



Report from the Environmental Commission to FAI General Conference 2005, Paris

On its annual meeting on 21./22. January 2005 Dr. Michael Goth, Germany, was elected as President of the FAI Environmental Commission (EnvC). He follows Chris Nicholas who over the past six years gave the EnvC its current structure and basis. We thank Chris for his devotion and wish that he supports EnvC for many more years.

The FAI Executive Board expects the EnvC to provide active assistance in solution of environmental problems of air sports on a global basis. Our principle objective is to positively influence air sport practitioners and the public opinion that air sport activities and care for the environment can indeed be combined.

In order to achieve this objective, the EnvC is currently developing a work plan for the next years. We want to be proactive on issues which we think help to raise environmental awareness and not to be reactive on topics where the battle is already lost. We want to focus on a few important tasks which we can achieve despite the limited resources we have. We will assign delegates to take care of the work plan tasks to assure progress over time.

Interaction with FAI Commissions

Little attention has been given by FAI Sport Commissions to environmental affairs, although the challenges and restrictions imposed on flying often arise from environmental and nature conservation issues. In general environmentalists have the better arguments when it comes down to conflicts. The FAI sport commissions should therefore substantiate environmental considerations in their business. Widely recognized environmental problems should be identified and brought to the attention of the EnvC so that solutions can be developed together. We invite FAI sport commission members to actively approach us and to attend our annual meeting.

A forum to present the EnvC to other FAI Commissions was the Executive Board and Commissions Meeting on 20. May 2005 in Lausanne. The EnvC President had the opportunity to participate and present the current status, tasks and work plan. Further opportunity to talk with EnvC members will be available during the General Conference on 13./14. October 2005.

We are very pleased that, based on an initiative of EnvC which was brought to the attention of the FAI Aviation and Space Education Commission that it selected the theme: "Air Sports and Nature in Harmony" for its 2006 FAI Young Artist Contest. The aim of this contest is very much in line with the our principle objective stated above. The rules for this contest are available on the FAI website. We wish this contest all success and many outstanding contributions demonstrating that the artists imagination of harmony between nature and air sports is a reflection of reality.

Environmental Commission Website

The EnvC website has the twofold purpose to provide both, the air sport practitioners and the public outside of air sports who are visiting the FAI web pages with objective



information on the relationship between environment and nature, and the various air sport activities. Therefore, it is our goal to present not only information about EnvC, but objective scientific material such as case studies and research data on air sports and environment that provides help to those air sport practitioners who are challenged by environmental and nature conservation problems in a specific region or governmental regime. As this material is also available to the public, it may help to change the image of air sports in some minds of opponents to flying activities.

This is the theory. In the real world, the EnvC website is far from being a valuable data base. While with the assistance of the FAI bureau we are able to manage the website, we have not yet identified somebody to routinely care for maintaining the website and the material available to date is scarce. At least a list of literature references exists. This situation is not at last a consequence of the fact that EnvC has no financial means.

We identified a number of case studies/articles from a German book published by the German Aero Club and the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection "Air Sports & Nature Protection" which understandable to a normal person while being scientific. It is intended to translate these articles into English and to place them on the website. We received release from copy rights but have no budget to translate or find the time of volunteers to translate these articles.

Case studies on the influence of air sports on nature and environment, preferable in English language, from any region of the world should be forwarded to the EnvC. If suitable, we will post this material on the website.

Current EnvC Activities

A key EnvC work plan item is the development of a ***FAI Standard for an Environmental Management System (EMS) on Flying Sites***, similar to international standards established for industrial facilities (e.g. ISO 14001 or EMAS). The standard will be aimed to define and implement basic technical infrastructural requirements and organizational procedures on flying sites which enable environmentally friendly operations (e.g. waste and wastewater management, fuel handling, nature conservation plans, etc.). It is planned that an independent third party will certify that a flying site meets the requirements of the standard. This will demonstrate to the local community that the flying site operates in accordance with state of the art environmental practices. Thus, the image for flying activities shall be improved. The standard will be customized specifically to flying sites and flying activities, and has several levels of achievement depending on the objectives and resources of the subject flying site. Such an EMS standard (Step Audit) has been developed in Germany in 2004/05 and is in the stage of implementation by German soaring and other flying sites. Therefore, the adoption for FAI should be achievable with reasonable resources. Again, translation of the standard into English language is the key factor for further progress. Further, the certification process and procedures pose a yet unresolved issue.

EnvC delegates from the UK and Sweden committed themselves to contact, advice and observe ***International FAI Soaring Championships in the UK and Sweden*** on environmental affairs. The aim was to minimize the impacts of an exceptional large number of persons and machinery (cars, trailers, gliders and tow planes, as well as campers) on relative small patches of land and the related fauna and flora. In Sweden, the pre-event for the World Championships in Gliding (aka Viking Glide 2005) was certified by the Swedish Sports



Confederation as a green event. In summary, it can be concluded that the interaction between the EnvC delegates and the event organizers contributed to the success of these championships.

In addition, EnvC delegates provided several presentations on environmental aspect of air sport to several national and international congresses and conventions.

Financial Support of EnvC

The EnvC currently has no financial resources. Some, but not all NACs may reimburse their EnvC delegate for travel expenses to the annual meeting and/or national activities. There is a verbal agreement that EnvC projects may be funded by the FAI bureau/executive board, if the project is supported by FAI officials. This requires that the project has to be described and justified, a time consuming process which prevents and delays work on the actual project. A more realistic and practical solution is needed, otherwise the expectations of the FAI Executive Board on success and global support by EnvC will not be met.

Aircraft Noise

The EnvC recognizes that noise originating from aircrafts, disregard if small or large, commercial or private, is one of the most important environmental issues for the public. Noise is often the argument of regulators supported by the public to restrict flying activities or to close flying sites. Therefore, topics around aircraft noise such as noise control in the vicinity of flying sites, development of standards for noise measurements of small aircrafts (the noise dose concept) which are not regulated by ICAO standards (motorized paragliders, ultralights, motorized gliders, tow planes with gliders, etc.), discussion of pro's and con's of national aircraft noise regulations, and other noise topics have been discussed in each of the EnvC meetings over the past years. No substantial achievements were made yet.

Therefore, the EnvC does not currently invest much activity into aircraft noise topics. This is mainly due to lack of noise experts within the EnvC, firm regulations and standards already in place in many countries, and availability of mature technical equipment for noise reduction. We have recognized that it is beyond the abilities of the EnvC to influence international or even national regulators in the noise field.

Instead, our approach is different: We want to demonstrate to the public that air sports people are environmentally considerate persons. By raising positive reflections on air sport in the public we want to distract the focus from only the noise issue.

Despite this, EnvC delegates continue to work on noise topics in countries such as Denmark and the UK and some achievements may be made medium to long term.

Dr. Michael Goth
President, FAI Environmental Commission

5. September 2005