



FAI President's report to the 111th FAI General Conference, Lausanne, 26-27 October 2017

Honourable Presidents, Delegates and Observers, Air Sport Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Being here, making my first President's report to you feels like the finishing touch to a very exciting year. Unbelievable things are happening in the world of air sports at the moment. With new challenges, and new opportunities that all of us are facing together. In all regions in the world, and in all disciplines of our thrilling air sports arena.

First, I would like to address my gratitude to the Secretary General Susanne Schodel, my colleagues in the Executive Board and the staff at our Head Office. Although I was aware of the hard work of the FAI staff members during my membership of the EB over the past 4 years, as President I am now even more appreciative of their dedication to serving the FAI community as a whole.

The 110th General Conference was a special one. Particularly for me, as it's when I was elected! But I think it's true that the incredible location, the interesting program and the overwhelming hospitality we received in Bali made the conference unforgettable for everyone who took part. So on behalf of us all, please allow me to express my gratitude to the organizing committee for their excellent work. And in particular to Federasio Aero Sports Indonesia, the Indonesian Air Force and - last but not least - Chepy Nasution, Vice-Secretary General of the FASI.

The EB elections resulted in a new team. The returning members Alvaro d'Orleans Borbon, Bob Henderson, and Agust Gudmundsson, together with newly elected members Mary Anne Stevens, Jean-Claude Weber, Bengt Lindgren and myself, started work straight after the Bali conference.

But I would like to thank the EB members who had to leave, Gill Rayner and Niels Christian Levin Hansen, for all they did to improve air sports, and make them more accessible and successful.

Early decision made by the new EB included to use a personalized portfolio format that connects each EB member to one specific air sport. It is available on the website. It also chose Jean Claude Weber to take over the responsibility of Finance Director from me.

And as promised in Bali, I made my first visit as your new President to the USA in November last year. Accompanied by the SG, this visit was to honor the founding member and new President of the NAA, Greg Principato. We learned a lot about Aeromodelling, and especially the interesting subject of drones, during this visit, which was the first of many - reflecting our belief in the importance of meeting to discuss our sports face-to-face.

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Another very special meeting took place in Lausanne, where Fedor Konyukhov was presented with an award. Attended by the President of the Russian NAC, it was an amazing opportunity to meet the man who broke the record for the fastest circumnavigation of the globe in a balloon – doing it in just 11 days. A world record that earned him the Pilot of the Year award.

What an honor to meet such people and to carry on the work of the FAI, which has been approving records of this kind since 1905!

Since the last conference, the EB itself has had 6 face-to-face meeting and arranged a number of conference calls to discuss specific items. All meetings have been held in the presence of the Secretary General and the Sports Director Markus Hagganey.

At one meeting in Frankfurt, arranged by the German AeroClub, we also talked with the Olympic Committee representative in Germany.

In Aarhus, Denmark, Susanne Schodel and I attended the yearly meeting of SportAccord. It was a fascinating event, at which we met representatives from many international sports federations, as well as the IOC.

Susanne also gave a presentation on FAI developments in the area of drone sports.

The 2019 Asian Games in Indonesia was one of the most important issues on the agenda this year. These Games, organized by the OCA, are important both regionally and globally. They are almost as huge and important as the Olympic Games, which is why we did our utmost to get air sports included in this spectacular event. And we did it! Working with our partners in the Asian region, we signed an agreement with the OCA. The result: paragliding will be part of the Asian Games.

Achieving this result was tough for the EB. Mainly due to the internal discussion with the relevant Air sports commission.

It showed us all that our governance structure needs to be discussed, as the two pillars of our organization both have their own, indelible responsibilities.

It also highlighted that we need to think about how the Executive Board works. We have to find ways to progress even when people have different views, if that progress is in the interests of air sports generally. In other words, we need to decide who has the final say, especially in unforeseen circumstances.

That's why the EB is organizing a conference on governance in December. We will discuss the outcome of this conference with you once a solution has been found.

I strongly believe this is a very necessary step. While a lot of new developments are foreseeable, air sports are no longer just about championships, they are also events that can attract a large audience of spectators.

We, the EB, believe that events such as the Air Games Tour, the World Air Games, the Asian Games, the Swoop Freestyle Challenge, and the growing number of drone-sports competitions, are a vital part of introducing air sports to a big, new audience, including lots of young people – the future of air sports.



Take, for example, the Paragliding Accuracy World Championship in Albania, which I was lucky enough to watch. It was a well organized event, that received significant national TV coverage, including a dedicated TV show. It's just one example of the many such events taking place under the FAI brand.

Within the FAI, as I mentioned before, we have two strong pillars: ASC's and NAC's. Last year, we learned more about the necessity of working together across all disciplines. This sometimes requires new decision making processes.

It also means the NAC's must always be involved, more than in the past. To this end, we have to find better ways to encourage our active members to take part in the policy making process. We really need the input of the NAC's. Their experience is key to helping us all improve our activities, for everyone involved.

The organization of the First Asian Summit in HongKong was an important step towards this goal. It proved a great way to meet the different NAC's in the region. The same is true of the Scandinavian summit and the many spontaneous meetings that took place in our German speaking member countries.

In Spring this year, I also accepted an invitation to meet the African and Arab Air sports federations in Cairo. I met a lot of very dedicated air sports friends from about 23 different countries. Some linked to the FAI, some not. It made me realise that the FAI has work to do in this region.

A more recent visit, together with Alvaro d'Orleans Borbon, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made it even more clear that there is huge potential for development in this region too. Our enthusiastic air sports friends are ready to act – all around the world!

Another big event this year was the World Games in Wroclaw, Poland. It was a great opportunity to showcase the skills of our members in a range of air sports disciplines. The event itself was very well organized by the Polish aeroclub. And was a great place to have our MidYear ASC and NAC presidents meeting.

Preparations for the World Air Games 2020 are already underway. We will have to work hard to match the success of the WAG Dubai 2015. So we have already started visiting potential locations, the recommendations from which should help this GC to take an important step towards making these World Air Games happen.

Perhaps you noticed that I mentioned drones a couple of times earlier. Drones have become a subject that takes up a huge amount of the EB's and Head Office's time.

They are an unstoppable development, with big implications for the FAI. If we don't take charge, responsibility for them will be taken over by other entities. And we must not let this happen; the folding paper planes of this era are important for young air sports fans and especially for industry.

A number of NAC's have already joined forces with us to make this happen in a positive way within the Federation. In Chenzhen, for example, very promising talks with new partners in this discipline led to a meeting with a large chinese delegation in Lausanne some weeks ago. Next year, we will hopefully see the results of these talks.

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The First Conference on Drones was also a big success, showing the FAI's understanding of its responsibility in this area, and proving an important meeting for the large number of parties involved. A great initiative from our Secretary General.

Dear friends, I am looking forward to this General Conference. And I am even more excited about the forthcoming year, which will undoubtedly be packed with exciting air sports developments.

May I call upon all of you to support me, the Executive Board and our staff in our efforts to help us all keep enjoying the sky, which is our stadium!

Thank you for your attention,

Frits Brink

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