



CIVL 2017 PLENARY – ANNEX 6 CIVL PRESIDENT REPORT

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It's been a busy year again at CIVL. I will not go through everything we did. It is detailed here and there in the 50+ annexes to the Agenda, and in particular:

- The Bureau decisions (annex 7)
- Reports on our championships and test events (annex 11)
- Reports from our Committees and Officers (Annexes 13 to 22)

Our actions to move CIVL forward can be evaluated in the Bureau and Committee's proposals (annexes 23 to 29).

There are also proposals from NACs, bids from championships and nominations for awards. We will be busy! So please take the time to go carefully through everything before the Plenary, do your homework, come prepared and we will be productive.

I will state here my specific actions as your President, what they mean and the main issues we are facing.

President's actions

Being President means representing CIVL in various FAI meetings. In 2016...

- **April in Lausanne:** workshop on the World Air Games. Analysis of what happened in Dubai. Should we go for another WAG in 2019 or 2020? Violeta Masteikiene was here too.
- **June, in Greece:** all Air Sport Commissions (ASC) meet FAI Executive Board (EB) for one day. The ASC Prez meet the day before to exchange on common issues. The official meeting started with each Prez explaining his Commission specific issues. Then most exchanges were around the World Air Games, past and future, and the new FAI website. Future work on both matters explained. Other subjects: finances, FAI membership structure, drones flying...
- **October, in Indonesia:** the big one, the FAI General Conference (GC). Five days, very intense. 3 days of working groups, CASI meeting (the body that writes the General Section of the Sporting Code), ASC/EB meeting... then 2 days for the Conference.
- **November in Lausanne:** workshop on IT. What ASC are using, what they need, what FAI already has, what FAI is working on. I did not go, Brian Harris did, understanding better than me the IT issues.
- A couple of 'private' meets with FAI staff at the Head Office. There is nothing like direct talks to move things forward.

Going to these meetings cost time and money. Is it worth it? Well, they are a good opportunities to understand how FAI and the sports work and push our ideas, but the overall result can be sometimes frustrating. We don't always understand if our priorities are taken into account, FAI is a complex institution with complex issues to deal with and is sometimes slow to move. So it goes...

Our priorities as explained to FAI

The big thing at FAI is the World Air Games (WAG) and the road that leads to it: the Air Games Serie (AGS). €450,000 or so were spent in 2016 and €350,000 or so will be spent in 2017. Budgets of the same nature are expected in the coming years. Roughly, each year the money spent for the AGS is the equivalent of the global budget of all FAI Commissions. Big money indeed.

When the time came for CIVL to address the General Conference, I explained:

'The biggest choice we have to make today is how we are going to build the road to the 2020 World Air Games. I am a big supporter of the World Air Games. I see it as a stepping stone on which we can build our sports, and if we build our sport right, the smallest Second Category event will profit from our work, from our investment.

Yes, the WAG are for glory and for attracting sponsor, but yes, the road to the WAG must be a unique opportunity to support and fortify our sports. If we don't take this unique opportunity to support and fortify our sports, not only we will have missed an unique opportunity to do so, but we will lose the trust and working force of our sport persons, from the volunteers at the highest level down to the competition organizers and to the pilots who fly in them.

So when you will vote for next year's budget, I encourage you to support the WAG project.

Not only because it will make us famous and bring sponsors, but because every Franc we invest in the new formats of competition, every Franc we invest in the technologies and equipment that go with them will trickle down to the smallest of your competitions will profit the most anonymous of your pilots.

And the earliest those necessary and unavoidable investments are made, the earliest the whole competition structure will profit from it.'

The 'unavoidable investment' we required:

- A Sporting Licences database that really works.
- An automated online competition sanctioning system.
- An automated Timeline calendar where sanctioned competitions are seen in a graphic way and where some non-yet-sanctioned competition can also be seen.
- A template event managing website that all organizers can use from registration to the publication of results.

The November IT Workshop seems to have understood our needs (that we share with a lot of other Commissions). A recent meeting with FAI staff are giving us hope that most of our requests could be implemented by the end of the year.

Balance of powers

Participating in the General Conference, having access to the budget, is a good opportunity to understand where CIVL really stands.

Yearly, in average over a 3-year period...

- FAI revenue: 2,333,000 CHF
- FAI expenditures: 2,603,000 CHF
- Commissions represent 14% of FAI revenues and expenditures.
- CIVL represents 14% of Commissions revenues and expenditures (just under 2% of FAI's)

CIVL budget in a typical year

- 47% in administrative costs.
- 63% in the development of the sport.

FAI budget for the AGS communication and marketing in 2017: 389,000 CHF.

The equivalent of 13 years of CIVL investment in the development of the sport.

Also...

Voting power at the 2016 General Conference

- NAC: 345 votes.

- Commissions: 4 votes each, so 44.

That's for all Commissions 11% of the total votes, and not on all matters: on Statutes, we are not allowed to vote.

What I am trying to show here is that:

- CIVL power, both money-wise and politically wise is very flimsy.
- It is important for us to be united, to take care of ourselves, to count on our own forces, to spend wisely our energy and money if we want to have any chance to accomplish anything.

What about the Head Office?

Of course, because of FAI Head Office we are not that flimsy.

