

REPORT - LONG RANGE RALLY)

During the GAC meeting in Salzburg last year, delegates appeared to be highly interested in the organization of a "Hans Gutmann Memorial Rally & Flight".

Having been co organizer of rallies with Hans, I spontaneously offered to organize the Memorial Flight from Gragnano-Trebbiense in Italy via France, Spain to Portugal and back via France to Bitburg/Germany, where the Air-Expo and Airshow and the Air Navigation Race was planned.

During the gala dinner in the evening, I felt even greater support from the delegates for such an organization. Consequently I started in December to organize the rally with stop overs in Spain, Portugal and France (the Austrian Aero Club was responsible for organizing the leg to Italy, where they had erected a Memorial for Hans).

We started a first publicity campaign in January via FAI in Lausanne, GAC delegates, FAI Vice-Presidents, microlight clubs, Europe Air Sports and EPFU. We even channeled invitations via IAOPA. Initially 6 crews registered provisionally.

We did not receive any reply from the local aero clubs at the stop over destinations and/or the NACs. Basically I got no answer, no help or proposal. One would expect that especially the local aero clubs would be best equipped to help finding hotels or propose a local touristic program.

After having sent 3 to 4 mailings via email, post and even after having contacted them by telephone, I finally got some replies, namely from Perpignan, Castellon, Cascais, Gasteiz - Vitoria, La Rochelle and Bitburg. Subsequently Perpignan and La Rochelle withdrew their support.

We foresaw two starting points for the trip to Castelon, i.e. via Gragnano-Trebbiense where the memorial ceremony was planned for participants from Austria, Switzerland and Italy, and via La Rochelle for participants from the Scandinavian countries, Germany and Luxembourg.

After having negotiated reasonable prices at social rates for hotels, landing fees, handling and transportation to hotels, we started the second publicity campaign, involving again FAI Vice Presidents, GAC delegates, microlight clubs, Europe Air Sports, EPFU and many aero clubs for which I had an email address in my data base. In addition we informed the aviation press, IAOPA members, reaching thereby a potential of many thousands of pilots in Europe who all received an invitation.

The final result of the two publicity campaigns was zero participants, which led me to cancel the Memorial Flight. Finally we flew the Memorial Flight involving 5 aircraft from Luxembourg. The flight took place via the Cognac Rally - which a Luxembourgish team won this year - to Castelon (supported by Vincente Nebot), Cascais, where we stopped over for tourist activities(supported by the President Paulo de Moura Marques and his Crew) returning North via Gasteiz (Bilbao - stop over supported by Jesus Sagastuy) directly to Bitburg, where the ANR was waiting for us.

Just to mention: the ANR could benefit equally from the two publicity campaigns. Only 4 crews registered, i.e. 2 from France, 1 from Switzerland and 1 from Luxembourg. The ANR report is attached for your convenience.

However, after 28 years as GAC delegate and 18 years as FAI Vice-President, I am not prepared to give up (even I'm not more Luxembourg delegate) ! Should you so wish, I am again available to organize the Memorial Flight , or other Long Range Rally's and to help to organise the ANR.

Jean Birgen