

PROPOSAL TO IGC PLENARY 2007

Proposed by IGC Bureau

It is Proposed That:

A Low-cost Class Committee is established

This Proposal affects:

Sporting Code Section – Nil

Annex A Rule – Nil

Other - Nil

Proposal from the Bureau for the creation of a LOW-COST CLASS COMMITTEE

Background

At the Plenary Meeting 2006, France submitted a proposal to create a specific class for microlight motorgliders (See Annex 1) in order to take into account a real trend towards such light motorgliders which benefit from a loose regulation in many countries in Europe. The Plenary accepted the principle but asked for a complete review of the class structure at the lower (lighter) end.

Therefore at the Bureau Meeting held in Cambridge in September 2006, Roland Stuck presented the attached working paper (See Annex II) with three proposals:

- Proposal 1 creating a specific microlight motorglider class (300 kg max for a single seat)
- Proposal 2 merging the World class and the 220Kg class into a single class with 13 m span and no MTOM restrictions. The PW5 would be incorporated in this class despite its 13m40 span with grandfather rights
- Proposal 3 replacing the microlift glider class by a class of Ultra light gliders with MTOM < 80 Kg with no wing loading restriction in order to benefit from the quasi absence of rules existing in Europe and in USA for such gliders

The Bureau did not accept these 3 proposals and suggested to ask the World Class Committee about their opinion. Francois Pin sent a reply (see Annex III) in which he proposed to create a low cost entry classes committee.

The Bureau has agreed to take over this proposal with some modifications and to submit it to the plenary

The Proposal

- A Low Cost Entry Classes Committee is created.

- This committee would regroup all existing subcommittees and representatives of the low-cost classes and initiative groups (World Class, Microlift class, Ultra-light gliders, Microlight Motorgliders, etc.) into a single committee.
- This Committee would be tasked with coordinating and managing actions across the entire low-cost, light-end, segment of Soaring toward better exploitation of that segment of Soaring toward global membership growth by targeting attraction and retention of less (financially and soaring infrastructure) fortunate pilots and countries.
- Initial action of this committee would be a thorough review, and report to the plenum, of the entire class structure at the low-cost, light-end of Soaring, with recommendations on actions to better exploit that segment and optimize its class structure, as requested by the 2006 IGC Plenum.
- Following actions would include coordination across all low-cost, light-end classes, of the proposed actions, and periodic update of recommendations for long-term optimal exploitation of the low-cost segment toward global membership growth.

Annex 1

PROPOSAL FROM THE FRENCH GLIDING FEDERATION (FFVV) TO CREATE A MICROLIGHT MOTORGLIDER CLASS

Microlight aircraft are becoming more and more popular in many countries. This is due to the fact that they are cheaper than certified aircraft and benefit, in many countries, from very liberal regulations. For example, in France, pilots need no medical, no log book and they can take off from any field with the permission of the field's owner.

Several manufacturers, mostly from the East European countries, have started to produce motorgliders which comply with the microlight specifications (in Europe, the maximum take-off mass is limited to 300 kg for a single seater and 450 kg for a two seater and min.speed 65 km/h). This trend was clearly visible at the Aero 2004 exhibition in Friedrichshafen, where as many microlight motorgliders as conventional motorgliders were displayed. Microlights such as the Silent, Apis, Test, Alpine, Taurus, look really like modern motorgliders. They have retractable engines and show interesting performance.

The gliding movement is, therefore, faced with the emergence of a light gliding movement which is developing outside of the structures of our gliding community. As a consequence, there is a major risk that the gliding movement will lose members to the profit of the microlight movement. Furthermore, there is a safety issue, since such microlights can only be flown safely if their pilot has been trained as a glider pilot.

The FFVV thinks, therefore, that the IGC should provide a home for this kind of motorglider. We know that we already have (too) many classes but the creation of such a class is largely justified by the number of existing microlight gliders, which is probably already higher than the number of gliders in all other existing light glider classes.

Clearly the IGC would make a major historical mistake by missing this train!

