



IGC PRESIDENT REPORT TO THE FAI GENERAL CONFERENCE 2006

The International Gliding Commission held its annual meeting in Lausanne in March 2006. FAI President Portmann delivered the keynote speech and Sir John Allison, President of Europe Air Sports, was our guest speaker. Time was, again, set aside for discussions on topics regarding the future of gliding. We intend to invite the Presidents of the gliding Federations and Associations to the 2007 Plenary meeting to debate our newly developed Strategic Plan.

The Plenum was pleased to confer the award of the Lilienthal Medal to Mr Ian Strachan, United Kingdom and awards of Pirat Gehriger Diplomas to Mr Francois van Haaff, The Netherlands and Mr Martin Simons, Australia, in recognition of their services to the sport of gliding.

Significant decisions taken by the IGC Plenum in March 2006 included:

- The development of protocols to allow Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) Flight Recorders to be used to verify badge flights,
- An intention to review the calculations underlying the IGC Ranking List,
- The creation of a microlight motorglider class,
- The intention to adopt Proximity Awareness Systems at International competitions,
- Locking Annex A, World Gliding Championship Rules, for a period of four years.

2006 World Gliding Championships

The 29th FAI Multiclass World Gliding Championships, 2006, was held at Eskilstuna, Sweden. The World Champions are:

- Open Class Michael Sommer, Germany
- 18M Class Phil Jones, UK
- 15M Class Janus Centka, Poland
- Standard Class Leigh Wells, UK

The 5th FAI World Class and 4th FAI Club Class World Gliding Championships, 2006, were held conjointly at Vinon, France. The World Champions are:

- Club Class Sebastian Kawa, Poland
- World Class Christophe Ruch, France

2006 Sailplane Grand Prix Events

At the time of the writing of this report six qualifying Sailplane Grand Prix events (New Zealand, Slovakia, Russia, Germany, England and France) have been completed. Some 90 pilots, representing 16 nations, have flown 450 incident-free Grand Prix tasks so far this year. Two further qualifying rounds will be completed in South Africa and Australia later this year.

The Sailplane Grand Prix will be the IGC's contribution to the 2009 FAI World Air Games.

Media Developments for Gliding

In January 2006 Air Sports Limited demonstrated a unique capability to combine live video from a helicopter mounted camera and in-cockpit cameras with graphics generated from the gliders using GPS data. This combined presentation has attracted significant interest from the media.

For the future, the potential demonstrated by Air Sports Ltd has the capability to raise the public and media profile, not only of the sport of gliding, but for all FAI air sports and will provide us with the opportunity to attract people to our sports, create significant sponsorship opportunities and to raise the political awareness and acceptance of our activities.

Championships Awarded

The 2nd FAI World Sailplane Grand Prix 2007 was awarded to New Zealand.

Strong bids were provided from several countries for the new calendar of World Gliding Championships in 2009. The bids awarded were:

- 5th FAI Women's World Gliding Championships to Szeged, Hungary
- 6th FAI Juniors' World Gliding Championships Rääskälä, Finland

Developments in the Sport of Gliding

A number of countries have reported that gliding simulators are being used for the ab-initio training of glider pilots reducing costs for the trainees and the clubs.

The use of the Internet for On-Line competitions is expanding with, during 2006, an IGC-OLC World League being established. The use of on-line contests provides a significant opportunity for pilots to share in the common bonds of competition and camaraderie across, what would otherwise be, unsurmountable land and sea barriers. 800 Clubs, from 10 Nations, participated in the 19 rounds of the IGC-OLC World League. The winning Club was Albuquerque Soaring (USA) and SSA Clubs filled the first five places.

Future Challenges

On-going challenges for the IGC are the threats from EASA and other Regulatory bodies to diminish our access to airspace and to demand more restrictive requirements, especially for airworthiness.

The most recent airspace threats are the plan to impose Mode S transponders on all recreational aircraft in the UK and massive changes to the TMA around Madrid airport. The latter threatens the very existence of a number of gliding clubs around Madrid. Regulatory changes of this sort must be contested by the FAI as well as by our individual air sport commissions.

All gliding nations in Europe owe a debt of gratitude to the work of the European Gliding Union (EGU) which is working hard to preserve existing privileges for glider pilots, with some notable recent successes especially for licences and airworthiness requirements, in the face of the over-bearing EASA rule-environment. I note, with regret, that some countries are getting a “free ride” in this process because they will benefit from the outcomes without having actively supported the efforts of the EGU.

We are determined to ensure that our World Championships and Grand Prix events are conducted to a consistent and high standard. Our strategies to achieve high quality events include expanding the role of our Stewards for the World Championships and the development of a management team to oversee the Grand Prix.

The IGC is also faced with a dilemma as the cost of competing outside of national borders increases. The majority of active competitive glider pilots live in greater Europe, yet the IGC is a family that spans the world. Finding a way of ensuring that our World Gliding Championships are held worldwide is, therefore, a challenge for the future.

Marketing our new showcase event, the Sailplane Grand Prix, has been presenting us with significant difficulty. The FAI has previously permitted the brand words “FAI World” and “Grand Prix” to be associated with a single entity aligned to the FAI. Our legal advice is that this now means that no FAI Air Sport Commission may be able to use the words “FAI” and “World” in association with “Grand Prix” to name and market events. This decision has proven, in our opinion, to be most unfortunate as it severely limits the ability of the FAI body to now name new events. The IGC will be announcing the name of our Grand Prix event, going forward, at the General Conference.

Finally, it is my honour to acknowledge the excellent support and assistance provided by Secretary General Max Bishop and the staff at the FAI Office and to thank them sincerely for their efforts on behalf of the IGC.



President
[International Gliding Commission](#)