



**FAI Aerobatics Commission (CIVA)
Report to the 105th General Conference
Belgrade, 14-15 October 2011**

The FAI Aerobatics Commission continues its work in promoting, administering, and improving the sport of aerobatics worldwide. This is only possible because we are all a part of a larger air sports movement and members of the FAI through our national organizations.

Achieving our goal of promoting our air sports discipline is successful because of the extensive and dedicated work of volunteers around the world who are deeply committed to the sport. As I do every year, I pay tribute to them in this report. The purpose of this report is to provide you with updated information on this work as it is noteworthy and deserving of your recognition.

The 2011 Calendar

This year, CIVA has had a very successful and full Championships calendar which has kept our officials very busy with several serving at more than one competition. This year our schedule included:

World Glider Aerobatic Championships (Unlimited & Advanced categories): Torun, Poland World Aerobatic Championships (Unlimited Power): Foligno, Italy European Advanced Aerobatic Championships: Dubnica, Slovak Republic
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CIVA selected and provided FAI international officials for all of these events. Judges were selected under procedures which take into account judging performance. This performance is now measured by a software program that was in use at all Championships this year called ACRO. ACRO is also the scoring program for all FAI Aerobatic Championships.

World Advanced and European Glider Aerobatic Championships

In recent years, CIVA has introduced a new category of competition – Glider Advanced Aerobatics – and the second FAI World Championships in this category took place this year in Poland. The World Advanced Glider Aerobatic Championships (WAGAC) was held in conjunction with the long-running World Glider Aerobatic Championships (WGAC) which is for Unlimited glider pilots.

38 pilots including 2 independents (who fly “hors concours” or H/C in CIVA parlance) participated in the WAGAC. The 2011 World Advanced Aerobatic Glider Champion is **Benoit Merieau** of France. He flew the Swift S-1. Advanced is of a level that permits gliders to participate that may not be Unlimited-capable. This will encourage more pilots to compete.



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I was also delighted to see such a young and talented man capture the title. It bodes well for our future to see many young competitors flying who had not been seen at FAI Championships before.

WAGAC Team winners were: (1) Germany, (2) France, and (3) Sweden.

In the World Glider Aerobatic Championships, which are at Unlimited level, 23 pilots flew. The new Champion is **Jerzy Makula** of Poland. Jerzy will go down in the record books as one of the most accomplished aerobatic pilots of all time. He has won the World title on several occasions.

WGAC Team winners were: (1) Poland, (2) France, and (3) Russia.

The Aero Club of Poland can also be counted on to organize excellent events and have done so on many occasions over the last two decades. My special thanks to the Aero Club of Poland for its outstanding support of FAI, CIVA, and the sport of aerobatics.

European Advanced Aerobatic Championships



7th FAI EUROPEAN ADVANCED AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIP

In Power aerobatics, the Advanced category continues to be our largest competition class and the European Advanced Championships were the largest FAI Aerobatic Championships held in 2011. 56 pilots participated.

The new European Advanced Aerobatic Champion is **Simon Fick** of France. He flew the CAP 232. Team France also won the WAAC under the leadership of Claude

“Coco” Bessiere, a past World Champion and the successful trainer of many French Teams. Mr. Bessiere will receive the Leon Biancotto Diploma this year at the FAI General Conference for his outstanding contributions to aerobatics. There has never been a team trainer who has produced more Champions than “Coco” has and the Diploma is richly deserved.

The Teams of Russia and Ukraine were second and third, respectively.

World Aerobatic Championships

The 26th World Aerobatic Championships was held in Foligno, Italy in late August and early September and attracted 51 pilots (including 4 independents). The Championships had been scheduled to take place at a military airfield near Ravenna but had to be moved due to the conflict in Libya.

New World Aerobatic Champion is **Mikhail Mamistov** of Russia (shown below left with the Aresti Cup). This is Mikhail’s second win of the World Championship title. He flew the Sukhoi SU-26M3. World Women’s Aerobatic Champion is **Svetlana Kapanina**, who has captured this title on several



occasions and also ranks as one of the best aerobatic pilots of all time.



Team results were: (1) Russia, (2) France, and (3) USA.

One item of interest to the General Conference that I should mention is the situation in Spain. There has been a long-standing dispute between the NAC of Spain and several Spanish pilots who fly at Unlimited level. This resulted in no Spanish Team being present during the classical flight programmes at WAC this year.

