

56th FAI/IPC PLENNARY MEETING 2005

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Author (s) :	Patrice Girardin Renort			Agenda reference :	4.1
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IPC 2004 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Numerous competitions were held during the course of 2004 and some excellent results were achieved by the parachuting athletes. These results however tend to mask the difficulties we have in organising or finding organisers willing to respect the contractual conditions voted during the plenary.

In reading the actions taken by the bureau, it is easy to see that these essentially administrative but sometimes diplomatic actions mainly concern the organisation, the future and the outcome of the competitions held this year. It is very difficult to rigourously enforce our rules and regulations and not have some sympathy for the organisers. They are all well known to us, even friends and certain amongst them invest more than just their time and their energy. This conflictual relationship, even though the stakes are not that high in our sport, lead me to question the plenary as to whether we want to maintain the rigidity of our rules. Should we maintain our process as it exists today – with all the risks that this involves (increasing legal issues or reducing the number of potential organisers) or return to a more flexible system that may be somewhat lax.

Throughout the year, the commission has been faced with this question and the justification of such stringency to achieve a “perfect” organisation (olympic dream or other such “fantasies”) is no longer credible. However, as the world in general legislates everything, this way of functioning has become inescapable.

The events of this year lead me to think that the IPC is overstretching its limits in relation to its structural capacity and that the objectives of these past years, motivated by the olympic dream, were simply too much for us. These events also lead me to believe that now the olympic door is closed (temporarily we are told) it is time to move onwards with our competition formats to make the organisation easier and attain a better distribution of competitions throughout the world.

In spite of all this, the commission worked democratically and I can assure you that the sometimes quite lively discussions show that the bureau take their work very much to heart. I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to some of the comission chairs who have let me know that they were not sufficiently kept in touch this year.

I would like to conclude on the subject of the relationship between the IPC and the FAI. I decided that in this election year not to be controversial and to wait until the new FAI Bureau announced it's new direction. Some of the decisions taken during the last meeting seem to me to be a step in the right direction. President Portmann is, however, faced with the question of how to enable the commissions to achieve more autonomy. I am prepared to bet that an answer will be available by our next Plenary meeting in 2006.

Patrice Girardin
IPC President