

**98th FAI ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE – PARIS - FRANCE**  
**AGENDA ITEM 6**  
**REPORT ON WORK OF FAI MEMBERS, FAI AIRSPORT ACTIVITIES AND THE FAI**  
**SECRETARIAT**

In this Centenary year, it is my pleasant duty to give you my report on the activities of the FAI, its Members, Commissions and Secretariat since the last General Conference in Madrid (October 2004).

Perhaps you will allow me a short historical reminiscence in this special year. Since FAI was founded there have been 32 Presidents, but only 10 Secretaries General. We are quite a rare breed, but I hope not yet in danger of extinction. No doubt the most distinguished of my predecessors was Paul Tissandier (\*), whose name is immortalised in the diplomas that we awarded last night. He was the son of Gaston (\*), (born 1843), a chemist, author of an influential book entitled "Aeronautical Voyages", and inventor of the idea of using balloons for meteorological observation. Among his exploits, Gaston escaped the Siege of Paris in 1870 in a balloon, taking several sacks of post with him; flew a balloon to an altitude of 25 000 feet (during which flight his two companions froze to death); and flew the first electrically powered airship, here in Paris, in 1883. So young Paul had aeronautics in the blood and turned out to be a great aeroplane pioneer too, having been the second pupil to learn to fly with the Wright Brothers in Pau (\*). It was a mystery to me to understand how he had managed to survive for no less than 32 years in the job of FAI Secretary General and die whilst still in post, until I discovered that in fact he only came into the office briefly once a week, in between his various aeronautical exploits, to sign letters and issue instructions. What a shame that the clock cannot be turned back...

It was a great pleasure for me to see my immediate predecessor, Dr Cenek Kepak (\*), with us here last night. As a former FAI President, as well as Secretary General, he steered FAI through a very difficult period of transition in 1987 –1993. And on a sad note, I pay tribute to his predecessor, Bertrand Larcher (\*) (Secretary General from 1981 -1986), who died not long ago.

Whilst we are still on this historical theme, I would like to mention the ways in which we have marked our Centenary. During the last year, we have succeeded in raising the public profile of the FAI to a substantial extent, thanks to the various Centenary events, and I would like now to hand over to my colleague, Jean-Marc Badan, who is going to report on what has happened in this connection.

(JMB Presentation).

Thank you, Jean-Marc. I would just like to mention once more our book (\*) "High Flyers". If you are interested in aviation history and FAI, I urge you to buy this book. It would also make an excellent gift for friends at the end of this Centenary year.

Let me turn now to the state of our federation in its centenary year.

**MEMBERSHIP**

The FAI Membership (not counting the decisions the Conference has just taken) stands at :

|                           |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Active Members :          | <b>76</b> (77) |
| Associate Members :       | <b>12</b> (11) |
| Temporary Members :       | <b>7</b> (6)   |
| International Affiliate : | <b>2</b> (2)   |

*(Last year's figures in brackets)*

You will see that there has been a small net reduction, caused by the Board's decision to shorten the period during which Members who have failed to pay are kept on the books. There is no shortage of organisations wishing to join FAI. But our membership rules, and the level of subscriptions necessary to sustain the organisation, act as serious deterrents.

## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

In 2004, **23** World Championships were held in **15** different countries in Europe (**11**), North America (**2**), South America (**1**), and Oceania (**1**). **56** FAI member countries participated in FAI World Championships, with a total of **2'339** competitors. These slides (\*) show that the overwhelming majority of participants still come from Europe. We must find ways of redressing this imbalance.

This is a busy slide (\*), but it shows you that Germany is the champion for participating in the highest number of FAI events (33), closely followed by France.

The total number of FAI Championships held (\*) has been increasing slowly these last 10 years. But the European dominance (\*) has not in any way diminished.

## ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This year **52** countries responded to the FAI questionnaire (compared with 46 last year, and 36 the year before – thank you for this welcome improvement).

FAI members are still facing problems that have become all too familiar: excessive regulation and airspace restrictions (particularly in Europe); reducing access to flying sites; declining membership (competition from other attractive activities, that are often easier to learn); increasing costs (fuel, insurance, government taxes), environmental problems, lack of financing, and lack of recognition by government and other authorities of our activities as being true sports. Increasingly, our members report conflicts between air sport organisations.

Another problem that seems to be growing is that of the “compensation culture”. By that I mean a tendency for people to expect to receive compensation both for any work that they do, and for any damage, physical or otherwise, to their person. This translates into an increasing difficulty in finding volunteers and an increased likelihood of legal action being taken against our associations, as well as against individuals. So we need more insurance, which itself is increasingly costly. I am not sure that there is any easy solution to what is a general sociological phenomenon.

