

WORLD MEMBERSHIP REPORT – YEAR ENDED 2005

Compiled by John Roake, Chairman of the IGC membership committee

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ARGENTINA	286	251	268	253	242	252	264	186	174	182	230	249
AUSTRALIA	3532	3349	3240	3139	3089	2976	2785	2725	2673	2606	2637	2575
AUSTRIA	4038	3986	4028	3990	3965	3928	3817	3790	3692	3690	3687	3598
BELGUIM	1577	1580	1571	1557	1570	1591	1530	1520	1472	1916	1877	1850
CANADA	1257	1292	1257	1319	1321	1313	1290	1350	1295	1232	1134	1085
CHINA										120	117	50
CROATIA										270	272	149
CZECH REPBL	3311	3385	3531	3540	3591	3190	3142	3114	3206	3246	3249	3196
DENMARK	2046	2036	2005	1984	1927	1950	1892	1875	1841	1766	1756	1783
FINLAND	2595	2533	2442	2670	2474	2602	2814	2600	2548	2493	2442	2446
FRANCE	14165	13809	13256	12554	11813	11100	11510	12020	12155	13300	12669	12169
GERMANY	38444	37592	37624	36724	36768	36687	36414	35852	35650	35236	34642	33196
GREECE	52	50	50	49	49	51	52	53	60	60	83	82
HUNGARY	2097	1881	1881	1881	1664	1664	1628	1637	1643	1602	1450	1000
ICELAND	94	100	97	96	96	101	80	70	68	65	53	52*
ISRAEL	225	204	193	189	190	190	183	184	175	180	176	170
IRELAND	74	75	78	79	81	85	94	98	111	118	111	119
ITALY	2165	2135	2105	2120	2135	2125	2110	2122	2129	2129	1749	1641
JAPAN	733	719	705	697	686	675	663	684	670	643	640	670
KENYA										7	9	8
KOREA										10	9	8*
LUXEMBURG										49	35	35
LITHUANIA					471	469	472	494	510	526	532	540
NTHRLNDS	4200	4024	4090	4046	4125	4079	4065	4088	3816	3617	3952	3949
N. ZEALAND	1069	1109	1047	1017	987	889	867	901	917	919	893	875
NORWAY	1701	1707	1618	1701	1599	1574	1550	1578	1760	1760	1513	1528
PAKISTAN					23	25	28	29	28	27	25	24*
POLAND	2466	2422	2697	2808	3062	2902	2892	3048	3058	3058	2996	2587
PORTUGAL										64	64	62*
RUSSIA	145	130	130	130	115	115	112	126	127	127	123	350
SERBIA/MONTENEGRO										143	130	127*
SLOVAK REPLB	1045	962	945	925	846	774	736	699	729	675	652	916
SLOVENIA		915	898	885	874	861	872	924	949	949	598	579
STH AFRICA	612	655	651	641	688	728	579	597	613	635	598	628
SPAIN	459	467	478	490	493	498	496	435	436	560	561	550*
SWEDEN	3595	3322	3088	3249	3013	3025	2700	2950	2700	2912	2776	2600
SWTZRLND	3779	3574	3654	3647	3666	3680	3145	3040	2977	2871	3154	2995
UNTD KNGDM	9522	9757	9409	9225	9225	9164	8802	8848	9166	8341	8242	8833
U.S.A.	23636	23252	22764	22565	22464	22025	21997	21960	21826	20950	20980	21369
	128920	127273	125800	124170	123312	121288	119581	119597	119174	119188	116908	114643

NOTES ON THE MEMBERSHIP TABLE:

There has been yet another decrease in world glider pilot numbers of 2,495 (2.115%) for the year ended 2005. Over the past 10 years the number of pilots has fallen by 10.1% (from 127, 273 in 1995 to 114,413 in 2005.) The decline for the year ended 2005 has escalated from 1.89 % in 2004 to 2.115% in 2005. I said last year that the decline was alarming, but it is doubly so for 2005.

In New Zealand, the average age of a glider pilot seems to have past its peak – last year 52.3 years of age - now 51.4. Eleven years ago it was 45.6. I would like to hope that our New Zealand trend is indicative of a turn-round in pilot ages.

Sourcing membership numbers from each country is a monumental task and unfortunately IGC delegates are not as co-operative as one would expect them to be. There are so many other statistics we should be gathering, i.e. time in the sport, number of junior pilots, number of female pilots etc. etc etc. This year I plan to email a “census” form in October to each IGC delegate or national aero club, seeking much more useful information.