Annexe II

Some ideas about the lower segment of the IGC class structure

Paper presented at the IGC Bureau meeting in held in Cambridge on 11 September 2006

Roland Stuck
IGC Vice President

The existing Class Structure

- Open Class
- 20m Two seat Class
- 18m Class
- 15m Class
- Standard
- Club class
- World Class (PW5 CS 22 certified)
- Ultra light Gliders (220 Kg MTOM)
- Microlift Gliders (220 Kg MTOM and < 18 Kg/m² WL)

Why am I unhappy with this structure ?

- There are too many classes at the lower end compared to the existing fleet
- There is almost no activity in these classes
- The structure is not consistent
- This structure does not take into account regulative boundaries
- This structure does not take into account emerging trends

Too many classes at the lower end

- According to a rough estimate, there are only about 500 gliders in the three lower classes (350 PW5, 100 ultralight gliders, 50 microlift gliders)
- This is to be compared to the total number of gliders in the world which is between 25000 and 30000
- Is it not too much to have 3 classes for only 500 gliders ?

Little activity at the lower end

- World class is dying out. Only 350 gliders sold. Almost no new gliders sold, few competitors at WGC. Major countries do not want to participate in Word class
- Almost no activity in the ultra light glider (MTOM 220 Kg) class
- Nothing happened in the microlift class created two years ago. Where is the expected revolution ?

The existing structure is not consistent

- At the higher end, all classes are defined as a function of the wingspan of the gliders. This is logical, since their performance is primarily related to this parameter.
- At the lower end, the parameters are the MTOM and the wing loading (!)
- Should we not define the lower end classes by the same criteria?

The existing structure does not take into account regulative boundaries

- In Europe, according to the EASA Basic Regulation 1592, all gliders with empty mass of more than 80 kg as a single seater or 100 kg for a two seater are now regulated at the European level and must be certified according to CS 22 (ex JAR 22). Nearly all the

existing ultra light gliders (220 KG MTOM) and the microlift gliders of more than 80 kg class have, therefore, no legal existence in Europe!

- On the other hand, there is no class for the gliders exempted from the European regulation (single seat with empty mass of less than 80 kg for a single seat and less than 100 kg for a double seat, which benefit generally from relaxed regulation in their national country. (They have a similar regime in USA)
- There is also no class (outside the club class) for the motorgliders built according to the European microlight (aeroplane) specifications (minimum speed <35 kts and maximum take-off mass of no more than 300Kg for a land plane single seat or 450 kg for a two seat) which are also exempted from the European regulation and generally benefit from relaxed regulations at national level. This is a pity, because these motorgliders are becoming more and more popular.

The existing structure does not take new trends into account

As mentioned above, the microlight motorgliders are becoming more and more popular for the following reasons:

- They have acceptable performances (for single seaters comparable to those of a first generation standard class glider)
- They are not too expensive (built in East European Countries)
- In most countries, their regulation is very liberal (In France: no medical, no external control of the maintenance, possibility to take off anywhere)
- They provide freedom and autonomy to the pilots !

Examples of such microlight motorgliders

- Single seat:
with retractable engine: Silent, Apis, Test,
- Two seats:
with fixed engine: Lambada, Sinus,
with retractable engine: Taurus
- Clearly these motorgliders belong to the gliding world

If we do nothing

We will lose members to the microlight movement

Pilots flying these motorgliders will not benefit from adequate training

THEREFORE, WE MUST PROVIDE A HOME FOR MICROLIGHT GLIDERS IN OUR GLIDING MOVEMENT

Hence our recommendations:

Proposal 1

- Create a class of microlight motorgliders with MTOM < 300 kg for a single seater (and 450 Kg for a two seater ?) as decided by the Plenary Meeting in March 2006
- Politically, this would show our will to keep these aircraft in the gliding movement
- This would avoid losing members going to the microlight movement

Proposal 2

- Merge the World class and the 220Kg class into a single class with 13 m span and no MTOM restrictions. The PW5 would be incorporated in this class despite its 13m40 span with grandfather rights
- With modern materials and techniques, it should be possible to build an attractive 13 m glider (good performance, cheap)
- This would be a step similar to the one made some 50 years ago, when all gliders had more than 15m span width and IGC decided to create a standard class with 15m span
- There is a possibility of having a CS 22 "light" for these gliders.

