

## **CIVL President's Report to the FAI General Conference 2009**

### ***Sporting Activity and Competition Review***

It is a pleasure to be able to report again an increase in both Hang Gliding and Paragliding activities internationally. More than 250 Category 2 competitions were sanctioned worldwide. It is nice to see that in FAI sanctioned Paragliding Accuracy competitions, for example, in addition to European member countries and Japan, other Asian countries including China, Chinese Taipei, Malaysia and Indonesia are now represented. As a result, the number of PG Accuracy pilots now on our database has increased dramatically by 30% to 862. In the FAI World Paragliding Accuracy Championships held in Croatia, a record 17 countries were represented. Certainly the inclusion of Paragliding Accuracy in the World Air Games 2009 has contributed to increasing interest in this discipline worldwide.

In fact, the number of registered pilots and FAI sanctioned competitions in all CIVL disciplines has increased again in 2009. Our sport continues to be dominated by Paragliding XC, with some 6000 registered competition pilots - four times the number of hang gliding pilots. Furthermore, at the World PG Championships in Mexico, 44 FAI member nations participated, probably the highest number in any CIVL sanctioned competition to date.

In 2009 there were three CIVL-sanctioned Category 1 World Championships, plus the HG & PG elements of the World Air Games, and six practice events for Category 1 championships planned for 2010.

2009 Category 1 Championships were:

- World Paragliding Cross Country Championships at Valle de Bravo in Mexico
- World Hang Gliding Cross Country Championships at Laragne in France
- World Paragliding Accuracy Championships at Ivanec/Trakoscan in Croatia
- World Air Games, Torino, Italy

2009 Test events for 2010 Category 1 Championships were:

- (Pre-) European Hang Gliding Cross Country Championships at Ager in Spain
- (Pre-) European Paragliding Cross Country Championships at Abtenau in Austria
- (Pre-) European Paragliding Accuracy Championships at Inonu / Eskisehir in Turkey



- (Pre-) World Hang Gliding classes 2 & 5 and class 1 Championships for women at Tegelberg in Germany
- (Pre-) Asian Paragliding Cross Country Championships at Yoshinogawa in Japan
- (Pre-) World Hang Gliding and Paragliding Aerobatics Championships at Omegna in Italy

It is thanks to the NACs that support these events, the event organisers and all the volunteers who invest their free time in assisting to organise the competitions, that we are able to run and enjoy these competitions in a safe way. In the past years we have already referred to the lack of enough qualified volunteer officials for our steward and jury database. Although we have trained some new stewards in the past year, this is a continuing concern that might risk the validity of future championships. We again are asking the NACs, the CIVL delegates and HG and PG federations to help encourage volunteers for these roles.

### ***Future Championships***

During the CIVL Plenary Meeting in February 2009 in Hall in Tirol in Austria the following Category 1 competitions for 2011 have been awarded:

- The World Hang Gliding Cross Country Championships to Sigillo in Italy
- The World Paragliding Cross Country Championships to Piedrahita in Spain
- The World Paragliding Accuracy Championships to Kuncice pod Ondrejnikem in the Czech Republic

We regret that because of financial difficulties, the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Championships HG & PG Aerobatics, 2010 at Omegna in Italy has had to be cancelled. The cancellation of that event was a complete surprise for the bureau and the FAI.

### ***Online competitions***

CIVL began the trial season of its WXC (world XC online contest) in October 2008. There are already 70,000 registered flights from 5,000 pilots with flights in 76 countries. Total flown distance overall is 1,400,000 km.

### ***Safety***

Following the February Plenary, CIVL has instigated a number of new safety initiatives. The "HG Pitch Stability" Working Group, the HG Subcommittee and the CIVL Bureau are continuing to work on a permanent ruling that will contribute to HG safety. Hang Glider Sprog Angle Measurement was started during 2008, with a positive response from pilots. This year, a more strict measuring process was undertaken at the HG World Championship in Laragne. Pilots are considerably better informed about the possible dangers of incorrectly adjusted sprogs.



