

“EUROPEANISATION” – Are you ready?

- Are you heading for European waters this summer, and will this be the yacht's first visit to Europe?
- Are you building a yacht with the intention of cruising in European waters?



If you have answered “yes” to either of these questions, then the following information could greatly enhance the enjoyment which you, your owner and your charter guests get out of cruising in Europe.

However, my apologies to those readers who already know what to expect, both electronically and electrically, and are already well prepared for their European summer. We wish you happy cruising.

This article has been prompted by the number of yachts which have arrived here in Europe from the US in recent years, and whose captains:

- a) have not considered the different systems they will encounter when they arrive in Europe.
- b) have considered the different systems, but have not made advance arrangements or left sufficient time for “Europeanisation” upon arrival.
- c) have installed systems at their port of departure which are found to be unsuitable upon arrival in Europe.

The statistics are alarming. We believe nearly 20% of the yachts disembarking from the Dock Express in Palma and Toulon fall into one of the three categories above. Unfortunately this figure does not improve each year.

Thus, this guide is to help you consider what alterations and adaptations will need to be done to your yacht's systems upon arrival,

so that you, your owner and charter guests can enjoy cruising Europe whilst still keeping ALL your electronic and electrical systems running.

The Stone Age!

Only a couple of years ago, we visited the captain of a yacht newly disembarked from the Dock Express in Palma de Mallorca. He was delighted and relieved to find someone who spoke English and proceeded to tell us, "I think I've arrived in the ***** Stone Age here - my phones don't work and neither does my TV". We tactfully asked whether he had converted either system for Europe, which resulted in a confused response. We gently explained that "he was not in the Stone Age, but in modern Europe, and that some of our systems do indeed vary from those used in the US, as they do in the rest of the world".



The "I only have eyes for you" syndrome

Another regular problem we experience is with yachts which arrive fully aware of what is required, and with all the necessary components, but which unfortunately have not made advance arrangements, or allowed sufficient time, for "Europeanisation".

Only last year we received a call from a yacht returning from the Caribbean to say "we have just passed Cabo Figuera light and will be alongside in the marina in 2 hours. Can you have an engineer ready to carry out the conversion as the owner arrives tonight at ten?"

"Of course we know what works in Europe"

This is a familiar statement made by local non-European electronics consultants to captains when asked whether they can specify systems for their European cruise.

Of course many of these installations do work, but unfortunately many do not and never will, as completely incorrect equipment has been specified. But do bear in mind that, even in the event of a

completely correct specification and installation, the final commissioning cannot take place until the yacht is in Europe. Europe is technically complex. Although we now have, almost, one currency, we are still made up of several completely independent countries. We speak many different languages, and thus each country has its own satellites broadcasting its own channels in its own language, or languages, and covering roughly its own territory. Although we have one mobile telephone system, the billing has to originate from one country, and roaming charges fund the use of the telephone when used in another country.

One of the many reasons why so many yachts choose to cruise European waters is for the owner and guests to enjoy the huge range of cultures available here. However, the task of specifying, designing and commissioning the best systems to work throughout European cruising grounds is far from elementary but it is not rocket science.

What technical problems are encountered upon arrival in Europe?

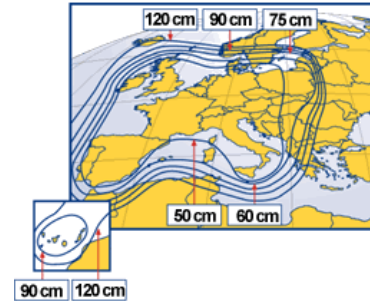
These can be categorised into the following areas:

a) Communications

- i) GSM, GPRS and soon 3G mobile phones work on 900 & 1800 MHz and not 1900 MHz.
- ii) US analogue cell phones do NOT work in Europe.
- iii) There may be some difficulties in obtaining airtime SIM cards for GSM & GPRS phones if not resident in Europe.
- iv) Data connections are different for GSM and GPRS data services compared to US analogue connections.
- v) High speed Internet services such as DirecPC and KVH TracNet use different satellites, services and systems in Europe.
- vi) There is a KVH/Mitsubishi mini M variety that only works in the US and Caribbean. It does not work in Europe.

b) Satellite TV

- i) The availability of English language satellite TV ranges from extensive to limited, and requires different satellites, decoders and subscriptions.
- ii) TV package provider subscription can be difficult for non-European residents.
- iii) Quality of reception depends upon cruising area, dish size, having a euro feed assembly and LNB, the number of coax cables running to the dome, mast shadow, radar location and, of course, weather.
- iv) The TVs onboard need to be multi-standard or have standards converters.
- v) Different decoders with different remote controls require reprogramming of touch control screens.
- vi) Power supplied to some of the European components is 240VAC 50Hz.



c) Entertainment systems

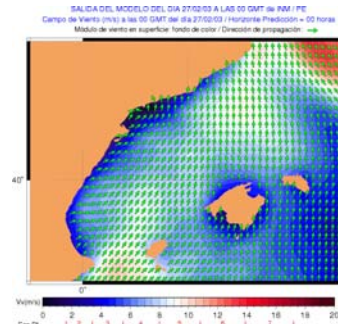
- i) Locally purchased DVDs and videos can only be played on Code Free or multi-region players.
- ii) Terrestrial TV transmission standards vary from country to country.

d) Power

- i) Shore power in Europe is supplied at 50Hz. The standard voltage is different at 240VAC, but this is easier to cope with in comparison to the potential frequency problem.
- ii) Most electronic components purchased in Europe are both 50/60Hz 240/110VAC, but be wary of “white goods” (washing machines, dishwashers etc.) where you will only find 50Hz varieties which do not run very efficiently at 60Hz.

Other points worth considering:

- a) For the best recommendations on local weather websites, speak to local captains or a good service company.
- b) For a good, easy to use Internet Service Provider when moving from country to country, speak to a local service company.
- c) Electronic chart coverage can easily be prepared in advance.



Planning and Advice

As you are only too aware, many different languages are spoken around the shores of Europe. In most of the larger yachting centres, you will find a number of service companies that speak English. Find and choose one. Communicating about technology in your native language will make your life much easier.

Secondly, plan ahead. Work out what you need well ahead of your arrival. In the spring, when most yachts return from the Caribbean and US for the Mediterranean summer season, many reliable companies get booked up for weeks and sometimes months ahead. In order to get prompt service, book a slot in advance.

Finally, use local knowledge. Contact a service company in advance whose engineers have real hands-on experience of what works in your prospective cruising ground. Any service company worth its salt will be able to give you real solutions to all the above problems, rather than hypothetical solutions based on information from a website.

Technology services, such as sat TV footprints and programming, are constantly changing. Be prepared to accept that what worked last year, will not necessarily work this year.

As mentioned earlier “Europeanisation” is not rocket science. There are hundreds of yachts who have standard routines in place to convert their systems on passage with final commissioning on arrival.

We look forward to welcoming you to European waters this summer but please, for your own peace of mind and enjoyment, come prepared; we are here to help you!

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