



FAI President's report to the 109th FAI General Conference

Rotterdam, 25-26 September 2015

Dear President of Honour Pierre Portmann, Your Excellences, Companions of Honour, FAI Vice Presidents, Delegates and Observers,

It is an honour to serve as your President and I would like to start with expressing my gratitude to the Executive Board and Head Office for outstanding cooperation throughout the year.

The last General Conference was in Pattaya, so nicely arranged and hosted by the Royal Aeronautic Sports Association of Thailand, and I would like to forward again our gratitude for the arrangements of their President Group Captain Veerayuth Didiasarin and his team for an excellent General Conference. I take note there were approximately as many Delegates (44 incl. 7 proxies and with a total of 353 votes), to this location as here in Rotterdam.

You elected three new Executive Board Directors, Gill Rayner, Agust Gudmundsson and Niels-Christian Levin-Hansen, and I am pleased to report they very quickly came onboard our hard working team and terminated their Air sport commission responsibilities. We are one team, with one goal, to serve and develop our Members and sports. I take this opportunity also to thank you for re-electing me to my last two-year service.

The Executive Board consists of my Deputy H.R.H. Prince Alvaro d'Orleans Bourbon, Finance Director Frits Brink, and Directors Gill Rayner, Agust Gudmundson, Bob Henderson, Niels-Christian Levin Hansen and our Secretary General Susanne Schödel. A particular thank you to her – you will hear her report further on.

At the first Board meeting right after the Conference portfolios were agreed as follows

Alvaro d'Orleans Borbon	Deputy to the President, FAI Strategy, Commission relations, IPETA Board
Frits Brink	Finance Director, Financial management, Fundraising, Branding, FAME Chair, IOC, SportAccord and other International relations
Gill Rayner	Multisport Events, Organiser Agreement, Statutes, Women in FAI, South America contact, Membership issues/relations
Agust Gudmundson	Information technology, South and East Asia contact
Bob Henderson	Sponsorship and partnership, CIMP relations, Anti-Doping
Niels-Christian Levin Hansen	Sport strategy, RVP system, Middle East/Africa contact, GC format development

At the General conference in Pattaya, apart from electing Officials, we introduced our new Secretary General, and made some very firm decisions; amongst which were to set up a Finance Advisory Group (Chaired by Sergey Ananov, with Alica Hirzel and Andy Chau), introduced electronic voting system, and a new Vision and Mission document. You will recall we had a very vivid discussion on budget preparation and presentation, and we will present the 2014 result

– which was positive – and the proposed Budget differently, after the advice of the Finance Advisory Group.

At the conference we also welcomed the new International Affiliate Membership of the Portuguese Free Flight Federation, African Air Sports Federation, Arab Air Sports Federation and Segelflugszene gGmbH.

I take this opportunity of reminding you of our Vision: A World where safe participation in air sports and recreational flying is available for everyone at reasonable cost

And our Mission: FAI, the global organization for the promotion of air sports and recreational flying In accordance with the Vision and Mission statements we have contacted the ICAO to strengthen our good relations. We have sent representatives to two ICAO conferences with very positive feedback. We need however to find time and resources to deepen our contacts with ICAO.

As for Europe Air Sports our Understanding of Agreement regarding their defending our interests towards the EASA regulatory bodies remains, and we are grateful for what EAS are doing to ease the regulations and costs for both recreational flying and airports in Europe. These days we are most concerned with the regulation for drones, which seriously can affect all aeromodelling activities.

We are members of SportAccord, the international federation of all sports, and took part in their Annual Conference in Sochi, Russia. This Conference was remarkable for a welcoming address by President Putin, and for the opening speech of their President Mr. Marius Vizer, who quite bluntly attacked the International Olympic Committee, IOC, complaining of their lack of transparency and cooperation with SportAccord. This attack has then led to the resignation of Mr. Vizer and the breakdown of SportAccord. There is a SportAccord extra-ordinary General Conference later this autumn and we will be there to defend as a recognized Olympic sport. Actually, I hope that a reformation of SportAccord might in fact strengthen our position in the world of international sport federations.

