



CIVL 2021 PLENARY – ANNEXE 6A
CIVL PRESIDENT REPORT

Stéphane Malbos

Covid-19

How not to start with what influenced 2020 the most? We had 326 ranked events in 2019, our highest number, and 130 in 2020, our lowest since ... 2003. And we had very few 'large' events, Cat 1 or Cat 2, the truly international ones. They happened before the pandemic.

The Bureau decided to adapt to these exceptional circumstances by

- Freezing the devaluation factor of the WPRS.
- Facilitating applications and postponements.
- Encouraging Cat 1 organisers to go as far as possible in the preparation of their events.
- Supporting whatever pandemic-related decisions the organisers came up with: they know better.

We can hope for a better 2021, but we have to be ready for a similar year.

In 2021, we have World championships in our four disciplines. If they are confirmed but some nations cannot participate, the championship will be evaluated by all parties, so a balance can be found between fairness to all nations, the desire of pilots to participate and the moral and financial obligations of the organisers. The final decision will be validated by the CIVL/FAI, the organiser and its NAC.

The pandemic is not without financial consequences. Events entry fees represent most of our revenue. We had less in 2020 and expect the same in 2021. We are lucky that, along the years, we have built a significant financial reserve that allows us to wait, see and not take radical measures like raising fees or stopping investments. The availability of our reserve has been questioned, as the FAI finances are in a dire state (see further down). Luckily, we need to use a limited part of our reserve to function properly in 2021, so we don't expect any problem.

The pandemic also prevented our yearly physical meetings: Autumn Bureau, Plenary and, for the CIVL President, Commission President Group and General Conference. Although we are learning to zoom efficiently, we are missing the lengthy discussions and the friendship of physical meetings. They are not only indispensable to review in depth the issues and strategies, they are also the rewards of our commitment as volunteers.

Our disciplines

Paragliding cross-country, accuracy and aerobatic, hang-gliding cross country... Please check the different reports from the Committees Chairs for information. Spoiler alert: it's been a slow year.

Asia development

In PG XC, the potential of PWCA Asian Cup stays intact. One good event in Nepal just before the pandemic, fulfilling all expectations. Then Covid stopped the development.

In PG Accuracy, the Airsport Federation of Asia (AFA) asked us to support the Asian League. This project will develop the discipline and especially the human structure: judges and organisers. It includes a series of 'Open' events in many countries and a 'Final'. We are working with AFA on the league regulation and the extent of our support.

Software, communication, officials, finances...

Check the specific reports.

Safety

Also check the specific report. For a few years now, we haven't had really have a proper database of in-competition incidents. We regularly remind organisers that they have to send us incident reports if any happen. Once we get them, we look for trends and report if we find any. But the fact is: the number of incidents we get is too small to have statistical value; national federation statistics are a lot more reliable.

This does not mean that we don't care about safety. In fact that's probably all we care about, next to fairness: safety is built throughout our sporting code and other regulations, scoring formula included.

CIVL Finances

Andy's report will be published ASAP. Numbers are not available yet.

FAI finance

Extracts from the December 21, 2020, Commission Presidents Group (CPG) meeting with the new FAI President, David Monk...

'Today, the FAI is solvent, not at immediate risk, even though circa 2.8m CHF has been spent above income on major projects in recent years. Commission reserves are covered by non-current assets, however these could take some time to realise if needed. FAI is legally obliged to be able to realise the reserves in the balance sheet under the title of equity.'

David commented:

'There is a belief that (the Commission reserves) should be kept 'ring-fenced' for the sole use of the Commissions. This is not the case and never has been. The commission reserve which has been stated as ring-fenced has always been allocation in a fund within the business but not necessarily in cash. However it is ring-fenced by default. In business, large sums of cash not deployed as working capital are seen as inefficient. The reason for this is its value will decrease with inflation. And this was a justification for the cash reserve to be exploited for investment whilst retaining a reasonable operating fund (cash in bank) to work with. This is not a policy I agree with particularly with regard to a not-for-profit organisation which needs a cash reserve for Covid or cover years where other revenue, sporting or subscription, is down. It may not be efficient to hold cash, but it is the safety net the organisation needs. Times such as now would be far easier to address instead of looking constantly for savings and cost reductions.'

The CPG report adds:

'Once the past is understood, how can we restore operating funds?

- Keep lowering the administrative costs. It is a priority in all ongoing work.
- Unify and simplify the Commissions administrative processes. Find synergies.
- Use of special events resources if any.

All financial transactions must henceforward be open to broad review, nothing hidden.'

A new FAI?

In my last year report, I underlined the 'global failure' of the FAI during the past 5 years, mainly the Air Games Serie, World Air Games, Noosphere eNavigator, One-FAI... As a result, the FAI Secretary General was fired at the end of the 2019 General Conference.

In 2020, the Executive Board focused on the FAI finances and on the Covid-19 administrative consequences. The hoped-for decision-process reforms were put on the back burner.

The pandemic somehow had positive effects.

- The EB has ran the basic FAI structure.
- The NACs ran the sports in their territories.
- The ASCs managed their sports in international events.
- The secretariat supported the EB, the NACs and the ASCs.

The pandemic showed

- That each of these entities is responsible and can take decisions in its own field.
- That each body can and should be trusted by the others.
- That all entities can communicate on a regular basis.

Online work and communications, both written and verbal, have been efficient.

Throughout this direst of periods, the 'vertical' management style which the EB has employed to hand down instructions to ASCs has been largely absent. The participants have operated freely within a balanced structure well adapted to the FAI reality. The current FAI statutes accommodate this kind of management, though some clarification would be useful to define responsibilities in a better way. For the moment, however, the current statutes can be used without modification to run the FAI in a non-hierarchical way.

The 2020 General Conference closed a not-so-good chapter for the FAI. Past mistakes and their financial consequences were again brought up. Bob Henderson let David Monk run unopposed for the FAI President position. See in Annexe 6b David's speech before his election.

With a new President and Executive Board and a scaled-down secretariat still led by Markus Hageney, we have every reason to be confident in a better future for the FAI.

Thank you!

To all involved in Bureau, Committees and Working Group. Thank you also to Elena, our competition coordinator and CIVL administrator, who does a lot more than what her job description requires. And she does it well!

Conclusion

Last year I ended my report like this...

'If we learned anything, it is that we have to be strong and independent in all aspects of hang-gliding and paragliding. Not because we want to go away from the FAI – we need to be part of it – , but because it is our responsibility to build and run our disciplines, to define our strategies, to deliver spotless events, and because in the end we have to be ready to count only on ourselves.'

This is still valid for this year's report. I will add: we now have to rebuild the FAI. The new President is clearly in line with what we have defended these last years, so let's roll up our sleeves and go back to work 😊!