Earlier in the year, the CIVA Bureau had unanimously decided to designate three pilots from Spain (Castor Fantoba, Juan Velarde, and Anselmo Gamez) as an "FAI Team" under the provisions of Sporting Code which permit an ASC

to do so when a competitor is "unable to represent an NAC". (General Section 3.2.1)

The Bureau took the position that these pilots were eminently qualified to compete and should be eligible to win Medals and Diplomas at WAC. This was subsequently borne out by Mr. Fantoba's results at WAC, in which he would have placed 5th overall had his results counted. He is also one of the world's top competitors in CIVA "special events" including the FAI Elite Contest in Riga, Latvia this year.

Spain's NAC objected to the CIVA position on the matter and the FAI President and Executive Board disagreed with our interpretation of GS 3.2.1. CIVA respects FAI Headquarters' stance on the issue and subsequently, the pilots competed "hors concours" at WAC, which is allowed under CIVA rules. When competing in this status, a pilot cannot have any standing in the official results or win any Medals.

I want to extend my appreciation to the FAI President, John Grubbstrom, for taking the time to deal with this issue personally and to discuss it with the President of the NAC of Spain. While it was not successfully resolved, for reasons which are too detailed for this report, I hope that someday these pilots will be able to compete for FAI Medals and Diplomas at a future Championships. Castor, Juan, and Anselmo enjoy the respect and friendship of many people in our rather small community and we also know they would bring credit to Spain. It was a pity that no pilot flew at WAC under the Spanish flag during the classical flight programmes, though one pilot did in the "Final Freestyle" (Ramon Alonso). That flight programme does not count toward the WAC final results.

Though I was heavily criticized personally by the President of the NAC of Spain for CIVA's action in a letter to Executive Director Bob Henderson, I want to emphasize that these steps were taken with the unanimous agreement of the Bureau of CIVA (seven Officers). I also hope that the wording in General Section can be further clarified for our guidance in the future. Let me also mention that I deeply respect the sovereignty of our NAC's and their right to determine and administer team selection procedures internally. We cannot interfere in internal matters within our member countries. But we are deeply concerned when some of the world's best pilots are not permitted to participate

in FAI Aerobic Championships as this strikes at the credibility and value of those Championships when top competitors are not present.

My thanks to the Aero Club of Italy for its successful organization of the WAC and in particular, Dario Costa, the Contest Director, and Irene Pasini, who headed up the organization.

Full results for this competition, along with the others above, can be found at the following:

www.civa-results.com

Making Use of Technology

In the past three years, organizers have been making increasing use of easily available technology to make our competitions run more efficiently. As with all international events, communications is always a difficult issue, not only due to language differences but in distribution of important information. I encourage all Commissions to adapt some of our ideas to your Championships.

All of our contest sites are covered by a WiFi network.

A software program is used to send mass SMS (text) messages to all of the mobile phones that were either issued by the organizers or to Team Managers' personal mobiles. Weather observations and announcements of all kinds were transmitted this way and everyone knows what is occurring during the Championships. These mobiles can be "disposable" types and are relatively inexpensive.

Twitter has also been used to publish all of the SMS (text) messages that were sent out so they could be accessed via the internet. In addition, thanks to the cooperation and help of Faustine Carrera of the FAI Staff, CIVA officials were able to post Twitter messages and news on FaceBook at Championships this year. This has been very useful. We appreciate Faustine's cooperation.

Contest scores are uploaded throughout the day to www.civa-results.com by the Scoring Director. This facility is provided within ACRO, our scoring software, and is easy to use. The scores are instantly available to everyone who has WiFi access and a laptop, tablet, or smartphone on the contest site and makes our competitions much more open and transparent.

If I am attending the competition myself as an official, I blog every day and sometimes several times a day with brief articles on contest developments with photos. This blog appears on the CIVA website. All Championships have websites of their own as well.

FAI Financial Reporting and Budgeting

It was my pleasure to serve as a member of the FAI Financial Reporting Task Force (FRTF), a working group established by the Executive Board. As the FAI Treasurer, Bob Clipsham will report, we met in Frankfurt early in the year and again in Lausanne in the Spring. The FRTF report was presented to the Executive Board by Mr. Clipsham and new procedures for financial reporting and

budgeting were implemented this year.