As a recognized Olympic Federation, I am pleased to report that our relations with the IOC are excellent, both on a personal level and for our acceptance as a sport with potential future Olympic participation.

Examples of such development are our participation in the Asian Beach Games – organized by the Asian Olympic committees, and – we hope - in the Asian Games – an enormously large activity with over 9,000 athletes. We are also in contact with the organizers of the Olympic Games in Tokyo, hoping to be at least a demonstration sport, and with the Youth Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

These are examples of air sport activity where we will be more active in the future, promoting air sports in new areas. I take this opportunity of forwarding our gratitude to our Regional Vice President in East and South Asia, Tengku Abdillah, for his outstanding work with the regional development in his area, where air sports are developing so quickly.

You will hear from Tengku Abdillah later on.

Since we are striving to develop FAI as the World Air Sport Federation, being less “Eurocentric”, and in the preparations for the World Air Games in Dubai this December, we have arranged much appreciated cross cultural training sessions for key officials. It is surprising and eye-opening to find how easily behavior, attitude and language can cause misunderstandings, and how easily one can get on speaking terms with persons from cultures another than your own - if you only know what their practice of communicating and behaving is.

Our Head office has also introduced much appreciated Organisers seminars that help future organisers to better understand the organizer agreement and the requirements for a successful event according to FAI rules. These seminars also help organisers to learn from each other, and to get to know the concerned FAI officials better.

Each year we arrange an informal Active Members Presidents’ meeting and this year it was in Alicante Spain. 17 NACs were represented and the meeting is of open character, enabling free discussions on various topics and getting to know each other better. The Executive Board was able to discuss a number of issues that will be presented at this Conference. CIAM Vice President Bruno Delor made a most interesting presentation on new Rules for competition with drones, which will be incorporated in our activities. You will hear from him later in the General Conference. We are grateful to Real Federación Aeronáutica Espanola for their arrangements which were very much appreciated. The meeting is however only for one day, and we are looking at how to improve the value of the meeting and develop the format to motivate more participants to travel for this.

I wish to inform you that I have instituted a Board of Enquiry to study a potential Record documentation violation by one Member and that this Board is studying the case at hand with a firm determination to avoid similar situations in the future. It would therefore be inappropriate to advance any conclusions at this stage.

This year we have again had no doping issues and the rules for doping controls in air sports are gradually being lightened, you will hear a report from Executive Director Bob Henderson and our Anti-Doping Manager Mrs. Ségolène Rouillon on this later on. I wish to especially thank her for her work, as well as the athletes that have contributed by being a part of the doping control scheme and registering in the WADA online report system Adams. Still, however, our competitors are sometimes surprised and even concerned when there is a doping control, so I ask you to continue to spread the information on this, there are excellent tuition pages on our webpage.

We have had more than 60 Category 1 events around the World (World and Continental Championships). I would like to mention our Flagship Events this year, the Aerobatic World Championships in Chateauroux, France, the World Gas Balloon Long Distance World Championship the 59th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett in Pau, France and the Sailplane Grand prix in Varese, Italy as examples of very successful events that also were supported by our Global sponsor Breitling. I wish to congratulate the organisers of these events that considerably helped the FAI with our Breitling promotion.

The contract with Breitling will now be re-negotiated, and for this reason our budget proposal this year is conservatively taking into account the possibility of a significant reduction in the financial support from this renowned chronometer company that is so closely related to our sports. We are however optimistic of continued support from them.

Our partnership with Red Bull Air Race, which was re-opened in 2014, has continued to be very successful at the satisfaction of both parties. In a month's time the 2015 finals will take place in Las Vegas.

Meanwhile, we are developing our brand and "sellable products" in order to find new exciting sponsors and it is our common interest to find new contracts – please do not hesitate to contact me should you have suggestions in this area. We work closely with several marketing agencies on this issue and if we can develop our sports into even more media and public attractive events, I am sure of success.

