



FAI Gliding Commission (IGC) Report to the 105th General Conference Belgrade, 14-15 October 2011

During 2011 we held the 6th Womens' and the 7th Juniors FAI World Gliding Championships and the 16th FAI European Gliding Championships. The 2010-2011 series of the Sailplane Grand Prix (SGP) was completed. Membership in our sport continues to decline but the activity levels and the number of entries at World and Continental Championships and in the IGC-OLC World League continues to grow. In the case of the OLC, the growth has been 30% for the past year. We have introduced two new competition classes. A tremendous amount of work has, again, been undertaken by our volunteers at all levels of the sport and we are focused on improving safety and quality at our sanctioned events.

Financially we are balancing our expenditure on Officials' expenses against income from sanction fees and pilot fees. The consolidation of Commission revenues into the FAI accounts and the revised budgeting and expenditure procedures have not caused us any difficulty and we expect this process to become easier and more transparent as the system matures. We have three major projects in hand, the Safety Strategy adopted in 2010, a proposal for the FAI to invest in flight recorders/ trackers and a web based delivery system to provide coverage of our SGP races and other Commission events that lend themselves to exposure on the internet.

Our thanks go to all the staff in the FAI Office in Lausanne for their assistance and support to us during the year. We are well aware that significant changes and problems in the HQ have created enormous pressure for them over the year and I wish to record the IGC's appreciation and thanks for their support and enthusiasm during this period of transition. We also wish departing Secretary General, Stephane Desprez every success in his new role with FIM and look forward to working with Jean-Marc Badan as the new FAI Secretary General.

DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

This year the Plenum approved the addition of the 13.5 Meter Class with a stand-alone World Gliding Championships for this class, which will include the World Class gliders, with competition in starting in 2015 and the 20 meter Multi-seat Class, which will begin competitions in 2014.

The continued use of tracking combined with on-line live streaming and commentary has proven to be a very effective way to project the SGP races. As a result of the new opportunities available under a consolidated FAI budget, we have made a proposal to purchase trackers and create web-based support for live streaming to be hosted by the FAI. This we believe will benefit both our SGP product and other Air Sports products.

Last year I reported on a planned FAI-IGC Decentralised Gliding Competition focusing specifically on FAI triangles. This project has been held over for 12 months while we await the development of the updated FAI website.

We are continuing to look for ways to work with potential hosts and/ or promoters to create a world sailplane grand prix circuit; the sticking point remains being able to generate the venture capital required to achieve this aim.

CURRENT THREATS – ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

I am pleased to report that we have not had any fatal accidents at sanctioned competitions this year, but, at the same time, we continue to see pilots taking unnecessary risks. I offer you a quote from one of our Jury Presidents which highlights, for me, unacceptable attitudes amongst our pilots:

*Fédération
Aéronautique
Internationale*

“We broke three gliders in xxxxxx. All three could well be write-offs. I would guess that the total value of these gliders must be between 300K and 400K EUR. That’s over ten times IGC’s annual expenditure, at least three times IGC’s total reserves and about a third of the FAI’s annual turnover. Yet these losses seem to generate scarcely a ripple amongst the competitors. The mantra is “nobody hurt, therefore not important”. People seem to ignore or forget that these accidents:

- will probably have an adverse effect on insurance premiums, thereby driving still higher the overall costs of gliding for everybody,*
- will very likely receive media coverage, tending to reinforce the idea in the public mind that gliding is a dangerous, elite sport for rich people, and*
- may involve local accident investigation/civil aviation authority officials, whose views of gliding will be influenced negatively – especially when they see the kind of fields that two of the pilots were trying to land in.*

It is obvious that accidents, even when there are no injuries, are good news only for glider repairers. It seems to be accepted wisdom in the community that “boys will be boys”, people will push their luck and accept high levels of risk to win, and that’s life.”

I wonder how much these comments apply to other air sports? This may well be an initiative that needs to be taken up at the FAI HQ and coordinated across the FAI management team of the EB and the ASC Presidents.

Last year the General Conference sent a strong message to the FAI HQ that threats facing our sports, such as airspace and over-regulation, needed to be managed centrally. I agree and look forward to the development of an FAI able to argue strongly for the rights of all air sports persons in the global forums, rather than individual clubs and groups and Commissions all trying to fight the same battles.

Falling membership numbers continue to be a major problem which we are challenged to address. At the international level, I see our responsibility being to ensure that we promote our sport to make it highly visible and entertaining for the public. The SGP and the IGC-OLC League help to fulfil these objectives. The challenge is then at the national and club level to provide a welcome for new members and the opportunities to experience our sport. I would be interested to hear what NACs are doing to attract new members to all forms of air sport.

Anti-doping has arisen as the latest threat to our sports. The requirement that a number of elite air sports persons be registered with WADA to enable “out-of-competition” testing is proving to have a mine-field of difficulties. In reality, apart from two obvious substances (oxygen – which is a banned substance, and water – which fortunately is not banned) I cannot see any advantage to pilots from the myriad of substances that are on the WADA list. We need to address this situation urgently before we see our top pilots resigning from the sport. The Air Sports and the NACs need to work together to enable the FAI, through CIMP, to make a strong submission to WADA to enable us to resolve this situation.

