

## ISC PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT



The year started with great promise and a well-organised Plenary Meeting in Moscow. Those present were able to appreciate the generous hospitality of our Russian hosts to whom I reiterate my thanks.

I was very grateful that during the 2020 Plenary you gave me the honour of being able to continue to serve you as your President for another two-year term. I was happy to have the Bureau partially renewed with Elisabet and Gail, and I was delighted to welcome the newcomers (Aliya, Rina and Alix). We have worked very well as a team and I thank everyone for their contribution. Unfortunately, Alix, Recording Secretary, has had to resign for personal reasons, and we are very sorry to see her go; we wish her well for her future.



COVID-19, although on the radar in January, did not seem to be a major threat to our immediate future.... How wrong we were and how quickly the situation changed.

On March 10<sup>th</sup> we announced that the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Indoor Skydiving Championships and 4<sup>th</sup> World Cup of Indoor Skydiving would go ahead, only for the Belgium Government to make that impossible on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

We delayed the announcement to March 18<sup>th</sup>, after taking time to consult with FAI on how to manage the situation. We were the only Commission to have an event so early in the year and to be so far advanced in the organisation that the Entry Fees had already been paid. Also, in March, it did not seem unreasonable to reschedule the event to October 2020.

It was agreed with FAI that the situation could be considered as *Force Majeure*.

In normal circumstances, if an event does not take place it is because the organiser defaults in one way or another, which is absolutely not the case here, but our rules only allow for a *Force Majeure* to be considered if the event takes place then is cancelled or stopped for this reason.

Section 5 (4.4.5) is slightly more restrictive than the General Section as it associates the Jury with the decision and indicates that the sanction fee will not be reimbursed. This is understandable because the event, having started, means ISC costs would be expended.

The organiser was absolutely ready for the event to take place, had already engaged considerable expense and was in no way responsible for the situation. Consequently, a unanimous interim Bureau decision was made to allow the Organiser to reimburse only 80% of the entry fee but to reimburse 100% of the sanction fee. As you all know, COVID-19 made it impossible for the rescheduled competition to take place in October and another Bureau decision maintained the former position regarding reimbursement of the Entry Fee for the now-cancelled event. The event was not pushed to the following year because the World Championships in Slovakia were already scheduled for April 2021, only six months away.

NAC Spain and the President of Honour, Exi Hoenle, have both officially contested this decision and it will be a discussion point before the 2020 IBDs can be ratified. The Belgian organiser will, as agreed, present his accounts so that we can see the money retained was justified.

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On this occasion, Judges and Jury were asked to wait for their airlines to cancel their flights because it then puts the onus on the airlines to refund their tickets. The money, or any credit offered, could then be used for the rescheduled event in October or at another time. Unfortunately, we all know that the airlines are being difficult in this matter.

The World Cup organiser was given priority to rebid for 2022 as the details of the 2020 bid probably would be obsolete by then. However, the 4<sup>th</sup> FAI World Indoor Skydiving Championships in 2021 have now been cancelled too, so we will have to rethink our whole competition schedule including the Outdoor events.

In March, still optimistic for the short term, we all hoped that the Mondial would not be impacted by the pandemic. Unfortunately, by mid-April it was obvious that the Mondial could not go ahead and we informed you of this on April 24<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed to reschedule to 2021 following an agreement with the 2021 outdoor competition organisers to shift their events to 2022 and I would like to thank them all for their cooperation.

Rescheduling 2020 events obviously impacts all the bids that have been accepted by the Plenary after that date and although, as I mentioned, the 2021 Organisers were happy to reschedule by one year, we have not been able to negotiate with all our Organisers for the following years.

Most other FAI Air Sport Commissions have considered that 2020 was a blank and have, with the agreement of all their Organisers, pushed back all their events by one year.

Because this was not possible for us, the Bureau decided to not make an IBD on any matter beyond 2021 as there is time to allow the next Plenary to make these decisions. Whatever the outcome, we will need to take into consideration whether the 2021 Mondial will happen or not.

This will be a very important subject to be voted on during our Plenary and will be addressed in an Open Meeting first where it will be debated. Organisers will be invited to speak if they so wish.

No competitions meant that we did not have a lot to communicate to our followers. We have however, maintained our Social Media presence and I would like to thank Elisabet, leading the Media and Promotion Working Group and *The Edge*, our supplier, for the excellent work they have done finding subject matter to keep the interest up.

I did suggest to the Committees whose competitions could be judged at a distance whether setting up an on-line competition would be of interest, but this was not the case. This was a shame because I had found some worthwhile prizes.

It is interesting to note that COVID-19 has had at least one positive effect. It has encouraged scoring system companies to develop on-line judging and a couple of private initiatives have shown how well it can work. This is something that we need to look into rapidly if we are to keep up with the times.

Some private initiatives regarding judge training have taken place over the year and our Judges Committee decided to make videos available to those judges who needed material to train with. This was a useful initiative for those who do not have material available.

Whereas for us, it has been a fairly quiet year, the same cannot be said for the FAI. I have kept you up to speed with what has been happening by forwarding all the communication received from the President in office. I also informed you of the growing dissatisfaction of the Commission Presidents' Group and the lack of any progress in improving how the FAI functions.

