

## **RHODES**

**12th OCTOBER 2007**

Dear Presidents of Honour,  
Dear Companions of Honour,  
Dear Vice Presidents, Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to all of you for the 101st General Conference in Greece on the Island of Rhodes.

Quite a lot of things happened since our last Conference in Chili. We have to classify between new projects or projects in progress.

We start with the projects and plans in progress.

### **- World Air Games**

I think we can be proud of the progress made in the last two years which allowed FAI to award in Lausanne in May 2007, the 2009 Games to Torino. There were three bidders, Moscow, Odense and Torino.

The goal was achieved thanks to the decision to work with TSE who brought the professionalism and their experience and the excellent work of our staff in Lausanne and in particular JM Badan, who is now promoted to be "the FAI event and sport director" of FAI central office.

As you know, following the advice of TSE, the board decided after consultation of our members to establish the games in a 2 year cycle.

TSE will make a video presentation later to day presenting our concept for the future of the World Air Games, the flagship of FAI.

### **- RBAR – RED BULL AIR RACE**

We were successful, after a quite long process, to sign with RBAR an agreement, which brings visibility and media exposure to FAI, as well as some income.

We are acting as a supervisor helping RB to improve and keep the safety of their races on the highest level possible.

We are working in an excellent climate with RB and hope to extend our cooperation in the future to other projects.

We have ongoing discussions with other companies trying to get our sports on television and internet. We shall have first results and products at the end of this year.

### **- ATMOS**

We launched last year in Santiago this product in cooperation with Naviter. Mr Kolar made a presentation.

A program for developing was fixed starting with Ballooning, followed by CIVL and IGC.

We have to say that after one year, only little progress has been made. The ballooning site is still under construction, we have only a BETA version, the hangliding site is under development.

Thierry Montigneau and Marcel Meyer do their best in Lausanne but it seems that the project has to be changed on the management side.

AOB who is in charge of this project as a supervisor is trying to find a solution.

The sporting licence data system is now ready and will help the event organizers to have a better control over the FAI sporting licences of the participants in international competitions.

## **- ACTIVITY**

Our SGAL will give you more details, but I just want to tell you 2007 is a good year and all Air Sports contributed with many International Competitions.

The board had three meetings in January, May and here in Rhodes and 3 telephone conferences. Max Bishop and myself participated in the sport accord Forum and the General Assemblies of ARIFS, IWGA and GAIFS in Beijing.

I personally participated in meetings with our Chinese members and a very impressive trip to Yangzhou in Henan Province, visiting one of the biggest Air Sport Training Centers in China.

At the end of May we had our ASC Pds meeting in Lausanne, followed by the reception and selection of the city hosting our World Air Games 2009.

I was invited to the junior gliding world championships in Rieti in August.

It was a real pleasure to see the young pilots competing with enthusiasm.

They represent the future of our Air Sports.

I informed you about the threat to our powerflying, helicopter and balloon pilots, due to the language proficiency obligations decided by ICAO and coming to implementation in March 2008.

The decision by ICAO, strongly supported by a large majority of member states to oblige our VFR pilots to comply with level 4 on a scale of 6, which is identical for air line pilots, brings big problems, especially in Europe for border crossing.

I had a meeting with ICAO President Kobeh-Gonzales in Montreal and was invited to join the ICAO general ass, which took place in September, to defend our position.

My trip in July brought me to the conclusion that FAI needs some permanent representation in ICAO headquarter.

IAOPA is represented there by Frank Hoffmann who works for IAOPA. With the help of Max Bishop we made an agreement with IAOPA headquarter in USA to share the information for language proficiency with IAOPA.

This is a start up, if this works well, a larger cooperation on other subjects of common interest are conceivable

Following the recommendation of the President of Council, I participated to the 36<sup>th</sup> session in Montreal.

This visit convinced me definitely that this organization to whom we have an observer status since 1952 is gaining in importance for our activities.

To be efficient we need to have a regularly, locally representation. Andre Dumas did a great job in the past, once he retired we were struggling to find the right person.

