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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 101<sup>st</sup> FAI GENERAL CONFERENCE**

### **Rhodes, Greece**

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 worldwide and members of the FAI through our national organizations.

Achieving our goal of promoting our air sports discipline is possible due to 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.

### **World and European Championships**

Two FAI World Aerobatic Championships and one Continental Championships were held this year.

The XXIV World Aerobatic Championships were concluded in Granada, Spain in July 2007. The V European Advanced Aerobatic Championships in Joensuu, Finland and the XII World Glider Aerobatic Championships in Niederöblarn, Austria were completed in August.



The WAC in Spain was a success under the direction of Antonio Quintana. I would like to pay special tribute to Antonio Quintana and Spain. Four WAC's have been held in Spain (1964, 2001, 2005, 2007) which is more than in any other country in the 47 years these competitions have been held. This is the second time in a row Antonio Quintana has served as event director. Anyone who has ever organized a world event like this can appreciate the many hours of work this takes. My thanks to Antonio for all of his work and dedication to FAI and CIVA.

The new World Aerobatic Champion is **Ramon Alonso** of Spain (shown left). An Iberia pilot who flies Airbus A-340's for a living, Ramon has been active in competition for many years and is previously a European Champion. This is his first win of the world title and the Aresti Cup. A warm and generous person, he is well respected in the aerobatic community. Altogether, 51 pilots from 11 nations competed in Granada.

In August, **Alexandre Leboulanger** of France was crowned European Advanced Aerobatic Champion. He competed in a field of 30 pilots from 9 countries. The World Advanced Aerobatic Championships are scheduled to be held in the USA in 2008. The EAAC was headed by Contest Director Matti Peura who did an exemplary job in this first time as an international event director. All reports from the competition were extremely positive and a good image of FAI and air sports was left in Finland.

In Austria, **Georgiy Kaminskiy** of Russia took home the World Glider Aerobatic Champion title (shown right). The contest in Niederoeblarn was one of the best organized this President has seen, a tribute to the organizational skills of Contest Director Manfred Echter and the support of the Austrian Aero Club and the local organizers, SportUnion.



Noteworthy at WGAC were two things: a new computer system for scoring, with laptops at each judge's position and the spectacular geography. It is probably one of the most beautiful airport locations in the world. It is a multi-purpose facility and also hosts sports activities so the airport infrastructure was perfect for a large-scale competition.

We welcome new ideas in scoring as rapid results will absolutely be essential during the aerobatic portions of the World Air Games in 2009.

Full and detailed results of all competitions can be found at <http://civaweb.mwebservices.net>. This server is provided by Michel Dupont of France who is CIVA's Scoring Director. Scores are input instantaneously during the competitions and are viewable on the internet in "real time". Michel is also the creator of the CIVA Aerobatic Contest Managing System (ACMS), powerful software for scoring and contest administration.



### World Grand Prix

One WPGA event has been held in 2007 so far – WPGA #25 in Moscow, Russia. Winner of the Grand Prix was Svetlana Kapanina of Russia. This was the first time a woman has won an international aerobatic championships of FAI first category. I congratulate her on her continuing stream of accomplishments (shown left).

My thanks to Jean-Louis Monnet, Contest Director, for his long support of aerobatics and to Victor Chmal of the Russian Aerobatic Team who initiated the Grand Prix's introduction into this large Russian airshow (MAKS 2007 – 24 to 26 August at Zhukovski airfield).

A second Grand Prix is scheduled for Motegi, Japan during the first weekend in November.

### Contest Year 2008

The following classical competitions are scheduled in 2008:

- ▶ World Advanced Aerobatic Championships (Pendleton, Oregon, USA)
- ▶ European Aerobatic Championships (proposed by Czech Republic)
- ▶ European Glider Aerobatic Championships (bids invited)
- ▶ YAK 52 World Aerobatic Championships (proposed by Lithuania)

The YAK 52 event will be CIVA's first and will be the first "single type" event we have ever held. These aircraft are quite numerous and reasonable in price so we are hopeful this will open up new avenues for pilots who wish to enter international aerobatic competition.

