



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

Dear President, dear Executive Board, dear Past President, dear President and Companions of Honour, dear delegates, dear distinguished guests,

“What is FAI doing” is a question that some of you will have heard. It is easy to explain, what FAI is doing. FAI :

- sanctions FAI World and Continental Championships and International Events,
- ratifies World and Continental Records in all air sports, up to the stratosphere and space, and
- promotes air sports.

Let me put some information around it.

First some numbers: 40-60 Cat 1 events per year, with 4000 competitors in 2016. The development since 2000 shows a steadily increasing number of Cat 1 events. There are also 600-700 cat 2 international events with a multitude of competitors. The FAI Sporting License database is an indication – around 40,000 are listed there.

We will continue to discuss how we come to a more uniform scheme to issue FAI Sporting Licenses around the world, so that we have more Sporting Licenses holders. The current situation can surely be improved.

Each of these FAI events goes through the FAI Head Office, in order to publish it on the FAI International Sporting Calendar, to issue an Organizer Agreement and collect the legally valid signatures, provide FAI flags, information material, diplomas and medals to global standards in due time. Some of the events will have testing under the Antidoping Programme of FAI, and there is still much education to be done on the athlete and Organizer side.

And I would at this occasion also like to thank all these dedicated organizers who most often - on a volunteer basis with limited finances - organize passionate air sports events. Please join me in a thank you applause for the organizers.

Between 200 and 400 record claims are sent to FAI HO per year, and each of them opens a new file in our database, in order to archive the performance for the future generations, like FAI has done it in the past 112 years. A large portion of the record dossiers does not fulfil the Sporting Code regulations, and communication has to be sent back to the claimants, NACs and ASCs.

FAI is comprised of 112 national, regional and international air sports entities, who send their delegates into 14 commissions, 2 of them being technical commissions, 12 of them air sports commissions. The NACs and air sports in Asia are the largest growing group in FAI, and we are putting a special focus on that. The overall number of officials that originate from you, the NACs, and that are in a function in an FAI commission, be it as delegate, be it as judge, technical expert, etc. amounts to 2,500.

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On a side note, please let me emphasize how important it is that the leaders in the NACs and in the FAI Commissions work together closely, and are in regular contact. The world of global air sports in FAI is complex, it ranges from proficiency schemes and safety recommendations, to event and championship rules which are globally accepted. It is a very well maintained world of air sports rules, into the last details! And there are important discussions going on in the FAI Commissions about the future of some disciplines, about new rules, new event formats, new events. Many resources are going into this work, which is mostly done on a volunteer basis. It is important to appreciate this, but also to see how much work it is, and to which end.

The Commissions have annual meetings, for which invitations and annexes are sent and published, invitations to delegates for visa applications are done, individual requests are taken care of, minutes are received, reviewed and published. All of this is administered by the FAI Head Office. And we have to continuously invest into IT in order to relieve both the NACs, ASCs and FAI HO from paperwork. The FAI Event Management System, which is now growing with the help of our technology partner Noosphere, is part of this.

And I have to note, that the number of events, medals, records in FAI increased significantly over the years, but the FAI HO staff did not to the same extent. This is an issue straining our capabilities. But any expansion needs to be financed. I will get back to that later.

At this moment, it is time to appreciate the hard work of each of the FAI HO team members that is working for air sports, for you here in the room: a warm round of applause please.

Thank you.

Now to the Communication of FAI. The purpose is the promotion of Air Sports. Because the recipe is simple. If you promote a good event, it draws attention of spectators on the event, but also through media, and if you have spectators, you can attract sponsors and commercial partners. Which in turn helps to maintain the events, and thus the air sports.

Since FAI has so many events, and we have very limited resources, we select a range of events each year to focus on. This depends on Sponsor interest, but also on the quality of the event. This year's events selected are the following (slide).

