

From the CIVL Paragliding Committee
June the 6th, 2013

Lifting the suspension of open class

Following the tragic events at the 2011 World Paragliding Championships in Piedrahita, CIVL imposed a temporary suspension on the use of Competition Class paragliders in category 1 competitions. The suspension was confirmed by CIVL at its Plenary meeting in Taiwan in February 2012. As a result, most international competitions have been conducted using exclusively paragliders certified to the European standard EN926-2. In the two years since the suspension was imposed, it has become apparent that there is no reliable statistical data on the occurrence and causes of incidents in paragliding competitions and that the underlying issues with safety are more complex than the single issue of the use of wings, whether compliant to EN standards or not. This view is supported by the report of a task force put in place by CIVL to investigate the accidents in Piedrahita.

It has also become apparent that the improvement in safety anticipated from requiring all pilots to compete on EN-certified gliders has simply not borne fruit. Further work to improve the safety situation in competitions is on-going, including the implementation of a new End of Speed Section rule. Part of that effort is the definition of a new Competition Class for 2015 that will be suitable for the special situation in Category 1 competitions, in comparison with Category 2 events: High stakes, high pilot skill variance, high inclination of pilots to flying at or above their personal limits, to name just a few.

But it is CIVL's view that organisers of Category 2 and other paragliding competitions operate under different circumstances and should therefore be making their own assessments of rules to be applied to promote safety.

CIVL also recognizes that its actions and statements have an effect on the legal situation of Category 2 competition organizers. Therefore, the Paragliding Committee is asking the CIVL Bureau to lift the suspension on the use of Competition Class gliders as defined in the 2011 edition of Section 7B of the FAI Sporting Code with effect as soon as possible.

It is important to notice that ending the temporary suspension of 2011 Competition Class gliders has no effect on the current roadmap for Category 1 events regarding gliders: Category 1 events in 2013 and 2014 will be flown exclusively with gliders certified to EN926-2; Category 1 events from 2015 onwards exclusively with gliders in compliance with the 2015 Competition Class definition.