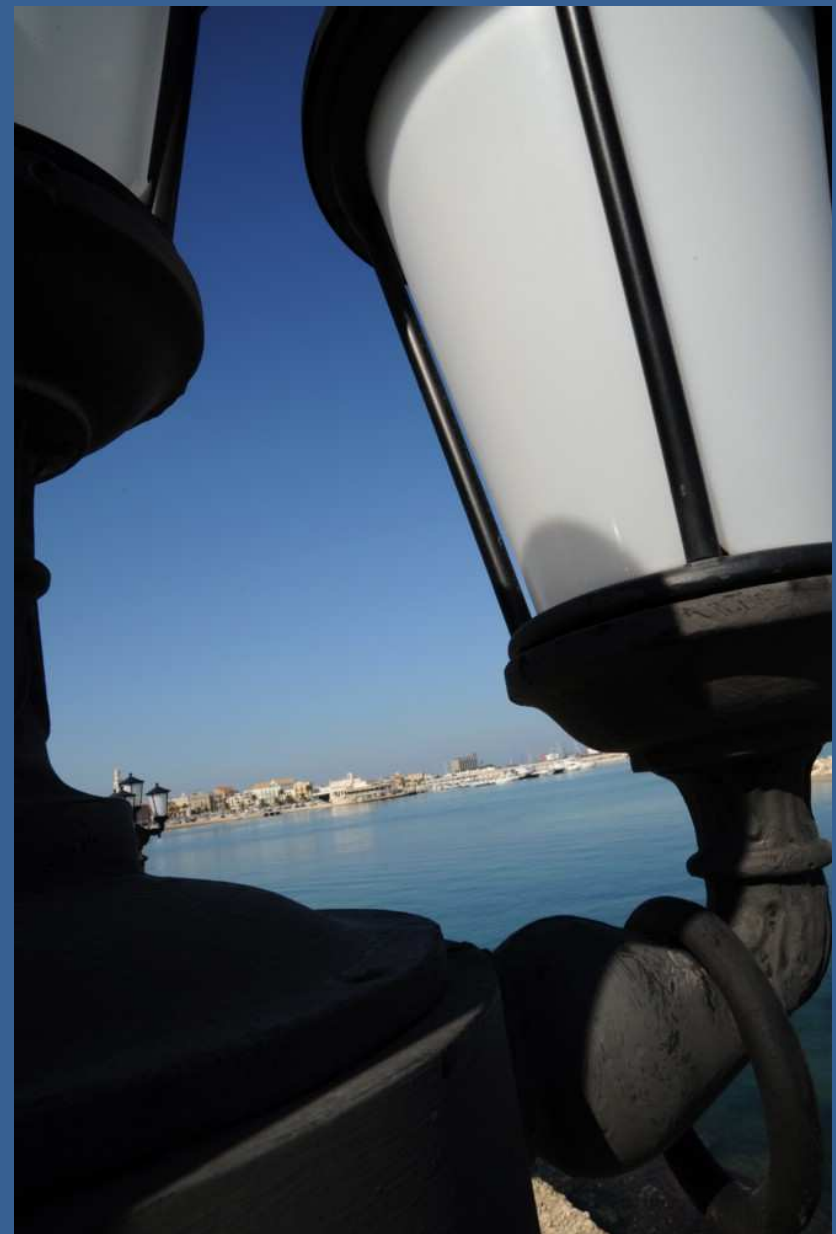


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As in 2008, hosting a World Championships in the country is a big occasion to promote the discipline.

**But the 2011 WRCC organized in Bari was especially important because the level of the organization and competition has increased significantly compared to previous editions.**



*21 Nations, 600 rowers representing 4 continents*  
*211 Italian rowers representing 30 clubs*



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In terms of organization, in addition to ensuring the technical standards to host the event, a lot has been done in terms of communication and attractiveness of the event for the sponsors activities and for spectators.

A commercial village/fun zone area for spectators was settled.

A big screen to follow the competitions was placed in the waterfront. Many spectators followed the races.



The location was strategic and the short distance between the city center and the promenade where the race course was developed facilitated the presence of the spectators.



A TV production using an helicopter was realized and spread by a local TV and a nice promotional video was produced

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In Bari demonstrative tests of Beach Rowing took place for the first time: the boats departing from the shoreline had to be reached by race by the athletes, left a few hundred meters before.



It was a fun experience favored by the beautiful scenery and the sunny day and mild temperature.



From a technical point of view it was the first championships organised according to the new Fisa regulation.