The World Grand Prix schedule is yet to be determined for 2008.

### **World Air Games 2009**

One of the more interesting aspects of my job as CIVA President has been the development of the World Air Games concept and the subsequent bidding which took place earlier this year. It was an honor to serve on the WAG Selection Committee. I look forward to working with Jean-Marc Badan of the FAI staff, local organizers, and our own technical specialists who will assist. CIVA Liaison Officer for WAG is Osmo Jalovaara of Finland.

CIVA is firmly committed to WAG. Our rules for the event are well underway and I expect them to be finalized – for both power and glider aerobatics – at our plenary meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania at the end of October 2007. We will do our part to make WAG spectacular and successful. I think you will find the aerobatic portion of the Games to be exciting, interesting, media and spectator-friendly, and a credit to FAI and CIVA.

### **Finances**

Sadly, little is possible without funding, sponsorship, and income. CIVA's finances are looking better this year. Our funds were depleted after the settlement two years ago regarding the aerobatic catalogue. My thanks to the FAI President, Pierre Portmann, and Max Bishop, Secretary General, for their assistance during those difficult times. As a result of our reduced resources, some expense accounts which we have paid in the past (CIVA President's travel, stipends for judges, travel for other officials) were eliminated and those expenses no longer paid. However, CIVA instituted increased sanction fees for the 2006 and 2007 competitions and our CIVA account is being rebuilt. We expect to be back to pre-2005 levels in our accounts after next year.

### **The Future**

In recent years, CIVA has also experienced shrinkage in its Unlimited category. We believe this is due to many circumstances beyond our control – price and availability of aircraft, insurance, rising cost of fuel, and so on. The last two WAC's have been fairly stable in size but we do not anticipate any future growth back to the levels of contest held in the 1980's.

On the other hand, we see stability in Glider Championships and steady growth in Advanced. Advanced has truly been our recent "success story". In my view, CIVA has to be extremely careful in nurturing this category and keeping costs reasonable so we can enjoy future growth. As I mentioned earlier, we also have the prospect of the new YAK 52 competitions being a part of our annual contest schedule.

We are also looking at several new ideas in aerobatic competition – events that would stray from the rigidity and repetition (resulting in bored spectators) at classical competitions. New concepts will be discussed in the coming months and a second test "World Aerobatic Cup" in the Czech Republic will be held next year. This will give us good experience for WAG in the following year and will be a test bed for us as well. My thanks to Jiri Kobrle, former President of the Aero Club of the Czech Republic for his support and desire to help move CIVA and aerobatics into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Due to all of the travel required of a Commission President and FAI Executive Board member, I am quite thankful to now be retired. I served nearly 30 years as a pilot for

Northwest Airlines, most recently on the Airbus A-320. It was a wonderful experience but after over 23,000 hours of airline flying, I am quite happy to devote my time to air sports. With the workload ever increasing, though it has only been a few weeks since my retirement, there seems to be no end to the work. I know other Commission Presidents share this view.



### **The FAI Executive Board**

Last year, General Conference honored me by electing me to the Executive Board. This means I hold two offices in FAI – Executive Director and Commission President.

Being a Board member has opened new challenges for me and has also permitted me to learn more about FAI and its day-to-day business. I believe I can continue to contribute to the Board due to my recent experience in air sports, as a Jury President for many years, a Commission President for 21 years, as well as my airline and military background. But I also believe it has made me a better Commission President as well, by expanding my outlook and viewing air sports as a whole, rather than just a small part. I will continue to do my best in both arenas.

### **In Closing ...**

I can also assure the Conference that we have an excellent leader in our President, Pierre Portmann, who is easy to communicate with and whose energy and enthusiasm for FAI and air sports can be quite infectious. Our staff, headed by Max Bishop, is capable, experienced, and seasoned. They are superb to work with.

I am confident of the future – for both CIVA and FAI – and look forward to playing a part in it. It is an exciting time in air sports as we all look forward to 2009.

Michael R. Heuer  
President  
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