Proposal 3

- Replace the microlift glider class by a class of Ultra light gliders with MTOM < 80 Kg with no wing loading restriction
- This class could benefit from less stringent rules
- This class would be the missing link between the hangglider and the conventional gliders

If these proposals were accepted, the new Class Structure would be the following:

- Open Class
- 20m Two seat Class
- 18m Class
- 15m Class
- Standard
- Club class
- 13 m Class
- Ultralight Gliders (<80 Kg empty weight)
- Microlight Motorglider class (< 300kg MTOM)

Annex III

Comments from Francois Pin (World Class Committee)

Dear Roland,

Thanks for your note and the file you forwarded. I wish the Subcommittee had received these when they were produced several months ago. This would have allowed a dialogue to really take place toward a non-rushed and valuable solution. Due to the urgency expressed by Bob, I send my reply before having heard back from the other members of the Subcommittee, and therefore this is my opinion alone. Also due to the urgency expressed by Bob, you get a long e-mail, (sorry, no time to optimize it), with many of the items that could have been included in an iterative dialogue. But you also get a proposal that may be useful....

We all agree now that membership growth in our sport takes place mostly in two ways:

- 1) In the countries blessed by a Soaring infrastructure based on large clubs (those that you call the major countries, all located in Europe), a membership prospect (attracted to the Sport for example by seeing a Grand Prix – Bravo for that splendid initiative in PR for the Sport) will naturally first go to a Club. Clubs will thrive for newer, higher performance (expensive) gliders to retain new members after giving them basic instruction, through cross-country training, solo cross-country, and then possibly racing on top performance machines in the variety of “long-wing” Classes. Clubs, and high-end, high-performance (high \$) machines, basically are the key in these countries to recruiting and retaining membership.
- 2) In the large majority of other countries, i.e., the less financially fortunate countries and the countries without a large-Club infrastructure, a new Soaring prospect will have no choice after getting his/her basic instruction (often on very primitive machines), but to consider buying his own glider or a share on a glider. Without it, and the corresponding progression to cross-country and the attraction to possibly racing up to the top levels, we know that the probability that he/she will rapidly leave the sport is high. Old, and maintenance-nightmare 30-or-so years old gliders are not attractive options to many. Only a very few lucky (wealthy) ones will be able to afford the cost of a competitive (>\$150K nowadays) glider to support racing in the conventional classes with a hope to reach the top level. For all these countries, low-cost entry-level classes that can support competitive racing up to the top levels, are key to the recruiting and retaining of membership.

Many actions are taken in the “major/Soaring-rich” countries to further enhance their recruiting and retaining actions at the Club level. Despite these, our global membership is shrinking. At this point, comparatively very little is done at the low-cost end to further enhance entry and retention in Soaring of either the less financially fortunate pilots or the less (financially or Club infrastructure) fortunate countries. The Club Class and the World Class are currently the only means and entry doors to competitive racing at the low-cost end. We need more entry channels, not less, if we are to curb the steady membership decline, which occurs despite all efforts at it in the Soaring-rich countries. I want to emphasize that without the low-cost classes, the membership decline (i.e., in the remaining “long-wing” classes) would be much worse !

If attracting more pilots and more countries in Soaring is still (I hope) a goal of IGC, then we should not close any entry doors, restrict the entry channels, or in any way decrease any entry avenues. We need to create more entry doors, and preserve and enhance the existing ones (currently the Club and World class being the largest).

