Situation
Many National Authorities publish translated versions of documents, for example of the RRS. In doing so, they make an effort to ensure the translation is precise and correct. However, mistakes in translation may happen and such mistakes sometimes change the meaning of the original document.

Question 1
If the notice of race and/or sailing instructions list a translated version of an official rules document under ‘Rules’, without mentioning anything about potential discrepancies between the translated and the original version, and there are discrepancies, which document shall take precedence – the translation or the original version?

Answer 1
The Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) are published in English by World Sailing and will always take precedence over any translation, unless the translation of a particular racing rule has the status of a rule change as provided for in rules 85 and 86. A difference arising from a translation is not a valid rule change as it will not specifically refer to a rule and state the change. A statement in the notice of race or in the sailing instructions that a translation of the RRS will apply instead, does not comply with rules J1.1(2) and J2.1(1).

Likewise, World Sailing Codes are published in English, and may not be changed, whether intentionally or otherwise. The Sailor Classification Code is additionally published by World Sailing in French, Italian, Spanish and German, but the published translations clearly state that if there is a conflict between languages the English version will take precedence.

Some racing rules may be changed by national authority prescriptions, the notice of race, the sailing instructions or class rules as provided for in rules 85 and 86. A translation of a racing rule that provides a meaning, intentionally or otherwise, that is different from the RRS in English, will take precedence only if it complies with the restrictions and procedures in rules 85 and 86.

If the notice of race or the sailing instructions are published in different languages, without stating which version will take precedence, rule 63.7 applies.

Rules 85, 86 and 88.2 apply to changes to national authority prescriptions, including changes in a translation, whether intentional or otherwise.

The language in which a class rule is published will take precedence. Any translation that has the effect of changing a class rule would need to comply rules 85 and 87 in order for the change to be valid and apply.

The same principles apply to differences resulting from translation of other documents governing an event.
Question 2

If the answer to Question 1 is that the translated version takes precedence and there is more than one translation of a specific document (translated by different National Authorities) at an international event, which version will take precedence?

Answer 2

Not applicable.