Therefore, the sport development strategy has been scrutinized and refined and you will hear a separate report on this issue during the conference.

One important factor to get media interest is the ability to follow and understand our sometimes complicated competition, and the IT development and possibility to follow events on-line are of utmost importance. An excellent example, with many thousands of "hits" on internet, is the Gordon Bennet Race. I hope you were on-line as well!

The further introduction of the Sporting License data-base has been successful and in all FAI Events the use of this data-base for entering into completion is mandatory. I thank those of you who have up-loaded the licenses and ask for your continued support with this – it is in your interest to facilitate the organizers control over entrants standings, and this data-base does just that.

You will hear the reports from the Commission Presidents later on. I only wish to mention here, that as you know, IPC, our parachuting commission, started a company called IPETA, and after some initial turbulence it is fully owned by FAI. The Executive Board and Head office is represented on the IPETA Board. The operation of the company is entirely in the hands of IPC officials and the Executive Board has based on an IPC Plenary decision approved to transfer as a loan 50,000 Euro from the IPC funds to the company in order to be able to develop and run Parachuting events, such as Canopy piloting – a spectacular parachuting sport with great potential for media attention. The IPC President, who is also the IPETA President, can, I am sure, elaborate on this should you wish to hear more about it.

You will have noticed that during the General conference week we have introduced workshops on various issues that we hope are of interest, and we are reviewing various options to make this week even more attractive and interesting, not only dealing with statutory issues but also giving the opportunity to discuss and develop other aspects of our activities.

During the year there have been a number of appeals against sport decisions, and in one case the complaining part was unhappy with the outcome and decision of the CASI International Appeals Tribunal, and decided to take the issue to CAS – the International Court for Arbitration of Sport. This is a most costly procedure, also for FAI even if we win the case. However, we were able to negotiate and close the issue. To reduce the number of Appeals we must review all commissions' internal rules and regulations, including the various Officials' handbooks and procedures so they are consistent, also with the FAI Statutes and By-Laws. This is a complicated and time consuming activity that is in process and discussed with the Commission Presidents.

I mentioned the coming World Air Games in Dubai. This will be the biggest air sport competition ever, gathering some 1,000 athletes in almost all air sort disciplines. Unfortunately, the meteorological situation on this location does not support all cross country competition, however all our commissions are represented. The selection of

athletes to the World Air Games are, according to the WAG Rules, in the hands of the commissions in order to get “the best of the best” and securing as many nations as possible taking part. This process has generally worked well, with one or two exceptions where a Member would have preferred to be represented by another athlete than the one selected by the Commission. The process will be reviewed in the evaluation after the Games. The WAG preparations are a major struggle for our Head Office and Commissions, as well as for the local organizer, but gradually things are getting in place and I am confident of a great event. Today we had a seminar that answered some questions at hand and I am pleased to say, that I am convinced it will a great Event, opening doors for future sponsors and partners. We will have a lot of winners there!

So what can we expect of the coming FAI year? Well, FAI finance will continue to be a major concern. We will have even more competition and record claims. And we will see new members coming aboard. The IOC cooperation will be strengthened and deeper, and we will be more visible and attractive by improving our sport format and developing our participation in multi-sport events. The Executive Board and our Head Office will be able to focus on strategic issues. We will – with your support – look into the rights of issuing sporting licenses and enabling more athletes, particularly youth and women, to take part in our events. We plan to have a major air sport seminar on Safety, in Saudi Arabia, and co-meetings of Commission Presidents, NAC Presidents and Head Office staff. We will have more seminars on organization of events and finally a new Organiser’s Agreement. Eventually we will have our General conference in Bali, Indonesia and then it is time for a new President to take over. In the long run I am confident FAI will develop and expand to be strong financially, focusing on marketing, sport matters and Members support by – whilst respecting our heritage and present format - introducing new variations and combinations of sports to attract competitors, media, crowds and sponsors.

Thank you for your kind attention

John Grubbström
FAI President 2010-2016