# Implementing the Greek Cruising Taxes

27 Jan 2014

**For distribution as needed**.

Since 9th December, the British Cruising Association (CA) has spoken with over 150 boat owners who have read our web site page describing the new tax. It is at <http://www.cruising.org.uk/news/greektax>. This keeps all British yachtsmen in the Mediterranean (we estimate about 7,000) up to date with the Greek Tax proposals.

These notes summarise their views, and replace all previous questions we have asked..

Several of our earlier questions have already been partly answered:

1. **UNCLOS**.
We understand that free passage through Greek waters will be respected, but that a strict interpretation will be made of the need for anchoring. Please consider how you would treat visiting boats wishing to transit the Corinth Canal
2. **Tax Collection**.
The Tax Collection System is not yet ready, so tax collection has been postponed until the collection system is working
3. **Penalties/Fines**.
No penalties will be enforced until the tax collection system has been operating for some time.
4. **Visitor’s Arrivals**.
Most visiting yachtsmen with boats kept in Greece (afloat or ashore) arrive in Greece between early April and the end of May. We suggest payments are not required from overseas visitors until June, assuming the payment system is operating by then.
5. **Boats Ashore**.
The law says that boats sailing, moored, anchored or docked in Greek waters must have paid the tax. This excludes boats on the shore. This is very reasonable, since boats on the shore cannot be used.
6. **Fees Charged on tenths of a Metre**We understand that fees are calculated on tenths of a metre, as registered in the ship’s registration documents
7. **Monthly payments**We understand that a boat over 12m which visits from another country may choose to pay for only one month at a time, with no commitment to pay for any other months.

We have further proposals, many of which have been published earlier. These are, in order of priority:

1. **Current Port Police Fees**.
Very few visitors bother to pay the current port police fees (fewer than 2% in the Ionian). This is because the collection system is deeply un-popular, and therefore avoided. Visitors prefer to spend €20 in tavernas, rather than spending an hour finding a port police office, then standing in queues, and sometimes paying a taxi, all in order to pay €8 in one office, then €0.88 in a tax office, which is often closed. Greece is the only EU country which puts leisure sailors to this daily inconvenience. **Recommendation:** The large majority of our correspondents tell us that if the monthly/yearly tax replaced the current port police reporting routines, they would accept the new tax as a great improvement in the total Greek cruising experiences. This should also release Port Police and give them more time to monitor collection of the new tax.
2. **Non EU Boats**Non-EU boats have to pay 3 monthly fees already, and many have asked us if this tax will be in addition to the old fee, or if it is a replacement. For this small number of boats, and for simple enforcement, we would expect the same system of collection to be used, with the same fees as EU boats.
3. **Kastellorizon**Kastellorizon relies for much of its living on day visitors from Turkey, one part of which are private leisure boats which visit and moor up for 2 or 3 days. There are other locations in the Dodecanese (Symi, Arki, Patmos) which have similar short visit traffic. Payment of an annual fee for boats under 12m (€200 to €400) applied for just 2 or 3 days will stop such visits to small islands near the Turkish coasts. To restore this traffic it would be necessary to extend the €10 x (metres) monthly option to boats under 12m
4. **Wintering Traffic**The need to pay for calendar years for boats under 12m will discourage wintering in Greece, since it forces two years of payment to winter in Greece. This is most likely to have an effect in the Dodecanese, where the Turkey wintering option is very attractive. It is also difficult to arrange winter payment for boats kept on the hard, since owners are usually absent until April or May. Consider payments for 365 days, rather than calendar years.
5. **Monthly Payments – 30 days**If monthly payments are for calendar months, all boats will try to lift on to the shore at the month end or launch at the month beginning. Equally, boats will try to arrive at the beginning and depart at the end of the month. This is likely to create strong peaks of activity and frustration. It is strongly recommended that monthly payment should cover the next 30 days, rather than calendar months.
6. **30% Discount**
Allow the 30% discount for boats over 12m to apply to any vessel which wishes to pay for the full year (i) when they enter Greece, or (ii) when they launch, if they are already ashore in Greece. We believe from our members that this will increase the numbers willing to stay in Greece, and thus increase your revenue from this tax.

We believe that implementing the tax with these changes would make cruising in Greece more popular, would persuade many yachts not to leave Greek waters, and as a result, would increase your tax income from visiting yachts. We would also do our best to persuade British sailors to continue enjoying cruising in Greece.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Baerselman

For The Cruising Association

27 January 2013

Note: The Cruising Association is a UK membership organisation which looks after the interests of people who cruise in boats around the world. Of our 4,500 or so members, about 300 boats are based in Greece, and a further 1,000 cruise the Mediterranean and plan to visit Greece at some stage.

We also provide information to over 6,000 or so other British boats which cruise in the Mediterranean, and provide information to the British Yachting Press on these matters.