Speaking of our own situation again, New Zealand membership numbers looked disastrous by reporting date, December 2005. As the New Zealand President I have been quite alarmed. But since then, the New Zealand Grand Prix was staged at Omarama, late January 2006, which provided remarkable publicity. More publicity in two weeks than we have had in the whole of the past 50 years. It is providing an encouraging lift to our membership numbers, proving the point that we have to get out and sell ourselves. It is not going to come to us - we have to get out and Sell! Sell! Sell!

I must take the time to offer a simple suggestion that may help your individual club membership. Some of our New Zealand clubs are about to try it out. Time and time again I hear of folk interested in gliding that have been to an airfield where it is being carried on, only to be ignored, finding noway of learning about gliding, its costs, its challenges and its excitement. They leave the airfield never to give the sport another thought. Well; how about a notice at the entrance to airfield - “If you would like to learn more about the sport of gliding - just speak to the man in the yellow coat” The man in the yellow coat is a pilot like you or I who is rewarded with substantially discounted flying for every new member he signs up! You just might find that you have a waiting list to be that man in the yellow coat. The sign at the front gate is the key to its success!

So comments about each country’s figures: The following notes should be read in association with the membership table. A determined effort has been made to achieve accurate as possible figures. Further new data supplied this year has again allowed me to correct errors in previous years.

ARGENTINA: A consistent increase over the past four years. Figures were provided from two sources, the second lot some 25 or more higher. I chose to accept consistency from the same source over the past six years. (The distance flying and world records flown in Argentina over the past three/four years must be having some effect)

AUSTRALIA: Down on last year. They are trying hard to arrest their decline.

AUSTRIA: Have been very stable in the past, but down 100 members on last year. Learnt for the first time that glider pilots are not required to be members of the national body, so there is likely to be several hundred more pilots that we cannot source to record.

BELGIUM: Very stable - little or no change.

BRAZIL: A concerted effort made to get their membership figures, but again without success. They have since been struck off FAI membership but I am aware of a number of pilots who want to complete in international gliding events this year. They have a problem!

BULGARIA: A concerted effort made to get their membership figures, again without success.

CANADA: A further fall in membership numbers – a pattern that has been prevalent for the past five years.

CHINA: A surprisingly small number of pilots - Down in 2004, Down 50% in 2005. I have always had difficulty getting their figures, but this time their National Aero Club replied with the data in less than 24 hours. Surprise! Surprise!

CROATIA: A 45% fall in pilot numbers between 2004 and 2005.

CZECH REPUBLIC: Stable membership with a small decrease over the previous year.

DENMARK: Stable membership with a small increase over the previous year.

FINLAND: Completely stable membership with no change over the year.

GERMANY: The world largest soaring country. A continuing drop in membership - year after year. A 4.1% loss for 2005. Germany's membership loss over the past 10 years amounts to 11.6%.

GREECE: No change whatsoever in 2005.

HUNGARY: Accuracy in membership has been hard to achieve. Their national aero club provided the figures for 2005, which would indicate that previous years figures were inaccurate. Down 45% on the previous year.

ICELAND: Could not get a reply from either their aero club or delegate. Used previous years figures.

IRELAND: Small increase on last year.

ISRAEL: Small decrease on last year.

ITALY: Lost 100 members in 2005 – Down 17% for the year.

JAPAN: Remains stable - small increase

KENYA: One club (commercial operation) minor change

KOREA: Small numbers, stable.

LATVIA: No response from delegate.

LUXEMBURG: No change - stable.

LITHUANIA: Another small increase – Have achieved increases every year since 1998.

NETHERLANDS: No change – stable.

NEW ZEALAND: Down 2%. Disappointing as the country works very hard at lifting membership.

NORWAY: Very small increase for 2005. Stable.

PAKISTAN: A small decrease.

POLAND: Once again no response from their delegate. Polish Aero Club asked to respond and advised they were down 409 members, a decrease of 13.65% for 2005.

RUSSIA: No change.

SERBIA/MONTENEGRO: Very small decrease - stable.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC: A 40% increase with 264 new members. The best performer in 2005.

SLOVENIA: They were down 36.7% last year, but stable in 2005 with the loss of 19 members only.

SOUTH AFRICA: Increase of 5%. Above the international average.

SPAIN: Unable to source figures. Previous year used.

SWEDEN: Down 4.6% in 2004. Down 6.3% in 2005.

SWITZERLAND: Increase of 9.85% in 2004. Decrease of 5.04% in 2005

UNITED KINGDOM: Congratulations to the U.K. Up 591 members, or 7.17%. Great!

U.S.A.: We now have a consistent source for glider pilot numbers in the USA now. At 21,369 the numbers are up 1.82%. The membership of the Soaring Society of America is up an encouraging 306 members for the year (2.46%). (Like Austria, pilots do not have to be a member of their national body)

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P.s. Just discovered there are 45 registered glider pilots in Mexico.

