



## ANNEXE 6 — CIVL PRESIDENT REPORT

**2019 has been a year full of contrast.**

**Happy face, not so happy face and reasons for hope.**

### **Happy Face**

#### **Bureau extended**

Most of the Bureau's work is done on Basecamp. Are systematically invited in the discussions Committee Chairs, Asian Liaison Officer and Administrator. We really work together. Thanks to all!

#### **Committees and Working Groups**

Some of the issues we had to deal with were not easy ones. I saw everywhere hard work and respect. A big thanks to all.

#### **Competitions**

We ranked 314 Second Category events, more than ever.

We had three very good World Championships in Paragliding XC and Accuracy and in Hang-Gliding Class 1. We had eight test events for this year's World and Continental championships. We don't expect any organisational problems.

In XC, our live tracker fleet is used successfully to it full potential.

We started our partnership with the Paragliding World Cup to develop high level competition in Asia.

#### **Judges' training**

We had successful training for judges in both Aerobatic and Accuracy.

#### **Software**

The new Event Application System is running. It requires a bit more work for competition organisers, and a lot less for CIVL and FAI. It still needs adjustments to make it as efficient as possible.

We are working hard on a new Event Management System. A series of modules will be available for free to every organiser: from registration to website, publication of results and automatic ranking. We hope to finalise the project this year.

In XC, we've been looking for alternate solutions for years. The Naviter SeeYou project failed. We are now working on AirScore, developed by Antonio Golfari, Steward McIntosh and Geoff Wong. It looks promising.

## **Insurances**

After Riikka Viikuna car accident while in Kazakhstan for CIVL, the FAI (that helped a lot in Riikka's repatriation) started looking for insurances for FAI many volunteers called to work in foreign lands. The work is still in progress.

On this day, only Bureau members are covered for accident/repatriation when travelling for FAI. All other volunteers are not covered yet. When travelling, please make sure that you are insured.

## **Other FAI Commissions**

For more than a year now, FAI sports Commission Presidents have been exchanging on Freedcamp, a working platform very much like Basecamp.

We now have a common understanding of what is going on at FAI and we can look for consensus before we take any matter to the Executive Board.

This is a big improvement and it makes us stronger.

## **Not So Happy Face**

### **Competition**

In Accuracy, the Automatic Measuring Devices that we bought have mixed results. The general environment and wind measuring is satisfying, but not the key element, the target itself. We need improvement.

### **FAI Global failure**

The general policies pushed by the FAI Executive Board and Secretariat these last years have dramatically failed in 2019.

The most visible failure is the World Air Games (WAG), first pushed back from 2020 to 2022, then just cancelled. The WAG were ill-conceived. Revenue, not sport, was the key motivation. CIVL and other Commissions' wishes and warnings were disregarded.

The WAG failure is to be linked to the Air Games Series (AGS) project. The AGS were supposed to lead us toward the perfect WAG. When designing the three consecutive projects, the Commissions were also ignored and more than one million euros was spent in useless studies and marketing. Nothing came out of it.

The FAI spent a million euros on the Air Games Serie but could not find a few ten thousand to finance the Event Application System for its 700+ competitions. CIVL and CIAM (aeromodelism) had to pay for half of it.

Another questionable FAI expenditure was the eNavigator, an Event Managing System build by Noosphere, the FAI latest sponsor. The system is so complicated that it can be ran only by Noosphere and has been used only for a handful of FAI events like the Gordon Bennet ballon race, the Drone World championships or the World Games. It is useless for 99% of FAI other competitions, including our 300+ event.

The eNavigator's failure forced us to build our own Event Management System. When we designed it, we made sure that it could be use by other Commissions with a minimum of modifications.

The online Sporting Licences have been mandatory for six years, but we still cannot count on a reliable database to check them. Our requests for updating this crucial software have been ignored.

The new FAI website was designed only for media and public. Commissions' needs were hardly answered and their specific pages are hard to find.

These different points above show how Commissions have been forgotten and how the EB and secretariat gave priority to their own agenda and projects.

The 'One FAI' seminar (August 2018) had identified a central reason for these failures: the fact that Commissions were not involved in the EB decisions on sporting matters. A few key proposals were made, like having Commissions' representatives participate to the EB meetings. A working group was implemented. It was chaired by an EB member that made sure that it would fail and the working group had nothing to show to the 2019 FAI General Conference. One-FAI was dead.

As this was going on, FAI lost two of its main sponsors, Breitling and Red Bull. FAI was now facing serious financial trouble. Part of the solution found by the Executive Board and Secretariat was to take the Commissions' money by taxing their sanction fees revenue. All Commissions Bureaux got pretty mad, still the provisional budget pushed to the General Conference would have cost CIVL some 20,000 euros.

The cherry on the pie came with the Kosovo issue. Kosovo is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) but not by half of the United Nations members. When, in 2018, IOC came up with a strong recommendation that nations that did not accept Kosovan sports persons should not be allowed to organise international events, CIVL identified instantly the potential consequences with our 2019 Paragliding Accuracy World Championship in Serbia. We met the FAI Secretary General and came up with an agreement: postpone the championships four months to give a chance to the political tension between the two countries to ease, then support the decision of the organisers to accept or not Kosovan pilots based on their safety criteria. Seven months later, when pilots had paid their entry fee and made their travel arrangements, the Secretary General stated that she never agreed on anything and basically requested that the CIVL jury recommends the cancellation of the championship if an official complaint from the Kosovan NAC was received.

We decided to keep a low profile and waited for the official complaint. The NAC complaint arrived four (4) days before the start of the championship with the FAI renewed request for the jury to rule on cancellation. Then we learned from the Kosovan NAC's President that the Secretary General had helped him write the complaint.

This was not a revelation, but the confirmation of how bad the FAI was failing. How could the FAI Secretary General push for the cancellation of a World championship four days before the opening ceremony, when the inevitable outcome was to be chaos, bankruptcy and humiliation, all this in the name of the supposed Olympic values?

## **Reasons for Hope**

Most of what I described here (except Kosovo) came up to the knowledge of the General Conference. Commissions were not the only ones to be impacted by the botched projects and catastrophic running of FAI finances. NACs were also asked to pitch in on the bill. The General Conference refused the budget and imposed a new one with drastic reductions of administrative expenses.

Before and after the General Conference, The FAI and Commissions Presidents had one-on-one discussions. The FAI and NACs' Presidents also had one-on-one discussions. It was stated that we needed a new beginning, that the priority for all was to go back to basics and serve the sport.

Just after the General Conference, the Secretary General was fired. Markus Haggenev, the FAI Sports and Events Director, became acting Secretary General. The FAI President decided to pursue his exchanges with the Commissions' President by creating a Basecamp

'project' whose main goal is to involve Commissions in sport-related decisions. Another Basecamp 'project' was open to discuss the future – or no future – of the WAG. The FAI President also implemented a new working group to replace the 'One-FAI' defunct one. The project is now called 'Refreshing FAI' and basically starts with the conclusions of the 2018 One-FAI seminar.

FAI is obviously at a turning point. Commissions have been heard. There is a reason for hope in a better FAI.

## **Conclusion**

If we learned anything in 2019, it is that we have to be strong and independent in all aspects of hang-gliding and paragliding. Not because we want to go away from the FAI – we need to be part of it – , but because it is our responsibility to build and run our disciplines, to define our strategies, to deliver spotless events, and because in the end we have to be ready to count only on ourselves.

*For the CIVL Bureau  
Stephane Malbos, President*