We have provided editor teams and tv/media production for national and international distribution. So there are social media posts, press releases, articles, web clips, news and 26 or 52 minute highlight shows of these events. I wish to thank CIVA for providing budget jointly with FAI HO for the World Aerobatic Championship in South Africa this year. I have to note that this material is owned by FAI, but can be used for promotional purposes by all in FAI. For this, please contact our Communications manager to give you access.

The analysis of the output, numbers of hours broadcast, brand visibility etc. will be done beginning of next year. To give you an impression, for 2016 the analysis of the FAI brand visibility looked like this.



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Another important communication tool is our website. You will have seen that we made a silent launch, and FAI has now a new face in the internet. Please note that the past website did try to do everything at once: promote air sports and be an information platform for the Commissions, Event Organizers, Officials, NACs etc. This is now separated. The entry door is the promotion of air sports to the wider public, and the information platform for all our experts is still there. You will find it more easy to find it, the more you use it. Thank you for approving the budget for this in the past General Conference!

Together with the more on communication, we started to work on the next step, to identify the core products of FAI and test the sports marketing world, where the agencies and sponsors are, if they are interested. That is called “going commercial”, and it is sometimes a dangerous word, it seems. I have heard comments that FAI events should be sporting events primarily, and it would not be important to think about the public or sponsor interest. Yes, one can do that. But does this secure the future of air sports, if it is only done for the sake of pure sports, satisfying primarily the wishes of the competitors? Think about the scarce resources not only of FAI, but also of the event organizers. We must change our approach.

To visualize this effort in regard to air sports marketing, please let me show you this picture of a bridge. I think it represents very well the two worlds, which can be connected, if FAI provides the right products and responds to the approach of the sports marketing world. We will touch most of these FAI events mentioned here – existing or planned, like the Air Games Tour - in the course of this General Conference.

Along this, it is so important to nurture our existing partnerships on global level. With DHL we agreed to focus on solutions for organizers, not primarily for individual pilots. Any organizer who wants to offer a solution for the competitors for their aircraft transport to the venue, can work with DHL. They are specialized on the last mile transport. What happens until then is in the discretion of each competitor. Noosphere has been incremental in putting together a comprehensive FAI Event and Result Management System. This will be rolled out one sport by one, as all are so different, and there is no “one size fits all”. Leaseweb is our hosting provider, and Breitling is our global watch partner. However, this is under review.

On Finances.

For a few years now, FAI is running on deficit (except for the ASCs through their sanction fees), and the past and current partnerships were not able to close that gap. Opportunities to raise revenues are coming from

- Events,
- Membership,

and if either of the previous is successful, subsequently from Sponsor- and Partnerships.

This is why we all need to work together. I can imagine that our dear NACs are not keen on a significant raise in the Membership subscriptions. So we need to generate other revenue, and that is why we do all the efforts in regard to World Air Games, Air Games development, and currently most important Drones. I have to mention that regarding Drones, as it is such a fast developing air sport, individual membership structures are discussed also. We will do that further with you as NACs involved. We



will present the concept to you when we have done enough research and can make a good proposition.

Secondly, I have to mention that the current presentation of the FAI Budget, with the FAI HO and the Sports Operations being shown separate and disconnected, is not good. It was introduced around 2010, I think. Obviously, it has led in FAI to the impression that the Air Sports Commissions are having a separate stream of income and expenditures, which is not connected to the FAI HO budget. But the Air Sport Commissions' work, as I described before, is including the FAI HO operations. Most of the work in the FAI Head Office is related to the Air Sports Commissions. So this must be presented in a better way. This is an ongoing project of review and development of a better solution. We hope to be able to improve this in the course of 2018.

I appreciate, when we talk about finances later today, with the help of the Finance Advisory Group, we should already get an idea how this can develop into a better presentation in the future.

I wish to close with a pledge – we all belong together because the Sky is our Stadium. So, in all efforts, let us remember how important it is to connect across airports, but also to connect across NACs.

Thank you for your attention.

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