The World Class has and continues to play an important role as a low-cost entry channel in our Sport. It is relatively small in number (350 PW5) but its fleet of pilots and gliders is steady, and in fact slightly growing, over the World (but not in Europe). Which means that it is doing better than the average of our sport, where membership is decreasing! And considering that it regularly feeds pilots to the other classes at the top, its rate of attraction and entry of new pilots is therefore much larger proportionally than the rest of our sport or the other “long-wing” classes ! Closing or clobbering that low-cost entry-level avenue, which seems to perform its entry-support role well, will likely result in a significant loss of members AND of entry channels into the sport.

The existence of the World Class has NO, absolutely none, negative impact whatsoever, on the big-wing classes. To the contrary, it has had only positive impact by bringing and retaining in the sport new members who otherwise would not be in it, help grow membership at the financially disfavored end, and eventually feeding these new members to the “upper classes” whenever some may get lucky to afford more expensive wings. Let’s face it bluntly: the only reason for the antagonism is that the big rich boys of Europe who are dominating the sport don’t like it, with

the two basic underlying reasons being because it irks them that someone who has spent \$20K can have as much fun as them who had to pitch upwards of \$150K for a machine, and because it kills the argument of the German manufacturers that to be able to Soar one requires one of their expensive machines. Sorry to be blunt, but that is the picture. Soaring is not just Europe. Soaring is not just big \$.

I understand that the original idea was to create a microlight motor-glider class under the laudable reason to potentially increase membership (in this case, per your argument, by not, perhaps, losing members to the microlight movement). To be frank, how things degenerated into the lose-lose proposition of the Bureau is beyond my comprehension, and, incidentally, not supported by any argument you make in your paper. I call it a lose-lose proposition because I cannot see any gain whatsoever that it would generate. I rather see losses all around due to a complete clobbering of the low-cost entry avenues in our sport:

- Our sport won't gain from decreasing or killing its entry channels at the low-cost end.
- Membership won't gain because the loss of an existing class or classes and its fleet of members, and the closure of a channel for future continued entries in the sport will definitely far exceed the potential prospect of (perhaps) not losing some members to the microlight movement.
- The long-wing classes certainly won't gain anything from killing one of the low-cost entry channels that regularly feeds members to them from the bottom (when some pilots can finally transition from low-cost to more expensive ships and long-wing classes).
- The World Class and all its pilots will suffer.
- The low-cost glider manufacturers will suffer.
- The expensive glider manufacturers won't gain anything either (if you can't afford a \$150K glider, you just can't).
- Etc. I see many other damages, and not one single potential gain.... !! And all this damage being done without a real review and/or clear analysis of the impact on membership.

After seeing the Bureau proposal and realizing the massacre of our Soaring membership at the low-cost end, the destruction of some entry channels in our sport for less fortunate pilots and countries, and the significant negative impact on the global membership in our sport that would result from it, my earlier note to you and the Bureau members was definitely not an endorsement of the decision of the Bureau, but a plea for "damage control" for the sake of our Sport, !! through an idea that would mitigate the significant membership damages expected, particularly at the low-cost end and at the most financially disfavored portion of our membership.

Frankly, the proposal from the Bureau seems premature, and hurriedly put together. It is not supported by any of the arguments you make in your paper. It will irreversibly clobber the low-cost end of our sport, with no gain whatsoever to anyone (Even you don't like it). It does not address what I believe is the real problem that must be solved by IGC, and which was likely underlying the request from the Plenum for a complete REVIEW of the class structure at the low end (they said review, not revision or clobbering). To be candidly frank with you, that review remains to be done. For example, I could not find in your paper the number of Microlight motor-gliders that would justify creating a class for them, or an analysis of why the benefit of creating that class would so much offset the significant damages and membership losses that would result from massacring or re-shuffling the others, or why the proposal of the Bureau to group some classes would make our sport, or its membership prospects, better in any way, etc. etc.