We started this cooperation in September and I can report to have obtained a compromise on such an important subject as language proficiency, particularly for Europe.

Both organizations had the opportunity to speech and we brought in with success a motion, which allows all member states to give some flexibility for sports aviation.

This motion found support from France and 6 other countries, only Norway voted, surprisingly against.

That brings me to the following remark, already expressed on other occasions.

Please do your homework, all our members have to keep or establish good and fruitful relations with their NAA's and bring forward our concerns on substantial matters like LANGUAGE in this case specifically in Europe, and make sure that their representations with ICAO are aware and do second when we bring forward proposals, or at least do not vote against.

This remark is valid too, for EASA and Eurocontrol.

We can only be successful if we have support from our members.

Your President and the headquarter cannot solve all problems from Lausanne, we need you all.

Let me say a few words about where we are to day and where I see our future.

FAI is a well organized and respected Federation covering world wide all Air Sports.  
Like all traditional and long standing organisations, we have strong and weak points.

The fact to see FAI after over 100 years of existence, still going strong in a world that has totally changed, shows that our fundamentals were and are still good.

The fact that we exist thanks to our volunteers on all levels is a good and essential principle, but in our modern world it is getting more and more difficult to find enough people, who are prepared to work, to be present, to answer questions and to look after the different Air Sports.

A volunteer is only efficient and useful to his organisation if he has the will, the time and the competence. One of these elements is missing and there is a problem.

Our organisation relies on our members and our Air Sport Commissions. The principle of "one country, one member" has been discussed many times in the past and each time the conclusion was, this system is not perfect, but presents the best compromise.

There is no doubt that in many countries it works very well and for the Lausanne office and the board it is excellent to have only one entrance door to a country.

But I have to say, and you know it, there are member countries, where the central organisation is not looking after all Air Sports, using their exclusive sporting power in an incorrect way, not giving enough support to our ASC for organizing competitions, not selecting in a transparent process the delegates to the commissions where the future of our sports is decided. The consequences are clear from the SGAL's membership report.

This situation brings me to the conclusion that we have to work again to find a system better suited for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and more efficient allowing to have the possibility to give direct access to Federations or other organizations in a country where the member is not complying fully with its duties.

- In the regulatory field our sports are becoming more and more complex in the different parts of the world
- Organisers of championships and similar events bear overall responsibility for third party liability risks, increasingly high financial risks, and many other kinds of obligations,

Organisers and Commissions now need more advice and help from central FAI in Lausanne. The recently cancelled Gordon Bennett Balloon Race is a good example. That means we must have additional competent paid staff in Lausanne, speaking at least 2 languages.

As you know and you saw our balance sheet for 2006, 90 % of our income comes from our members. The main target for your president and his board was, and still is to find other revenues to be in a position to finance the services and assistance we should have and to provide for the future.

We know the difficulties, certain of our good standing members have, to face to get the necessary financial support they need to comply with their duties.

As I mentioned last year in Chile, the obligation to diversify our income, to avoid any further increase of subscription was and is a main target.

We were successful in signing an agreement with RBAR and Torino-2009. Therefore, I am, today, in agreement with the board, in the position to propose to the GC an exceptional rebate of 5 % on the subscription fees for the year 2008.

The subscription scale will not change, but we will invoice you for the full amount due, less a 5 % deduction. Let me remind you that subscription fees have not been increased for several years. For many of you, the last change, four budgets ago, was indeed a decrease not to forget the favourable exchange rates for a certain member of countries.

We hope to be able to find in the future other income streams to continue this new policy and try to avoid any increase in the membership subscription fees, something which has already been achieved in recent years.

This gives me the opportunity to express my thanks to our staff in Lausanne who highly contributed to achieve the goals I fixed 3 years ago when I became your President.

Once more, I have to express my special thanks to Max Bishop, who did this year again a great job.

Then, let me conclude on these positive points and express my conviction that FAI in spite of all the problems we have to face daily, is on the way to a successful future.

And now, dear Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish us all a good, efficient and nice conference in this wonderful island.

Thank you for your attention.

Pierre Portmann  
FAI President

5.10.2007