There is no question that these new procedures and policies have proven to be controversial amongst the ASC Presidents and I am sure this will be extensively discussed in Belgrade, particularly at the ASC Presidents Group meeting prior to the Conference. Since I played a part in the FRTF, I support its report.

It should be stated clearly that ASC's do not exist as separate legal entities of their own. Therefore, FAI and its Executive Board are legally responsible for the management and administration of our funds. This has previously been pointed out by our auditors and the FAI Treasurer. What the FRTF tried to achieve was to create a procedure by which ASC's would continue to prepare their own budgets, administer their finances – but with the final budget approval in the hands of the Executive Board. Communication must be two-way in this process and if the Executive Board has any objections, comments, or changes to an ASC budget, it must communicate with the ASC Presidents and Treasurers. There is a provision for a time when such an “appeal” process can take place and prior to the overall budget submission to the Conference.

I am comfortable with this. While some ASC Presidents understandably have called for their funds to be “ring fenced”, our Commission does not have a problem with excess funds being a part of the overall FAI reserves. In fact, some of our Bureau members have questioned the need to accumulate large reserves of funds in what is supposed to be a “non-profit” organization. My view is that we must always maintain sufficient reserves for future contingencies, must spend our money wisely and for the development of air sports, and treat those funds with care, attention, and responsibility. I am confident our Headquarters staff, the FAI Executive Board, and our own Commission will do so.

For special projects in the future, I am also confident that CIVA can do a good job of “selling” our programs to the Executive Board. In 2011, the Board agreed to special expenditures for judges training, which we deeply appreciated. They agreed with our view that the development of judges is in the best long-term interest of our sport. Those training programs will continue in the future. That said, I also believe CIVA will develop the income sources to fund them in the future and will not operate at deficit and, therefore, be calling on FAI to fund (along with other ASC's) extravagant programs.

I look forward to the future improvement of these policies and procedures and taking part in the process. Our FAI President has strongly committed himself to communicating frequently with all of his constituents, including the ASC's, and his open and positive attitude are welcomed by our Commission. We know this will be a difficult challenge for the President and the Executive Board. As I have said before, FAI's strength lies in its huge volunteer work force. They must be properly incentivized and encouraged in their work. Giving them say over their finances is a part of this and it would be damaging to the future of FAI not to do so. I am confident our President will be able to accomplish this task.

Conclusions

In summary, all of us in CIVA continue to learn from our events and come up with new ways to improve them. I am proud we are not too rigid to try new ideas but at the same time, we hold fast to our rules to give the pilots stable and predictable events in which to compete.

Some of the things I learned these past years which are worth repeating:

- There is well established and easy-to-use technology out there to improve communications at our Championships, to keep people well informed throughout the world, and to make competition organization more efficient. Commissions should take advantage of all of them. Sometimes it is a matter of just knowing what is out there. FAI Headquarters can be of enormous assistance, since we now have “tech savvy” people on staff.
- It is very important to have emergency response and accident procedures in place. FAI provides an excellent document and this has been the basis of our Championships procedures. All Commissions should examine and implement such procedures.
- Websites are only useful if they are up-to-date and contain useful, recent information. “Blogging” on the CIVA website proved to be easy as I am sure it is on other Commission websites as well. FAI has been helpful in setting this up. I would recommend all Commissions to adopt this method of communicating. Otherwise, websites will not be visited by our constituents as they will be regarded as “old news”. Photos must be included.

Special thanks to Stéphane Desprez, Jean-Marc Badan, Cosette Mast, Christine Rousson, Rodric Neri, and Faustine Carrera – the FAI staff with whom I had the most contact over the last year. It has been wonderful to work with efficient and dedicated people.

Let me also mention it has been a pleasure to work with our new FAI President, John Grubbstrom, who has been very supportive of ASC activities and is deeply committed to air sports.

Finally, my apologies for not being with you in Belgrade. Family matters prevent my attendance and I deeply regret it. CIVA will be well represented by Mr. Alan Cassidy, CIVA Vice President, from the United Kingdom. Alan is one of the sport’s most experienced people – in all aspects, including as a competition pilot, software developer, author, trainer, organizer, and association chairman. I trust you will offer him all the courtesies you have extended to me over the years.

CIVA will meet in plenary session in Krakow, Poland on 5-6 November 2011. Watch our website for updates.

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