FAI staff is 10 members strong and most of their time is spent on competition and record matters, assisting Commissions or doing the work for them, from proofreading this plenary agenda and its 50 or so annexes to making sure the Basecamp project managing tool that we are using daily works properly, with too many things in between to be stated here. If we'd estimate FAI's work for us in money, our budget would be quite fatter!

Here and there I might show my frustration at FAI's inertia, but when speaking to the General Conference I never failed to thank FAI's staff, 'involved, helpful and devoted'.

The main issues we are facing

The future of GAP and FS.

It is linked to our 'Vision' to implement 'a flexible, maintainable, adaptable platform on which to "plug and play" functional modules in order to create a flexible, integrated, front to back, web-based systems to support CIVL's Championships, test events and Cat 2 competitions' (see under).

These last years, the Software Working Group kind of dissolved itself into non-work. The reasons are many. No finger pointing, no blame. Early last year we signed with Joerg Ewald's Flytec a contract that we thought would solve our problems. The collaboration did not work as we hoped and the situation did not improve.

Now we have for the coming Plenary a few Software proposals coming from the Hang Gliding Committee, Belgium, Austria and Bulgaria. Some are quite intricate, might be understood by few, might hardly be discussed, might get voted on and not implemented, or might get implemented but not tested (because we don't control Cat 2 and will not try something new in Cat 1 without Cat 2 testing).

In a few words, it is difficult to move forward on specificities when overall we don't know where we are going. Where could we go?

- Carry on as we are. FS works, it is used in lots of competitions, bugs are fixed but major changes may not be possible or will at least take a long time. FS stagnates somewhat.
- Rewrite the code. Major rewrite of the code in order to make FS easier to maintain and enhance. This is many man hours work and would be expensive if contracted out at European rates. It would need a developer to control the project. Is there anyone who wants to take it on as a voluntary (limited payment) project?
- Use Seeyou Competition. CIVL could negotiate an agreement with Naviter to use Seeyou Competition. It will require some work in order to get GAP working correctly with Seeyou and maybe there would be a cost to this. The downside is that the product would not be owned by CIVL.
- Use Compcheck. CIVL could negotiate an agreement with Ulric Jessop on the use of his well-tested software. Downsides: we will not own it; will it be easy to use, will it be adapted to hang gliding specificities?

How to implement our Software 'Vision'.

The 'Vision' is explained in Annex 18a, point 3. We know what we want but implementing it is another matter. It depends on what FAI will come up with (see point 5 of the same annex). It depends on the future of GAP and FS (see above). The financial side must be evaluated carefully. We should be sure of the chosen solutions before moving on.

WPRS and Sporting Licences

The CIVL World Pilot Ranking System (WPRS) is at the heart of CIVL. People organize competitions and pilots fly in them so they can be ranked and eventually selected in World and Continental championships. We started building it in 1998 and made it better along the years. What makes it strong is that we rank all pilots of all competitions on FAI calendar. It is truly a legitimate, recognized, unique worldwide ranking scheme. More than 10,500 pilots are ranked. Last year we had 11,500 or so entries, nobody is left out.

We must protect our WPRS at all cost. It means encouraging competition and scoring pilots. Unfortunately, the current FAI Sporting Licences scheme is poorly adapted to our practices and culture.

FAI rules request for all Cat 2 participants to have a Sporting Licence. If it is not the case, the event is not a Cat 2 anymore, it cannot be scored and ranked in our WPRS. Events that follow the rule strictly are very few. CIVL has a spotless record for controlling Sporting Licences in Cat 1, but doesn't know how to control them in Cat 2. If CIVL would apply the rule and invalidate events not conforming to it, there would be hardly any Cat 2 left and no more WPRS.

We talked about it last year. Our 2016 Plenary made proposals to CASI. During the October CASI meeting, I withdrew these proposals as they were going nowhere and a Working Group was implemented that I am currently chairing.

NAC have total control on the way they issue (or not) the Sporting Licences. Usually, access to Sporting Licences is pretty easy, cheap and fair, but there might be uses and abuses that make said access difficult if not impossible, expensive and unfair. A few examples:

- While in some countries like France or Russia getting a Sporting Licence doesn't cost anything, Italy says it has to link the Sporting Licences to a mandatory insurance that puts the global cost at over 150 euros.
- In 2015, the Croatian NAC withdrew the SL of its best pilots. They could not compete anymore. Last year, the corrupted NAC 'bad guy' ended up in jail. Croatian pilots are still struggling to come back to a regular situation: there was no sanctioned competition there in 2016 and they sent no pilot to the Krushevo Euros.
- Malaysia, which organized the last Asian PG Accuracy, has been suspended then expelled. No more competition, or pilots, or Officials accepted.
- In 2016, the Mexican NAC, FAMEDA, was suspended just before hosting our biggest cross-country Cat 2 competition, the Paragliding World Cup Super-Final. Today, FAMEDA is in 'good standing' but seems to spend more time extorting money from competition organizers than helping the sport grow. A petition ran against FAMEDA and hundreds signed it. CIVL complained officially to FAI. FAMEDA is now tightening its grip and forbidding competitions, even long-running ones like the Monarca. FAI is investigating the whole thing.
- Today, Brazil is suspended while the Paragliding World Cup is running its Super-Final there.

So the big questions:

- How do we keep scoring all competitions and pilots despite or within the rule?
- How do we deal with NACs that fail implementing FAI's aims and objective to encourage international competition?

Finding solutions will not be easy.