We have been warned by our Finance Secretaries that the situation of our Commission reserves was endangered because FAI liquidities were dwindling and it became evident that in the last year, FAI has

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been juggling with money coming in and money going out because the cash balance was insufficient. This was highlighted last year in particular when a counter budget to the one proposed by the Executive Board was presented by the UK NAC and accepted by the General Conference.

During the course of 2020, in view of the lack of progress and the difficulty in communicating with the Executive Board, as a group behind the UK NAC President who had decided to run for President, the Commissions took up the task to draw the attention of all the NACs to the disaster unfolding. We decided to show our dissatisfaction by standing as candidates for the Executive Board and lobby hard for change. The General Conference took place just last week (as I write this) and the change we hoped for has been achieved. In the end with the exception of Eric Mozer from IGC (gliding) all the Commission Presidents withdrew their nominations, the point having been made.

I had intended to continue to the election but the Statute that would have allowed me to continue in my role as your President was withdrawn obliging me to stand down. Still, we now have a new, very different, President, David Monks, and I have every faith that he will lead major change and defend the interests of the Air Sport Commissions. I have forwarded his presentation speech to you all for information. We also have a very different Executive Board with a number of new faces including Graeme Windsor, our very own President of Honour. We can be assured that he will defend our interests having been behind a movement to shake up or even leave FAI eight years ago.

A debriefing session with the new President and all the Commission Presidents the day after the General Conference shows just how important the Commissions are to David and how much he wants to work with us. Another meeting is scheduled for December 21<sup>st</sup>, which only confirms this point.

Now that it has been confirmed openly that the FAI is in a very precarious position financially, we need to look at our own finances. Gail will present two budgets for 2021 depending on whether the Mondial takes place or not. We have been living with a negative budget for some years, drawing down from our reserves. Gail has given us projections and offered alternatives to increasing our sanction fee. We need to look closely at our expenses and consider where savings can be made.

We have discussed for several years now whether to continue to finance continental records. I believe it is now time for us to stop that. We have increased our record categories in recent years, but may I question if that really is beneficial to ISC and what is the added value for us if we are to fund them?

The informal discussion group set up this year to look at Jury costs has a proposal, supported by the Extended Bureau, that we need to seriously consider and possibly adopt for 2022 onwards.

Synergies are perhaps possible regarding judge expenses and a closer look at those is to be considered as well.

All these points are projects worth considering in the relatively short term. Of course, we can also just change nothing and increase the sanction fees again, but I believe we owe it to our competitors to rationalise our costs too.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to say that we are still in negotiation with George Blythe and his company now called ASG. He has moved the company from Denmark to the UK where he has been able to find financial backing and support. In spite of suffering, like us all, from the consequences of COVID-19, his projects are firm, and he still wants ISC and FAI to recognise his Swoop Freestyle Event as a World Championship. The new agreement, which will have positive financial consequences for ISC, has been under negotiation for some time and I stopped in Lausanne this summer to meet with George and with Markus Haggeneby to discuss some of the details. Alberto, as CP Committee Chair, has been kept up to speed with the way this has all evolved and supports the work being done. As I write this report, we are almost ready to sign the agreement which can only be beneficial to ISC. Hopefully by the time we meet electronically in January I will be able to report on the 2021 joint projects. I have invited George to speak during our Open Meetings

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Internal Regulations – while looking at setting up an electronic Plenary it became necessary to adapt our Internal Regulations to cater for that. While doing so, some other areas needing change were observed. A draft document of the Terms of Reference, (ToR), was circulated, first to the Judges Committee where a number of changes were proposed and then to all the Committee Chairs. Feedback has led to further changes including removing some of those initially presented. An updated version will be circulated with the Agenda and will be discussed during the Open Meeting. This includes the possibility of holding an Extraordinary Plenary meeting, something made possible by the advent of Electronic Meetings and may be necessary if faced with a cancellation of the Mondial and the inevitable consequences.

Early in the year I conducted an informal survey to see whether an Electronic Plenary was acceptable to you all. The result was mixed but there was still a small majority in favour of this solution. As the year has unfolded, we no longer have the option to manage our Plenary any other way. The meeting will be held in January, probably over two weekends to facilitate those of you who work. Finding the right time of day is extremely difficult and I'm afraid some of you will have rather short nights.

You hopefully will have read this Report well before the Plenary so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful end to 2020 and a great start to 2021 when I hope the planet will return to something resembling the normality we were used to.

COVID-19 has had a big impact on all of us, mostly negative, and requiring management of situations previously unforeseen. Hopefully it has also given us the opportunity to take stock, reassess our priorities and look forward to a bright new future.

Again, all my thanks to my Bureau, Elisabet, Gail, Aliya, Rina and Alix, my thanks to the Extended Bureau for all the work you do for your respective Committees and Working Groups and to all you Delegates who work so selflessly for the athletes in your countries.

See you very soon through your screens and in the meantime, seasons greetings to you all.



**Gillian Rayner - ISC President**  
Leucate - December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020