Sadly, there was a fatality during the World Paragliding Championships in Valle de Bravo in Mexico (Stefan Schmoker from Switzerland). In fact, there were some alarming figures from this competition: 2 badly injured competitors, 5 mid-air collisions and 13 reserve parachute deployments.

Some additional safety concerns:

- Some mid-air collisions are not taken seriously by pilots
- Cloud flying seems to be a regular and sometimes intentional occurrence.
- There are insufficient rules covering minimum standards for some flying equipment

As a result, a Paragliding Safety Working Group was established at the Plenary Meeting in February. This Working Group is tasked to look at further ways of improving safety in paragliding competitions and liaise with the CIVL Safety & Training Subcommittee. Issues include: setting standards for flying equipment including helmets and harnesses,

Despite the fact that we all realize and agree that safety has to be the CIVL's 1<sup>st</sup> priority, I have to admit that our Safety & Training Subcommittee has not been very active during the year. More work needs to be done to improve safety and the Safety & Training Subcommittee will have to do as much as possible to coordinate the efforts to improve the safety.

I still have the idea that a more frequent communication in the Subcommittees (SC mailing lists) and between the Subcommittees might contribute to improving safety and really hope that in the future the SCs will make more use of the digital highway, that makes communication very easy.

By contrast, the Pre-European PG Championship in Abtenau in Austria was a very safe competition, where no incidents or accidents happened.

### ***Altitude Verification***

All pilots use GPS devices for recording their flights. The downloaded tracklog is used for scoring purposes. It can also be used to check for infringements of altitude and airspace limits, and sometimes to provide evidence to prove (or disprove) cloud flying. However, some instruments have only GPS sensors, some barometric sensors and some have both. While the Altitude Verification Working Group continues to consider whether to regulate the type of measurement that should be used to ensure consistent and accurate altitude measurements, the Bureau has insisted the recommendation used at the HG Worlds, Laragne, is used for Cat 1 events in 2010.



## ***The World Air Games***

Hang Gliding and Paragliding were well represented in the World Air Games with 4 disciplines: HG & PG Aerobatics, PG Accuracy and HG Speed Gliding. We especially thank the "FAI WAG coordinator", Jean-Marc Badan and the HG and PG experts, Dennis Pagen and Louise Joselyn, for their contributions, work and energy to make this event a success.

## ***Volunteers***

Concluding this report I wish to thank all the volunteers, like the people in the worldwide HG & PG federations, the people working for the NACs, the people in the organisations of the many competitions worldwide, the members of the CIVL Subcommittees and Working Groups, the CIVL Bureau members and the enthusiastic staff at the FAI headquarters in Lausanne, who make it possible that the HG and PG pilots worldwide can enjoy our sports in a responsible and safe way.

Special thanks to the Secretary General of the FAI, Max Bishop, retired from the FAI at the end of January. I think that not many people know how much Max has done for Hang Gliding and Paragliding in addition to his work for the FAI and other air sports. I wish to thank Max for all his advice and guidance over the years, and wish him a healthy and happy "retirement". It has been a pleasure to work with him and I am sure that we will miss his enthusiastic devotion to our sports.

## ***CIVL Presidency***

When I took over the presidency of the CIVL from Olivier Burghelle, I planned to stay in this function for approximately 7 or 8 years. This is my 5<sup>th</sup> President Report and that means that I have been CIVL President for only 5 years. In the 2010 plenary meeting I will not stand for re-election for reasons that have to do with my health. I have found out that the cliché that "health is the most important" is very true. Despite the fact that I like the CIVL President function very much, I need the time right now to focus on my health. I think that the nicest thing about being the CIVL President is the worldwide contacts with the people that represent the National Airsport Controls, the Hang Gliding & Paragliding federations and of course the pilots. I wish to thank all these people for the cooperation in the past years and wish you all happy landings.

Flip Koetsier  
CIVL President