

# PRESS RELEASE

## THE EUROPEAN ROPES COURSE ASSOCIATION & THE EUROPEAN ROPES COURSE STANDARD

The European Ropes Course Association (ERCA) was formed over three years ago from what had been the German Ropes Course Association.

Prior to the name change most members were from Austria and Germany. It was realized that there was a role to be played as a European wide Association as well as the strength that can be gained from members from diverse nations.

Currently we have more than 200 members in Austria, Belgium, The Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

Membership of ERCA is wide and varied; however, English and German are the two languages in which all documents are currently published. The broad diversity of membership, from across Europe, brings with it a healthy cross section of trainers, constructors and operators.

You may, or may not, be aware that a European Standard for Ropes Courses is very soon to get its draft publication. This standard is due to be released for public enquiry this month and copies can be obtained from the British Standards Institute. There are two parts to the standard: prEN 15567-1 “safety requirements and test methods” and prEN 15567-2 “operational requirements”. The enquiry stage lasts for five months. ERCA’s contribution to the provisional European Ropes Course Standard has been immense. Six members of the ERCA board have attended the meetings in Germany and France over the last two years representing their home countries.

So what are the benefits of membership?

All members receive a copy of the ERCA standards. This is an excellent source of reference which is regularly improved and updated to ensure compatibility with European Standards, European Directives and ropes course operating principles. The ERCA manual incorporates:

- Code of Professional Standards
- Operational Standards
- Installation Standards for Stationary Ropes Courses
- Installation Standards for Mobile Ropes Courses
- Technical Inspection Standards
- Training Standards
- Standards for Training The Trainer

The most valuable aspect to ERCA is its members - all of whom represent the European Ropes Course Industry. Such solidarity is essential in an increasingly litigious and regulated world.

The Working at Height Directive is a good example of where a formal association can provide immense credibility in the fight against inappropriate regulation.

As well as this of course you are joining a body of folk from across Europe with similar ideas and problems. The annual ERCA Conference is both entertaining and informative and provides a chance for hundreds of like-minded people to share their experiences, trials and tribulations.

Next year ERCA is planning to offer accreditation to trainers, inspectors and constructors and is currently establishing the infrastructure to administer this process.

We would strongly urge all those involved in the ropes course industry to consider becoming members. Further information can be obtained from the ERCA website ([www.erca.co.uk](http://www.erca.co.uk)) or from either of the two UK ERCA representatives whose email addresses are given below.

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