Let me offer an alternative view, and an actual proposal, based on what I think is the real problem to be solved: I interpret the request from the Plenum as a statement that IGC has yet to articulate to all members a integrated, solid, strategy for the organization, and optimum utilization toward membership growth, of the low-cost, light-end segment of our sport. In other words, the plenum is really asking for non-ambiguous, serious answers to questions like: what is the gain/loss of a particular class structure versus another, what is the optimal class structure at the low-cost/light-end that can optimally enhance membership growth in our Sport? Why this class versus this other, etc., from a membership and growth benefit analysis, etc...

We have no such "roadmap" and no real data or defensible integrated answers to these questions. The only "answers" heard typically come back from various "factions" or fragmented groups (World Class, Club Class, Microlift class, Microlights MG, etc.) that are each pushing their own rock. And here is what I think is the real problem: IGC has no coordinated strategy or integrated committee for optimally exploiting and managing the very important low-cost end of our Sport toward growing membership and/or the number of member countries (likely non-Soaring-rich countries).

So, If attracting more pilots and more countries in Soaring is still (I hope) a goal of IGC, then rather than rushing into a hurried ad-hoc proposal that has the potential for irreversible and irreparable damages all across the low-cost, light-end segment and membership of our sport, let's instead propose to do that review and set-up a structure to coordinate and manage, in an integrated and coordinated manner, the entire low-cost end of our sport, to the benefit of IGC and the membership:

Proposal: Integrate all "factions" or "subgroups" or SubCommittees dealing with low-cost classes (World Class, Club Class, Microlift class, Microlights MG, etc.) into one single LOW-COST ENTRY CLASSES committee, chartered with performing the review requested by the plenum, and mapping out the strategy at the low-cost end to support optimal use of that segment for growth, entry of pilots, entry of new countries, etc. and subsequently to update it regularly.

Attached below is the proposal.

Just as final notes (you have just read 3 and half pages, you can go for one more.. ☺) I have already heard some of the initial arguments (some you sent earlier) that must be dealt with. Let me just diffuse two here that I think are ill-founded:

- There are too many classes leading to too many champions. This devalues the title of champion. The public is asking who is THE real champion. Etc., etc...

This is a lame argument. We now have an answer to this. It is posted on the IGC website every day and on every page. Many widely popular sports, such as tennis or golf, have no such things as "the champion." They have a seeding system and can answer by saying that Mr. A won the Wimbledon or Mrs. B won Roland Garros, but Mr. X is number 1 seed. And Mr. Y is number n seed. Etc. The public and the media are very fine with that. Why would soaring be different? With our International seeding system (Wonderful initiative and action!!), we have a constant answer posted on the IGC site every day: Today, Mr. Sebastien Kawa is the number 1 in Soaring! (who incidentally made his growth to that spot through the low-cost classes, bronze World Class 1999, bronze WC again 2001, Gold WC 2003, Gold Club Class 2004, then the 2005 GP).

- There are too many classes. It hurts the Sport. Etc., etc...

This is an invalid argument. For example, at the high-end (\$ and L/D), two new classes (18m and 20m) were added in the last few years. That is 2 on top the previously 3 at the high-end (Std., 15m, Open). Did that hurt the Sport? Of course not. !!

Targeting reduction or extinction of the low-cost classes under this argument is part of the "whining" and "irking" of the rich boys and high-\$ manufacturers mentioned above. There is NO, none whatsoever, negative impact of multiple classes. If they generate even a small avenue to new membership or activity, they are valuable. Let them live.

I agree that the key is to properly managing them and their numbers. Many sports have many, many, classes (athletics/track-and-field, sailing, etc.). Does it hurt them? Of course not!! To the contrary. They use them to grow, managed, of course, based on membership impact and role in the sport. A function of the proposed "low-cost entry classes committee" would be to do just that.