There are 3 specific suggestions, among many made this year by our Members, that I will bring to the attention of the Executive Board and the relevant Commissions:

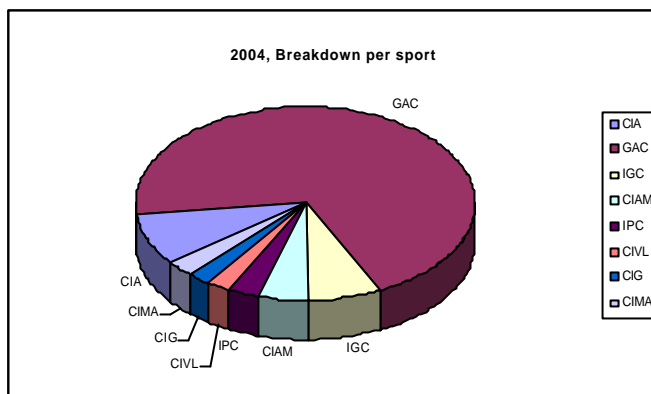
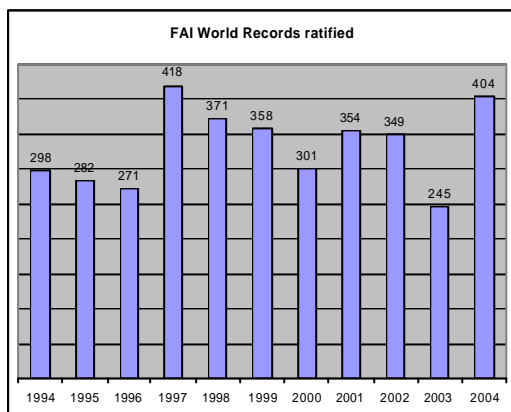
- The need in some countries for well-organised consultancy services to help the development of air sports
- The need to tighten control over services provided by contest organisers to participants
- The need for FAI to persuade national authorities that model flying is a sport.

## FLIGHT SAFETY

Members report that we lost 249 people in air sport accidents in 2004. It must remain our highest priority to improve this dismal record.

## WORLD RECORDS

**404** World Records were ratified in **9** different disciplines in 2004. 281 of these records were in Class C (powered aeroplanes).



The year 2004 saw some remarkable flights (\*). Amongst the most noteworthy records were:

- ✧ David Hempleman-Adams (GBR) who set a new Airship Absolute Altitude Record in a small hot air airship : 6'614m. (BX-03, 900-1300m<sup>3</sup>)
- ✧ Still in an airship, Steve FOSSETT (USA) and Hans-Paul STRÖHLE (GER) flew a new Airship Absolute Speed Record in a Zeppelin New Technology LZ N07-100 at Friedrichshafen (GER) – over 110 km/h.
- ✧ A prestigious old altitude record – that of Robert M. WHITE in his X-15 in 1962 was broken during the test flight of SpaceShipOne in the USA.
- ✧ William M. BROOKS ( also of the USA) established the most world records in 2004: 28 during his Around the World flight in a Cessna 501.
- ✧ Simon OLIPHANT-HOPE (GBR) flew around the World, Eastbound, in a turbine helicopter, setting a new speed record of 88.9km/h
- ✧ And 357 skydivers formed a splendid star in the skies of Thailand – the world's biggest ever free-fall formation. An attempt to achieve 400 is planned for 2006.

These slides show how the records were allocated amongst the disciplines (\*) and how the aeroplane records were distributed (\*).

## FAI COMMISSIONS

You will see amongst your papers an analysis of the number of member countries that nominated delegates to FAI Commissions in 2003.

## FAI STAFF

The total number of staff, including the Secretary General, remains 5 full-time and one part-time (2 days a week). There have been no changes since last year. We are very lucky to have such a loyal, committed and hard-working staff. I thank them all warmly for their support.

In addition to our normal work, and all the Centenary work, we have made a lot more progress this year with digitalising the FAI Championships and World Records archives, thanks to the help of our team of volunteers, now 3 in number. We thank Jean-Claude Jolliet, Claude Crottaz and Roger Barraud for their generous help, as well as Mady Delcroix who has visited Lausanne twice to assist us.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a very enjoyable celebration of our FAI centenary. It is most certainly an opportunity each of us will have only once in our lives.

Max Bishop  
Secretary General

13 October 2005