



**FAI Secretary General's report to the 108th General Conference
Pattaya, Thailand, 18-19 October 2014**

Dear President, dear Excellencies, dear Members, dear FAI Commissions and Executive Board, dear Observers, dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to be here at the 108th General Conference, and to give my report as Secretary General, for the first time.

As you know, I got on board in the beginning of the year, after an intensive selection process by the Executive Board. The offer for the position was published last autumn. When I first read it, I had mixed feelings. On one side I had an impeccable image of the FAI through my experiences at World Championships in Gliding and World Record flying, with Gold C, and Diploma. I felt proud to be part of that. A renowned institution with a long tradition, the world governing body for Air Sports, setting rules and regulations that are valid for each and every air sports person.

On the other hand, the job offer expressed that the FAI was in difficult times. Just to give you some examples, this was mentioned in the text as the tasks for the Secretary General:

- Set up harmonized and common management procedures to work with member federations and commissions – which meant this was not in place yet?
- Secure the long-term funding strategy for the FAI against agreed budgets and objectives – which meant that it was in danger?
- Ensure the World Air Games continues as FAI's flagship event – which meant that it might not be continued?
- Experience in crisis management and conflict resolution – oh lala!
- A persuasive style – well, I could try that.

All in all, I could tick off some of the items, and I tossed my hat in the ring. And I must say, the meetings with the members of the selection committee, then with the Executive Board and finally the Team at the Head Office left a very good impression with me. There was a clear understanding of what was needed, and a clear process going on. I met personalities who hold a high opinion of FAI. Yes, it was confirmed that there are some problems. But all in all the positive side really prevailed.

Regarding the problems: I perceive them as part of the natural challenge that you face in an international sports federation like the FAI is. It is run by volunteers on the ground and in the air, together with paid staff in the Head Office. Secondly, the FAI is a complex organization, with 11 rather diverse air sports commissions and its sub-bodies (with nearly 1000 delegates!), more than 100 nationally organized members of different shape and state, Expert Groups, Technical Commissions, and the Executive Board as the governing body.

However, there are positive sides to it: First - volunteer organisations always have a higher value for society than a purely commercial entity! Our mission is not only to find the best air sports athletes in the world in competition and record flying, but also to promote air sports in general. We will hear more about this in the presentation on the Vision and Mission, as well as on Marketing and Communications.

Whenever we do that, people like it. They love it, they admire the daring and exciting part of it, they look up to the pilots who have no fear to go into the third dimension, but they have fun! They admire the fact that you have the dream of mankind – to fly - as your volunteer occupation. What better can happen?

Secondly, to the complex structure of the FAI there is also a positive side: this includes potential innovation as well, an easier benchmarking, and mutual inspiration.

And thirdly, I am convinced that practicing air sports teaches us better and deeper than other sports on how to deal with the unexpected, and how to deal with complex topics. You only need to tell non flying people what air sport is about – we fly with highly developed technical equipment in three dimensions, we have to understand meteorology, legal regulations, and human performance. And we have the joy of broadening our horizons with every flight we make. This is what makes FAI special, and each of us a special ambassador.

And I think, each of us, you here in the room, as well as all involved in or touched by FAI, should always keep this in mind, when we are dealing with the day to day problems and obstacles.

Now, the purpose of my report is to give you an overview of our activities from the Secretary General's point of view, who is the Managing Director of FAI. It is based on the framework set by the Statutes and the By-Laws.

I will cover four topics:

- The Focus of the Head Office
- Air Sports Development
- Membership Development
- International Relations

1. The Focus of the Head Office

As you know we faced the challenge that the position of the Sports Director had to be filled again. And I am very happy that Markus Haggenev joined two weeks after me. With his expertise as Sports and Marketing Director he is a perfect fit for the tasks that we have at the Head Office. At the same time I want to point out that all the team members at the Head Office are doing their jobs in a very committed manner. I am very happy about this. Today also here are, as mentioned by our President, Faustine Carrera, our Communications Manager, and Annick Hauser, Assistant Sports Manager, and Visa-Matti Leinikki, our IT Manager.