Frankly, the proposal from the Bureau does not do that. For example, based on your pushing of a new Microlight MG class, you seem to "feel" that the light-end class structure must be modified to compensate for this new class. Consider the following: You cite 100 ultra light gliders and 50 microlift gliders, both being 220 Kg MTOM. 2 classes for 150 gliders. And you say that nothing has yet happened in these classes. So, why not a single 220 Kg MTOM class? The difference in wing-loading could be simply segregated and managed at the competition level, if needed, and if any ever takes place. For the low-cost classes, the structure would go from:

to:	
Club Class	Club Class
World Class	World Class
Ultra light gliders (220 Kg MTOM)	Microlight MotorGliderClass
Microlift gliders (220 Kg MTOM and 18 Kg/m2)	220 Kg MTOM Class

Why not? What says that this would not be preferable, for membership growth, to what the Bureau proposes? Same number of classes. It would give time to evaluate what the upcoming European policies would bring (your comment/concern). And also give a chance to the new WGC structure to start in 2008 to produce its expected effect,

and then to analyze it with respect to the low-cost classes (in particular Club and World). All options to further modify (through the low-cost entry classes committee) would be kept open. So, why not?

My point here is that we cannot give a real answer (based on something more substantial than “hand-waving” and personal feeling or preference) to why this structure, or the one that the Bureau proposal would bring, would be better, or worse, than another structure, for the future of Soaring and for membership growth.

So, my recommendation is that what the Bureau should propose (preferable to the World Class Subcommittee doing it) is along the line of the attached proposal, rather than an irreversible, unsupported by membership impact data, unnecessary, clobbering of the entire low-cost entry end of our sport that will likely have significant negative impact on membership.

Very best regards,
François

PROPOSAL to 2007 IGC Plenum: Create a LOW-COST ENTRY CLASSES committee to better coordinate and exploit the low-cost segment of Soaring and its avenues to membership growth

Background:

- Membership growth in our sport takes place mostly in two ways:

1) In countries blessed by a Soaring infrastructure based on large clubs (mostly located in Europe), clubs, and high-performance (\$) machines are the key to recruiting and retaining membership after basic training. Clubs and members rely on the newest, high-performance (expensive) gliders to retain new members through cross-country training, solo cross-country, and then possibly racing on top performance machines in the variety of "long-wing" Classes.

2) In the large majority of other countries, i.e., the less financially fortunate countries and the countries without a large-Club infrastructure, someone interested in Soaring will have no choice after getting his/her basic instruction (often on very primitive machines), but to consider buying his own glider or a share on a glider. Without it, and the corresponding prospect of progression to cross-country and the attraction to possibly racing up to the top levels, it is well known that the probability that he/she will leave the sport is high. Only a very few lucky (wealthy) ones will be able to afford the cost of a competitive (>\$150K nowadays) glider to support racing in the conventional classes with a hope to reach the top level. In all these countries, low-cost gliders and classes that can support competitive racing up to the top levels, are key to the recruiting and retaining of membership

- Despite all attempts, global membership is shrinking. The high-end is no exception.

- Low-cost, light-end classes, offer a very strong avenue for non-negligible growth of membership pilots and countries. More options and actions are needed to better exploit that avenue toward greater membership growth.

- However, actions and initiative groups in the various low-cost, light-end classes and initiatives of Soaring are fragmented and not coordinated. This significantly impairs defining and managing a powerful, coordinated, global strategy to exploit that segment and its potential benefit to global membership growth.

Proposal: Create a LOW-COST ENTRY CLASSES committee

- This committee would regroup all existing subcommittees and representatives of the low-cost classes and initiative groups (Club Class, World Class, Microlift class, Ultra-light gliders, Microlight Motorgliders, etc.) into a single committee.

- This Committee would be chartered with coordinating and managing actions across the entire low-cost, light-end, segment of Soaring toward better exploitation of that segment of Soaring toward global membership growth by targeting attraction and retention of less (financially and soaring infrastructure) fortunate pilots and countries.

- Initial action of this committee would be a thorough review, and report to the plenum, of the entire class structure at the low-cost, light-end of Soaring, with recommendations on actions to better exploit that segment and optimize its class structure, as requested by the 2006 IGC Plenum.

- Following actions would include coordination across all low-cost, light-end classes, of the proposed actions, and periodic update of recommendations for long-term optimal exploitation of the low-cost segment toward global membership growth.