

President's Report to the IGC Plenary 2006

2005 was the year of the FAI Centenary; an event marked by a number of functions and activities, all of which increased the profile that the FAI, in particular, has in the wider community. Our contribution was twofold and was very significant relative to the other Commissions. The "gliding weeks" held separately in the northern and southern hemispheres, produced a magnificent total of 2.65 million kilometres flown. Our congratulations to the winners in each class, to all those who competed and to the OLC and NetCoupe teams for their work coordinating the flight details. The second contribution was the successful hosting of the 1st FAI World Sailplane Grand Prix event in Saint Auban, France, with 17 international competitors. The success of this event has proven the value of the efforts put in over the last four years by, firstly Terry Cubley of Australia, and more recently by Roland Stuck of France. We are also indebted to the FFVV for their crucial support provided during the development of the Grand Prix series.

Four IGC-sanctioned Championship events were held in 2005: the 4th FAI Juniors' World Gliding Championships, Husbands Bosworth, United Kingdom; the 3rd FAI Women's World Gliding Championships, Klix, Germany; the 13th European Gliding Championships, Club, Standard and 18 Meter Class, Nitra, Slovak Republic and the 13th European Gliding Championships, 15M and Open Class, Räyskälä, Finland.

All were well attended and the IGC congratulates the organisers and the competitors on these very successful events.

It is my sad duty to also extend our sincere sympathies, as a sporting body, to the families involved in the tragic accident that occurred at Husbands Bosworth.

The Bureau met in October for, what has now become, a very valuable mid-year meeting. I would like to acknowledge the willingness of the Bureau members to travel from far and wide to spend two days locked up in an office in central Paris to work on IGC business. The Strategic Improvement Actions developed at this meeting to guide us over the next few years will be included in the Agenda for your review. The amount of work achieved during these meetings is formidable and I believe that we are a significantly better organisation because of these efforts. We are indebted to President Eyrier and the FFVV for generously hosting the Bureau at their facilities for these meetings.

Subsequent to the Bureau meeting a number of us attended the FAI Centenary General Conference in Paris. President of Honour, Tor Johannessen was elected as a Bureau Member to the CASI during the General Conference.

2005 has also seen a lot of work "behind the scenes" to develop the numerous Year Two proposals that you see on the Agenda. The work on Annex A continues, but I wish to add a note of concern regarding what is happening with the Annex. We are attempting to simplify it by removing those options that have not found favour at Championships. But we also continue to add scoring systems and to maintain the 1000-points system. I believe that we need to take a couple of steps back from Annex A and really look at what we need to manage our competitions well and to provide a single scoring system that will make the sport simpler to understand. This is a challenge that I put out to all of you.

Similarly, I am concerned that we have proposals constantly coming forward to change the way we recognise best performances – that is, records. To me records are the ultimate performance. Records create challenges for those who aspire to set new standards. Records create challenges for manufacturers and designers and engineers to produce better equipment

that enables greater performances to be realised. Do we want to have records that mimic the “best performance between airports” type categories that commercial aircraft achieve?

Year One proposals that are being put forward for you to consider include the development of proposals to advance COTS flight recorders for Silver and Gold Badge flights.

As I prepare this Report, we have, potentially, a series of **nine** Qualifying Grand Prix events proposed for 2006. This support for the SGP is tremendous and bodes well for the future of this event. These events are planned for Australia, France, Germany, New Zealand, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

We also look forward to the 29th FAI Multiclass World Gliding Championships, 2006, at Eskilstuna, Sweden and the 5th World Class and 4th Club Class World Gliding Championships, 2006, at Vinon, France.

The management of our international events is a key issue for us as an organisation. The Bureau has refined the 2005 proposal for funding “event officials” to ensure that we can support competent and effective Jury President’s and Chief Stewards. We believe that the Chief Steward is critical to the successful organisation of an IGC event.

We need to also ensure that the Grand Prix events are supported properly to ensure that these events are run in a consistent manner to showcase our sport to the public and the media.

Other challenges facing us in 2005 include the fact that we still spend the majority of our time on competitions and little on membership and other critical issues such as the threats from airspace, airlines, leisure sports, costs, and, professional sports. There are some great opportunities available to us including: media, other Commissions (especially the Education Commission), the FAI and the EGU.

We also need to raise the profile for the Women’s and Junior’s WGC.

The successful development of a wider focus and a greater public profile will assist in improving membership and sport opportunities, including sponsorship.

Our relationship with OSTIV and the EGU is critical to our sport. The EGU represents the interests of the European gliding community. Members of the EGU will have attended their Annual Conference the week prior to our IGC meeting and, as a result, no EGU report is being submitted to this Meeting. I note that, without full representation of all European countries, the political effectiveness of the EGU is weakened.

It is again my pleasure to formally thank all the Committee Chairpersons for their work in the past year. Their voluntary efforts enable the IGC to function. I would also like to thank the members of the Bureau for their dedication to Bureau duties over the year and the support that our 1st Vice President, Eric Mozer, has provided.

Finally, we all owe a great vote of thanks to Secretary General Max Bishop and his staff at the FAI Office. Their support, assistance and enthusiasm is fantastic.

Bob Henderson
President, IGC