*The level of the competitions and competitors raised a lot.*

Many athletes of the National Team took part to the 2011

World Coastal

Rowing

Championship

and since that

edition use to

attend the

Coastal

Championships

every year

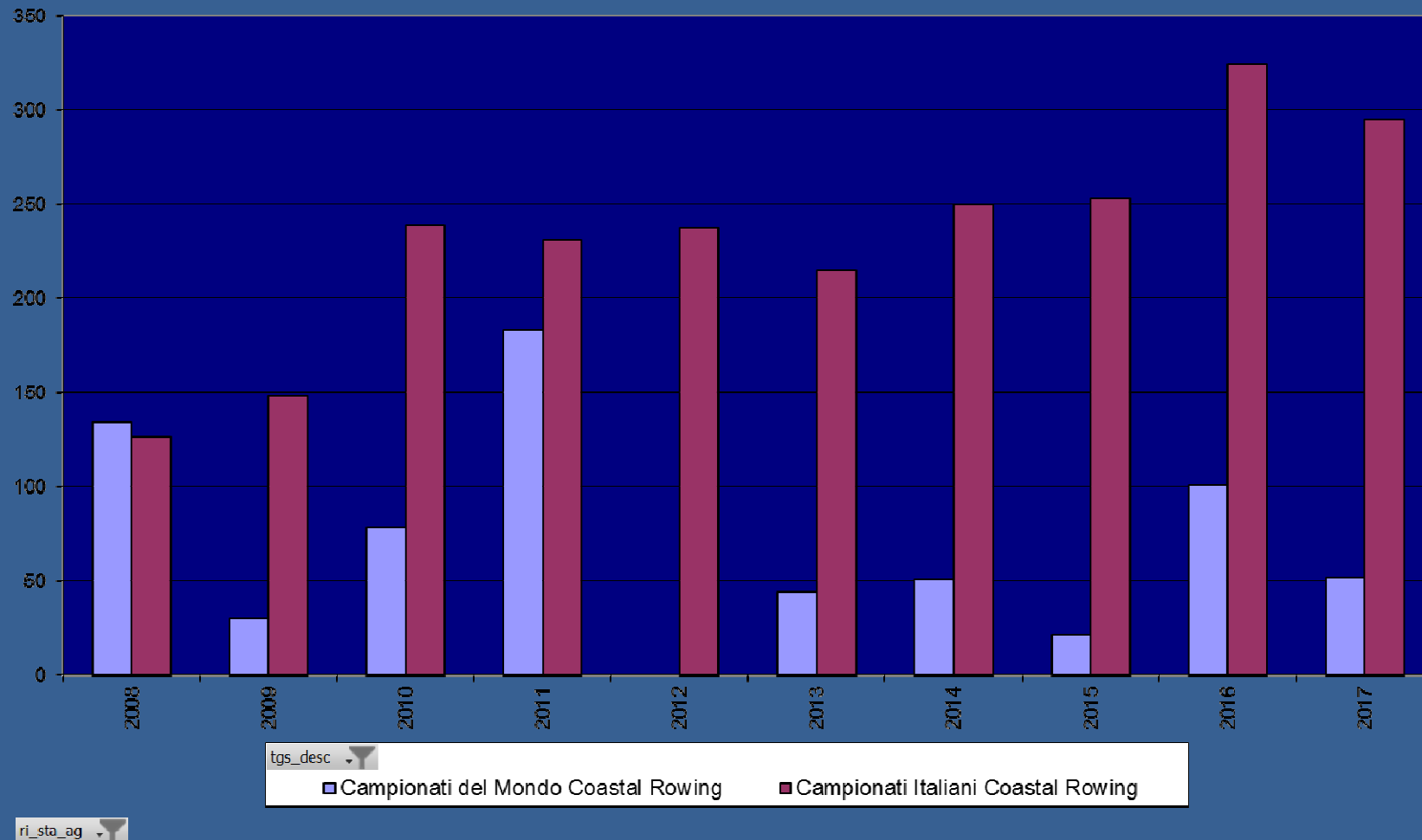


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## It's interesting to analyse some data about:

- the attendance of Italian rowers at WRCC from 2008 to 2017 (not staged in 2012)
- the attendance at National Championships



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**Italy is always among the teams with the greatest participation and results of our crews are improving year by year.**



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*In 2014 Italian clubs attending the WCRC in Thessaloniki, won 2 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze medal.*

*In 2015 in Lima won 2 silver and 1 bronze medal.*

*In 2016 our clubs In Monaco won 1 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze medal.*

*In 2017 our clubs in Thonon won 2 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze medal and Italy was 1<sup>^</sup> in the medal table for Nations.*

*World Coastal Rowing Championships results are now more considered by National Federations.*

*Since 3 years the World Coastal Championships is not anymore a «championships for clubs» only but Fisa now allows entries as NF Team, basically to encourage small and developing Nations. We think this change means something for the future of Coastal Rowing.*

*Italy is currently not ready to open to a Coastal Rowing National Team or crews, however we opened to the mixed crews from different clubs to encourage smaller clubs that may be miss one rower to complete a crew.*

*We have also used this opportunity for an experiment*

Last year in Thonon we've pursued an initiative involving the participation of nine university athletes, boys and girls, competing at the Championships as Italian University Team.



This project was aimed to bring the university movement closer to Coastal Rowing at competitive level and to guarantee a growth space also in Coastal Rowing for the university rowing movement in a season in which the usual world university championships was not staged.

## Next Actions

A lot is going on in the rowing movement at all levels.

Regarding Coastal Rowing we are currently studying with an Italian boat builder, that is also our partner, a possible promotion to facilitate and support the renewal of boats and equipment for our clubs.

This boat builder is currently helping a lot with its boats at national and international level.

We are also very interested in hosting again, in 2020 a World Coastal Rowing Championships in Italy.



*Beside this prospective of a more “competitive” Coastal Rowing we still want to take care of Recreational Coastal Rowing.*

The Italian Rowing Federation through its club has established a tour rowing series primarily focused on tours in coastal rowing boats along the beautiful Italian coastline and on big lakes like Lago Maggiore as well as on small islands like Capri or Eolian islands, finding routes in wonderful natural environment.

*In 2015 we hosted the World Rowing Tour in Lago Maggiore and in 2017 in Liguria*



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***Thank you!***



***Let's row together!***