Each of us in the Head Office is working for each of you. I would like to point out that despite the difficult times in the past the motivation is high. Here you see the current chart, which is still under review. Because our daily work is not really represented in this overview. So far, we have not done a detailed analysis of how much of our work is related to Sports Operations, and how much to General Head Office Operations. This distinction you might now from the budget and financial reporting. However, all Head Office expenses are subsumed under "Administrative Expenses" with no connection to "Sports Operations". However, the bigger part is definitely related to Sports.

To give you a few examples of what this means:

- Excerpt from Statutes and By-laws

Just to give you an impression, I may show you some slides on the daily work of the Head Office.

- Sanction Fees, Deposits and others for the Commissions
- Overview Medals and Certificates/Badges handled by HO
- Number of Cat 1 Events since 2000

Next year we expect 42 World Championships, including the Red Bull Air Race, 29 Continental Championships, and over 700 Category 2 Events. And our Flagship Event, the World Air Games. You will hear more about this later. I would like to point out, that it should be our blueprint event in December next year, where we will hopefully already have a number of potential new host cities as guests.

2. Membership Situation

87 Active Members, representing 3 or more air sports
15 associate members holding sporting power for one or two air sports
8 temporary members and
4 affiliate members

Trend: more air sport organisations developing, and we need to cope with that.

Also I would like to point out, that you, the Members, have a central role in FAI.

To me it seems, this should be more in the focus also of the Head Office. As a matter of fact, we do not only archive air sport history, we also have a rich documentation of the different situations in the Member countries. Not only related to the pure numbers of air sport persons – I understand that our questionnaire is the most boring thing to fill out. But it might be useful to look into defined topics, for example a review on best practice, etc. I can only suggest to you, that you ask us if you think we could provide you with information.

That brings me to the report on the Air Sport events in 2013:

3. Air Sport Development

First Category Championships (without WG nor CISM) for 2013:

*50*Events 1st Category (World: 21 / Continental: 20 / Others: 8) were held in
19 different countries

In Europe *(13)*, North America *(1)*, Asia *(2)*, South America *(1)*, Africa *(1)
*and Oceania *(1)*.

*69*FAI Member countries participated in FAI first category Events, with a total of
*3043 *competitors (World: 1584 / Continental: 1252 / Others: 207 (532 with the
competitors already counted in the Euro IPC Champs).

Results received at the shortest after 0 day, and at the longest after *56* days!

One remark on the Organizers – we are well aware that the Organizer Agreement is not the best. We have in the meantime presented the draft for a new one, a better one, which is one core document with customizable appendices, depending on the sport and the location etc. Yesterday it was

suggested to call it instead, which shows that we try to sell it better. We will also offer Seminars for Organizers, to build a network of experienced and new ones, to explain what an FAI sanctioned event is all about, what FAI Head Office can provide. The main motto for that is: Improve the selling proposition that we make with the Organizer Agreement. You as the NACs will be involved in this process as well.

International Records

In 2013, 232 International Records have been ratified, 87 % of them being World Records.

As mentioned, FAI's role is to find World and Continental Champions, to ratify Records, and thirdly, to promote Air Sports.

I would like to look at the question on how to promote air sports.

This is a graphic from a study made in 2011 for FAI. It shows a recipe that is very simple, and that many of you are working on in different stages. We talk about tracking possibilities, production of adequate footage and pictures, and simpler event rules, all with the purpose to attract audience, through that media, and then finally sponsors. We will need more sponsors.

So the guiding principle is "make air sports more visible". The Head Office is working on this in all its facets, together with the Air Sport Commissions and the Members. And the Expert Group New Technology. We look at the events that have the potential to go to media.

You will hear more about that later.

4. International Relations

And there is potential for more at the moment. Asian region – Asian Beach Games, Asian Games, Olympic Games? Tokyo 2020.

Meeting with the IOC President – not the first time, but at a time where the whole Olympic movement is under review. We showed all our air sports, and also Paragliders on Ski. We have been asked to develop something for Youth Winter Olympic Games ("Sports Lab", Under 18, on Snow or Ice).

Further involvements in : World Games 2017 / SportAccord / FAI Summer Party / Last but not least ICAO.

So what I told you outlined the work programme that I see as the Managing Director of FAI. It is also based on the strategies that were developed over the last years. I or better we do not want to reinvent the wheel. I hope you found this interesting.

Looking forward to be working with you.

Susanne SCHÖDEL, FAI Secretary General