

FAI Report to ICARE Plenary Meeting 2012

Mr. President, Dear Delegates & Gentlemen,

It's a pleasure for me to be with you today, and I would like to convey the best greetings from the FAI President John GRUBBSTRÖM, the Members of the Executive Board and my colleagues at the FAI Office.

My report will consist of a mix of information on the 105th FAI General Conference held in October in Belgrade, and on some of the latest projects currently dealt with by the FAI.

Part 1 - FAI General Conference 2011

The 105th FAI General Conference was held from 13 to 15 October 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia : 51 FAI Member countries were represented, as well as 10 Air Sport Commissions and all Technical Commissions.

FAI Membership

At the time of the Conference, the FAI Membership consisted of 103 member countries (83 Active Members / 7 Associate Members / 10 Temporary Members)

Albania and Qatar have been approved by the Conference as new Active Members (class 10), and the Conference took note that Jordan had resigned from FAI Membership.

Finance

The 2010 Financial Statement showed an excess of income over expense of CHF 85'900, which allowed increasing reserves and provisions – At the end of 2010, FAI Reserves, including contributions from FAI Air Sport Commissions, reached a total of CHF 1.5 mio (1.4 mio in 2009) - The Balance sheet showed a total of CHF 3.7 mio. (3.5 in 2009), 71 % of Assets being cash or cash equivalents, and 90 % of liabilities and funds consisting of FAI Special reserves such as ASC contributions, WAG reserve, or the Development and innovation fund.

In spite of the 2 % increase of FAI Subscription Fees approved by the Conference (the first one during the last 7 years !), the 2012 Budget is anticipating a deficit of CHF 21'000, which is mainly due to a significant reduction of sponsorship income, the Red Bull Air Race having been temporarily put on stand-by.

In 2010, FAI Auditors had recommended the Executive Board to review FAI financial procedures in order :

- To provide a more accurate picture of FAI's accounts and financial situation, and
- To allow the Executive Board better exercising its statutory financial responsibilities.

The Board established a Temporary Working Group, the "Finance & Reporting Task Force" (FRTF) which consisted of an equal number of representatives of FAI

Members, Air Sport Commissions and Executive Board. On the basis of recommendations made by the FRTF, the Board then decided to implement first changes in 2011 :

- FAI Accounts are now recorded on an Accrual Basis (*revenue or expense recorded when it occurs, not when payment is made*),
- FAI Accounts are consolidated in order to include all FAI and air sport revenues, expenditures, deposits and investments,
- New harmonized budget formats have been introduced, as well as a process for submitting and approving ASC Budgets and expenditures.
- In spite of these changes, the ASC contributions included in the Balance Sheet will continue to be shown in the Financial Statement for each Air Sport Commission.

These new procedures have been implemented in 2011. We are now building up on this first experience and some fine-tuning might be needed before the next budget round is started later this year.

FAI Statutes Working Group

The Conference elected a new Statutes Working Group, which is now chaired by Mr. Paulo de Moura Marques (POR). The members of the Statutes Working Group are Günter Bertram (GER), Guillermo Bauza (ESP), Marina Vigorito (ITA) and Mary-Ann Stevens (CAN). Mr. Robert Henderson is the Executive Board representative within the Statutes Working Group.

FAI Strategy

The General Conference in Belgrade provided an excellent platform for reporting and debating on the progress made on the new FAI Strategy adopted in 2010 in Dublin. On the basis of the comments and opinions expressed during the Conference, the Executive Board has continued its work on :

- The progressive introduction, on a trial basis, of 3 Regional Vice Presidents to improve FAI presence in specific parts of the world; the 3 regions selected for implementation of RVPs in 2012 are : South America, South and East Asia, Middle East.
- The creation of a series of Expert Groups to improve and encourage the sharing of information and know-how within FAI. These Expert Groups will be available as “management tools” for the Executive Board. Today, Expert Groups for Airspace and Navigation Systems (out of CANS) have already been launched. The next Expert Groups to be created in 2012 will be the IT EG (database, webbased services to ASC and Event Organisers), the New Technologies EG (tracking systems), Safety and Regulation EGs and, later on, Marketing & Communication.
- The development of a new Sports Strategy and Branding Guidelines to improve the visibility of FAI events and their presence on the market.
- The Executive Board will also continue working on proposals aiming at improving the FAI Structure and decision-making processes : The role of CASI should be re-defined, the appeal procedures clarified, and the ASC Presidents Group better involved in the management of FAI.