Media coverage of our World Championships has been difficult this year due to an overly restrictive contract between Flying Aces Ltd and the FAI, allowing FAI all rights to coverage. We look forward to a prompt and effective resolution of this problem to enable us to promote our sports in a timely manner.

THE PAST YEAR IN REVIEW

Accomplishments

- Successful completion of the 6th FAI Womens’ and 7th FAI Juniors World Championships, the 16th FAI European Continental Championships and the 2010/ 2011 SGP series
- 9% growth in the Ranking List from 5644 pilots, at the end of 2010, to 6160 pilots

- Creation of the 13.5M Class FAI World Gliding Championships, with the first event in 2015
- Incorporation of the 20M two-seater Class into WGC's from 2014
- Implementation of the "Safety Pays" Working Group

IGC Annual Meeting 2011

The IGC held its 2011 annual meeting in Lausanne in March. 37 NACs were represented and some 70 people attended our annual IGC dinner on the Friday evening.

Awards

The Plenum was pleased to confer the following awards:

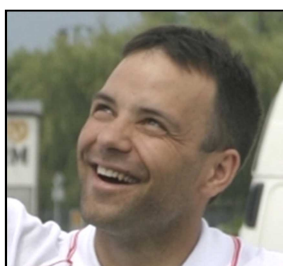
- The **Lilienthal Medal**, for eminent service to the sport of gliding over a significant period of time by a currently active glider pilot, to **Herr Reiner Rose**, Germany
- The **Pirat Gehriger Diploma**, for eminent services to international gliding, to **Mr Tony Burton**, Canada
- Regretfully, no nominations were received for the **Pelagia Majewski Medal**. This award recognises eminent services to gliding over a long period of time by a female glider pilot. I ask NACs to be aware that it is they who need to make nominations to enable the service of their people to be celebrated.

Pilot Rankings

The top three pilots on the IGC Ranking List (as at time of writing this report) are:



1st
Michael Sommer
(Germany)



2nd
Sebastian Kawa
(Poland)



3rd
Zbigniew
Nieradka
(Poland)

Championships

The IGC congratulates the winners of the 2011 FAI Gliding Championships, the FAI Sailplane GP Final and the IGC-OLC World League. Organisers again struggled to raise funding and sponsorship this year and we are grateful to everyone for their perseverance in making these events successful.

6th FAI Womens' World Gliding Championships – held in Arboga, Sweden, with 47 competitors from 12 nations completing a total of 16 tasks across the 3 classes. The Team Cup was won by Denmark.



15M Class
Susanne
Schödel
Germany



Standard Class
Sue Kussbach
Germany



Club Class
Agnete Olesen
Denmark

7th FAI Junior World Gliding Championships – held at Musbach, Germany, with 81 pilots in the two classes achieving seven days of flying in somewhat trying weather conditions. The Team Cup was won by the Czech Republic



Standard Class
Felipe
Levin
Germany



Club Class
Tim
Kuijpers
Netherlands

4th FAI World Sailplane GP Final – held at the Wasserkuppe, Germany, in conjunction with the centenary celebrations at this historical site. A full field of 20 competitors flew five days in inclement weather conditions.



GP World Champion
Giorgio
Galetto
Italy
31 points



2nd
Sebastian
Nagel
Germany
25 points



3rd
Peter
Hartmann
Austria
22 points

16th FAI European Gliding Championships – held in Pociunai, Lithuania (for the Open/ 18M and 15M classes) and in Nitra, Slovakia (for the Standard/ Club/ 20M two-seater and World classes). The Pociunai EGC had a total of 75 entries from 20 nations and nine competition days were achieved in the Open Class and ten days in the 18M and 15M. At the Nitra EGC 91 pilots from 19 nations competed in very poor weather conditions. The Standard, Club and 20M classes managed to complete four days racing but the World Class only achieved three days racing so no champion could be declared in this class.



Open Class
Markus Frank
Germany



18M Class
Karol
Staryszak
Poland



15M Class
Christophe
Ruch
France



Standard Class
Sebastian
Kawa
Poland



Club Class
Roman
Mracek
Czech
Republic



20M Class
Harri
Hirvola
& Visa
Matti
Leinikki
Finland



*Winner
World
Class
Jakub
Barszcz*

The IGC-OLC World League 2011

The 5th season of the IGC-OLC World League has experienced significant growth in the year with participation by 1385 Clubs and gliding organisations, an increase of 30% over 2010. This growth in participation is very satisfying.

The top three placed clubs for 2011 were:

- 1st FLG Blaubeuren (Germany)
- 2nd TSA-Texas Soaring Association (USA)
- 3rd Albuquerque Soaring (USA)

The number of individual competitors was static at 12,915 (2010 – 12,948), the number of flights at 96,845 was up by 2% compared to 2010 (95,019) and the total distance flown was 26.14 million Km (2010 - 27 million Km). The average distance flown by each competitor remains remarkably consistent at just over 2,000 Km.

Future Championships

The sanctioned FAI World Gliding Championships for 2012 are:

- The 32nd FAI World Gliding Championships (Open/18M/15M Classes) in Uvalde, Texas, USA
- The 32nd FAI World Gliding Championships (Standard/Club/World classes) in Adolfo Gonzales Chaves, Argentina

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'A' followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line.

President
FAI Gliding