



CIVL 2025 PLENARY – ANNEXE 39 K

PROPOSAL HUNGARY: NO CAT 1 FOR PG SPORT CLASS

Hungarian Proposal 2:

Opposing the Introduction of a Sport Category 1 Event

Proposal: Background

There is an ongoing discussion about the potential introduction of a Category 1 event for Sport (EN-C) certified gliders. This proposal outlines the reasons why introducing such an event could have significant negative consequences for the safety of our sport, impacting both competitive and recreational pilots. The reasoning presented addresses both technical and political/economic factors.

Technical Considerations

It is technically feasible to design and manufacture EN-C paragliders that achieve performance levels comparable to top-tier EN-D certified gliders (e.g., Zeno 2 / XC Racer 2) while still passing the EN-C certification tests. Furthermore, it is possible to create EN-C gliders with top speeds exceeding those of CCC gliders, as EN-C certification does not mandate speed limiters. While technically feasible, these gliders would compromise the safety and handling characteristics expected of EN-C certified gliders, prioritising outright performance beyond the scope of the certification.

Currently, no such 'ultra-performance EN-C' gliders exist because manufacturers are catering to the current EN-C market. This market largely comprises recreational pilots and safety-conscious competitors who prioritize safety over performance. The SRS and PWC competition series attract different, loyal member bases.

Political and Economic Considerations

National free-flying associations / NACs often receive support and funding based on their results in Category 1 events. A team leader's primary responsibility is to select and prepare the strongest possible team to maximize their nation's results in these events.

A likely scenario is that top-ranked pilots, such as those currently leading the WPRS rankings, would compete in these events using the highest performing EN-C gliders available with Submarine harnesses.

Secondary Effects and Safety Concerns

The introduction of EN-C class Category 1 events would likely incentivize manufacturers to create specialized gliders for their competition teams, similar to the development of specialized gliders for X-Alps athletes. This could create a significant safety risk within the broader paragliding community, as recreational pilots might be drawn to these ultra-performance EN-C gliders due to their certification, despite them potentially being unsuitable for their skill level. A historical example of this issue is the Gin Carrera, which

was designed to be a high-performance EN-C glider but managed to pass the EN-B certification. It had a notably poor safety record compared to other EN-B gliders, with a concerning high rate of serious incidents.

Summary of Concerns

1. **Compromised Safety:** The introduction of a Category 1 event for EN-C gliders risks creating a new class of ultra-performance gliders that prioritize performance over the safety characteristics typically associated with the EN-C certification.
2. **Elite Pilot Dominance:** The pilot demographic of a Category 1 EN-C event would likely mirror that of existing Category 1 events, featuring top-ranked pilots rather than the current Sport series participants.
3. **Uneven Playing Field:** It could create an uneven playing field, potentially disadvantaging pilots from nations with fewer resources, where top competitors may not have the means to acquire and maintain gliders in multiple categories.
4. **Double the expenses for national teams:** The National Teams' annual expenses needed for Category 1 events would double.
5. **Increased Financial Burden:** Category 1 events already place a significant financial burden on host nations. Adding another category would effectively double this burden, requiring two nations each year to potentially incur substantial financial losses.

Alternative Solutions

Some suggest a more restricted CSC within EN-C could mitigate risks. However, this merely shifts the problem. Any new top-tier class, even a restricted one, will trigger an arms race. The prestige of winning a Category 1 event, combined with manufacturers' drive for market dominance, will inevitably push performance boundaries within any permissible class, regardless of regulations.

Conclusion

The proposed introduction of a Category 1 event for EN-C gliders offers no discernible benefits to the sport while presenting numerous significant risks and challenges. Therefore, I urge the CIVL plenary to reject the proposal for EN-C Category 1 events and to uphold the current structure that prioritizes the safety and integrity of our sport.

Conflict of Interest

None. I am not involved with any paraglider brand, nor am I involved with the organization of any EN-C or Category 1 event.