

## Annual Report of the WAG Liaison Officer presented at the GAC Meeting of November 6, 2015

Following intense preparatory efforts and the decision of the WAG Dubai Organizing Committee to invite Air Navigation Race to the WAG 2015 as an official discipline/competition, coordination work started on November 27, 2014 with the organizers on location in Dubai.

The initial meeting went well and was conducted in a friendly atmosphere. Our questions regarding airspace, navigation material, airplanes, pilot licenses validation, airport, infrastructure, etc. were all regarded as easy to be achieved deliverables. We were promised solutions to our demands without any problems to be expected.

But, in the time passed since, we had to learn that in this region of the world the clocks were ticking slightly different. For instance, we were not told that Arabian people who speak English not necessarily are also able to read or write the Latin alphabet. We found it strange that our assigned contact person did not reply to our e-mails for six long months.

Only after a strong intervention at the highest official levels in the UAE we were then given a contact person with adequate English skills to communicate in a proper way. This, after Maurice Ducret and myself had sent in nearly 100 (one hundred) e-mails and now had to rewrite most of it again, explaining from the beginning to a whole new team...

Our most urgent questions from November 2014, though, still have not been addressed or solved. On the contrary, in September 2015 the United Arab Emirates Office of Civil Aviation informed us that no charting/area navigation material was available due to the fact that there were sensitive areas involved. And this in times of total satellite surveillance !!

Maurice Ducret managed to come up with our own solution in obtaining navigation charts and maps from a third nation in top quality.

But the next devastating news from the same Aviation Office was already around the corner, when they informed us that there was no airspace available for low flying VFR missions, because all airspace outside the main airports was Prohibited Military Airspace, by definition. Beyond that, they "...had never heard about something like the World Air Games Dubai..."... no comment ! This problem, too, seems to be solved now, at least by verbal commitments.

I will no longer bore the delegates by further stories and challenges we had to overcome. Just one more thing: All these issues have led to several hundred hours of extra work and effort by Maurice Ducret and myself. All of this has been delivered in an honorary capacity and on top of our day jobs in the office.

As of today, I am still wondering, how the FAI could award such a major event with 10 key aviation disciplines, to a country which has never seen half of these disciplines and therefore in no way can guarantee the required professional staffing. How can it be, that not even the most key elements like navigation charts and airspace were not properly evaluated beforehand? We were offered an airport lacking the proper infrastructure for such a major event: one single narrow runway, without a taxiway, in the middle of the desert, for multiple disciplines, and simultaneous usage.

Maurice Ducret and myself are still working with enthusiasm and lots of persistency to make the WAG 2015 a success. We are still convinced that with a bit of good will of the organizers in Dubai, these WAG 2015 can be a fantastic promotion for aviation overall.

In closing, I would strongly want to urge the responsible FAI representatives to involve the proper experts of each discipline before awarding the next WAG. Also, organization members of past WAG events should be involved in order to avoid repeating some of the prior mistakes.

Zürich, 2015, November 2nd

GAC Liaison Officer



Heinrich Schawalder