New FAI Air Sport Commission

The Conference approved to change the FAI Amateur Built & Experimental Commission (CIACA) from a Technical to an Air Sport Commission (world records achieved with new types of aircraft, possible introduction of workmanship contests for amateur-built and experimental aircraft, etc.). FAI Statutes and By-Laws have already been updated accordingly.

REMINDER : 5 FAI Goals proposed by the EB and approved by the GC2010 to achieve the FAI Mission and Vision over the next few years are :

1. *To STRENGTHEN our organisation*
2. *To UNITE our Constituents (NACs, ASCs)*
3. *To SERVICE our Constituents*
4. *To PROMOTE our sports*
5. *To INCREASE PRACTICE of our sports*

Next FAI General Conferences

106th FAI General Conference : October 2012, Antalya (TUR)

107th FAI General Conference : 2013, Kuala Lumpur (MAS)

Part 2 – Information on Projects and EB Decisions

FAI Office and Staff

The Staff situation at the FAI Office has been very difficult over the last few months : Our Members & Services Manager Ségolène Rouillon has been on a maternity leave from July to mid-November 2011. Our former Secretary General Stéphane Desprez and Sports Manager Rodric Neri left the FAI in September, thus significantly reducing our staff resources and increasing workload on other staff members.

The situation should now progressively improve :

- On 1 November, Mrs Françoise Gyps joined our team as our new Sports Administrator. (*note: Ms. GYPS has left the FAI and we welcome Ms. Annick HAUSER as Assistant Sports Manager*)
- Ségolène was back to office on 14 November.
- A new Senior Sports Manager will join the FAI Office on 1 March. Most of you already know Rob Hughes, who had already worked at FAI in 2008-09 as Project Manager. Rob will take over the lead of our Sports Department and will therefore soon be the first person of contact for all sports matters.
- On 1 May 2012, Mr. Visa-Matti Leinikki will also arrive at the FAI Office as our new, full-time IT-Manager, replacing Mr. Marcel Meyer who reached the official age of retirement last year. Visa-Matti not only has a long experience in Information Technologies, but also has been involved in Air Sports for many years, especially in Gliding : He is a pilot himself and has been IGC Vice-President for many years.

We are all looking forward to welcoming our new colleagues in Lausanne, and hope that they will bring a significant contribution to improving our services and support to FAI Commissions, Members and Event Organisers.

Until these new “work forces” arrive, we ask you please for your understanding if we are not always able to answer your e-mails and requests as promptly as usual.

New FAI Website

Shortly after the General Conference 2011, a completely new FAI website has been implemented. Apart from its new graphic layout, navigation system and content management system, the new website is again providing information and documents we had lost during the last few months/years (competition results, world records).

Work is still in progress to fine-tune some parts and features of the new website, and further developments will continue to be done, especially after having launched the IT Expert Group. Your feedback and suggestions on how to further improve our new communication tool are of course welcome. Please don't hesitate to contact our Communication Manager Faustine Carrera.

I kindly remind you that the FAI Website remains the central document center where all documents relating to Commissions' activities should be made available. I therefore ask you please to systematically provide us with the documents available for publication (minutes, agendas, reports, bids, etc.), so that they can be saved on our server and uploaded on the website.

We are aware that all of us will still need some time to get used to the new navigation system, and that there are still some needs for improving our new website, but I think that significant progress has already been achieved and that we again have a usable and more flexible communication tool.

FAI Sporting Licence Database : Another lengthy project

At the end of 2010, shortly before official implementation of the FAI Sporting Licence Database, we have been made aware of a significant security problem when downloading information from the Database. The FAI immediately switched the database off, and an external IT company had been mandated to work on the problem. But the webserver crash that occurred last spring forced us to completely change priorities.

Today, a new, improved Sporting Licence Database is under final testing. Within the next few weeks, FAI Members will be invited to upload their 2012 data, and the database will be opened for consultation as soon as a enough FAI Members have provided their data. Air Sport Commissions, FAI Members and Event Organisers will be kept informed as soon as the database will be available for consultation, hopefully before the 2012 competition season starts.

Until further notice and until the new database is fully operational and tested, “Paper Sporting Licences” will still remain valid as a back-up solution, most probably until the 2012 competitions' “high season” is over.

World Air Games

The bid process for the World Air Games 2013 had been opened in October 2010. Expressions of interest had been received from 3 potential hosts. The difficult

economic and political situation made it particularly difficult to receive firm commitments.

In September last year, the last potential bidder informed the FAI that they would finally not bid for hosting the World Air Games 2013.

Considering the world economic situation and the difficult situation at the FAI Office (new SecGen, understaffing), the Executive Board decided that :

- No World Air Games would be held in 2013,
- The next possible year would be 2015, thus shifting the World Air Games from the IWGA World Games and avoiding potential conflicts of dates,
- The World Air Games cycle would be reverted to an event every 4 years.

FAI Sports Strategy

The Executive Board is currently working on a new Sports Strategy aiming at :

- Improving quality and attractiveness of our events
- Improving visibility of air sports to media and public
- Increasing awareness of public, media and potential hosts
- Developing and promoting new types of “marketing” events

Tools to be progressively introduced :

- Strategy based on the recommendations provided by an external study (AiSTS Study 2011)
- New proposed 4-level structure of competitions
 - o Prestige (WAG, World Games, multi-sport events)
 - o Classical events (cat. 1)
 - o Marketing events (series, new events)
 - o ASC Challenges (cat. 2)
- New branding guidelines for Event Organisers (incl. combined logos, templates for documents and webpages)
- Creation of a new FAI Sports Marketing Agency, which will aim at hiring external expertise to develop, promote, fund and market new events
- New FAI Sports Management Group (EB + ASC Pdts + SecGen)

Multi-Sport Events

The FAI is involved in the official sports program of the following multi-sport events :

- Asian Beach Games 2012, Hayiang (CHN) : Powered Paragliders (Paramotors)
- SportAccord World Artistic Games, 2013 (CHN) : Indoor AeroMusicals
- The World Games, Cali 2013 (COL) : Parachuting Canopy Piloting, Paragliding Landing Accuracy and, as demonstration sport, Indoor AeroMusicals

FAI's involvement in these events provide additional opportunities to showcase our sports, to share experience with other International Federations and build-up our know-how, especially in order to improve the presentation of our sports (scoring, results, live-tracking, commentators, etc.).

Anti-Doping

As you know, the FAI is an IOC-recognized federation and, as such, is a signatory of the WADA Anti-Doping Code. While the first FAI Anti-Doping Rules had been introduced in 2009, the next step we will have to implement in order to be fully compliant with WADA Rules are “out-of-competition testings”.

The nature of our sports (non-professional athletes, specific medical requirements linked with flying, etc.) however doesn't make it easy to implement the procedures as defined by WADA. The FAI Executive Board therefore appointed a temporary working group which, under the lead of Exec Director Bob Henderson, is currently conducting a risk assessment among our sports. In close cooperation with the WADA European Office located at the MSI, updated FAI Anti-Doping Rules will be developed and implemented later this year.

Cancellation of FAI 1st Category Events

Following fatal accidents at a recent World Championship, the FAI has been requested to provide advice on the cancellation of approved FAI-sanctioned 1st Category Events.

The FAI Sporting Code General Section currently provides the FAI with the possibility of cancelling an event for *force majeure* (para. 3.15.1), and empowers a Jury President to stop an event should the organiser fail to abide by the FAI Sporting Code, rules and regulations (para. 4.3.2.4). However, there is currently no specific procedure or guidance in the FAI Constitution to facilitate the cancellation or cessation of an FAI-sanctioned event for reasons other than *force majeure* or non-compliance with FAI Rules by the organiser.

The FAI Executive Board has therefore decided to task CASI with amending the FAI Sporting Code General Section. However, as a formal amendment to the Sporting Code will take some time, the FAI Executive Board also decided to implement with immediate effect guidelines as to the process to be followed should the cancellation of an event be considered necessary for reasons such as substantial risks to the safety of participants, major financial uncertainty, or other reasons that may arise from time to time. FAI Members, Commissions and Event Organisers have been provided with this new Policy on 8 February 2012.

Conclusion

To conclude this report, I would like to point out that international sport is moving and changing every day. We all have to accept that the world is changing, and that our sports need to evolve to better meet with the expectations of potential hosts. If we want to keep a place in the world of sports, improve the visibility and attractiveness of our sports to the public, media, host cities and potential sponsors, we therefore definitely need to continue adjusting, modernizing and simplifying our rules and competitions.

Personally, I am convinced that our air sports can be further developed, but we have to work together, we need your constructive thinking, your willingness to explore new paths and accept reasonable changes.

Changes are not always easy to accept and implement, but please, let's go ahead, let's try, let's accept that not every change will be perfect from the very first minute !

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.

Jean-Marc BADAN
FAI Secretary General