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PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 104th FAI GENERAL CONFERENCE

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The FAI Aerobatics Commission continues its work in promoting, administering, and improving the sport of aerobatics worldwide. This is only possible because we are all a part of a larger air sports movement and members of the FAI through our national organizations.

Achieving our goal of promoting our air sports discipline is successful because of the extensive and dedicated work of volunteers around the world who are deeply committed to the sport. As I do every year, I pay tribute to them in this report. The purpose of this report is to provide you with updated information on this work as it is noteworthy and deserving of your recognition.

The 2010 Calendar

This year, CIVA has had a very successful and full Championships calendar which has kept our officials very busy with several serving at more than one competition. This year our schedule included:

1 st World Advanced Glider Aerobatic Championships: Jämi, Finland – 17-24 July 2010
10 th European Glider Aerobatic Championships (Unlimited): Jämi, Finland – 17-24 July 2010
9 th World Advanced Aerobatic Championships: Radom, Poland – 5-15 August 2010
17 th European Aerobatic Championships: Touzim, Czech Republic – 2-11 September 2010

CIVA selected and provided FAI international officials for all of these events. Judges were selected under new procedures which take into account judging performance. This performance is now measured by a software program that was in use at all four Championships this year called ACRO. It was developed in the United Kingdom by Nick Buckenham. ACRO is also the scoring program for all FAI Aerobatic Championships.

World Advanced and European Glider Aerobatic Championships

CIVA has introduced a new category of competition – Glider Advanced Aerobatics – and the first FAI World Championships in this category took place this year in Finland. The World Advanced Glider Aerobatic Championships (WAGAC) was held in conjunction with the long-running European Glider Aerobatic Championships (EGAC) which is for Unlimited glider pilots.

31 pilots (including two independents) from 8 countries participated in the WAGAC. The 2010 World Advanced Aerobatic Glider Champion is **Johan Gustafsson** of Sweden. Johan is 19 years old and flew the Pilatus B4. Advanced is of a level that permits gliders to participate that may not be Unlimited-capable. This will encourage more pilots to compete. I was also delighted to see such a young and talented man capture the title. It bodes well for our future to see many young competitors flying who had not been seen at FAI Championships before.



In the European Glider Aerobatic Championships, which are at Unlimited level, 28 pilots (including one independent) from 9 countries flew. The new Champion is **Erik Piriou** of France. Erik had flown last year in the World Air Games in Turin and is one of our sport's most talented pilots.

As a final note, at closing ceremonies I dedicated the Championships to Matti Peura, in the name of FAI. Matti was a driving force in glider aerobatics in Finland and was responsible for this Championships being organized in his home country. He was also an accomplished glider aerobatic pilot in his own right. He became ill in May and died soon after the Championships at age 48. He will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues in Finland as well as CIVA.

World Advanced Aerobatic Championships

The Aero Club of Poland can also be counted on to organize excellent events and have done so on many occasions over the last two decades. These events have often been held in Radom and this was the site of the WAAC this year.



This year's Advanced Championships broke all records. 83 pilots from 25 countries participated. This is the largest number of countries which have ever participated in an FAI Aerobatic Championships and we saw competitors from countries that had not been active for years in aerobatics or were appearing for the first time.

The new World Advanced Aerobatic Champion is **Baptiste Vignes** of France. He flew the CAP 231. Team France also won the WAAC under the leadership of Coco Bessiere, a past World Champion and the successful trainer of many French Teams.

The Teams of South Africa and Russia were second and third, respectively.

Let me extend my personal thanks and appreciate to the Aero Club of Poland. Indeed, Poland is a great friend of aerobatics and we look forward to many Championships there in future years.

European Aerobatic Championships

The 17th European Championships will begin in a few days but there is a strong registration for the event and I expect around 50 pilots, a normal number for this competition.



The Czech Republic is organizing the competition but it is the local people at the Aero Club of Touzím who have been carrying the burden and cooperation has been excellent. A small, grass airfield between Prague and Karlovy Vary, I expect the venue will be a pleasant one.

Full results for this competition, along with the others above, can be found at the following:

www.civa-results.com

 		
2010	Championships for this year:	Results available ...
July 17 - 24 (same)	The European Glider Aerobatic Championships, Jämijärvi, Finland	✓
August 5 - 15	The World Advanced Glider Aerobatic Championships, Jämijärvi, Finland	✓
September 2 - 12	The World Advanced Aerobatic Championships, Radom, Poland	✓
	The European Aerobatic Championships, Touzím, Czech Republic	
2009	Past Events ...	
June 3 - 13	The World Air Games, Torino, Italy	✓
June 25 - July 7	The World YAK 52 Aerobatic Championship, Rojūnai, Lithuania	✓
July 11 - 18	The World Glider Aerobatic Championship, Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic	✓
August 6 - 16	The European Advanced Aerobatic Championship, Radom Piastow Airfield, Poland	✓
August 19 - 29	The World Aerobatic Championships, Silverstone, UK	✓
2008		
June 6 - 8	The World Aerobatic Cup, Airfield Roudnice, Czech Republic	✓
July 5 - 13	The European Aerobatic Championships, Hradec Kralové, Czech Republic	✓
July 26 - Aug 3	The European Advanced Glider Aerobatic Contest, Rothenburg, Germany	✓
August 1 - 10	The World Advanced Aerobatic Championship, Pendleton, Oregon, USA	✓
August 7 - 17	The European Glider Aerobatics Championship, Piastow Airfield, Radom, Poland	✓
August 17 - 24	The World Yak-52 Aerobatic Championship, Novosibirsk, Russia	✓
Contest Data File Archive and scoring software		
web by exploit-design		

Making Use of Technology

In the past two years, organizers have been making increasing use of easily available technology to make our competitions run more efficiently. As with all international events, communications is always a difficult issue, not only due to language differences but in distribution of important information.

I encourage all Commissions to adapt some of our ideas to your Championships.

All of our contest sites are usually covered by a WiFi network.

A software program is used to send mass SMS (text) messages to all of the mobile phones that were either issued by the organizers or to Team Managers' personal mobiles. Weather observations and announcements of all kinds were transmitted this way and everyone knows what is occurring during the Championships. These mobiles can be "disposable" types and

are relatively inexpensive.

Twitter has also been used to publish all of the SMS (text) messages that were sent out so they could be accessed via the internet.

Contest scores are uploaded throughout the day to www.civa-results.com by the Scoring Director. This facility is provided within ACRO, our scoring software, and is easy to use. The scores are instantly available to everyone who has WiFi access and a laptop or smartphone on the contest site and makes our competitions much more open and transparent.

If I am attending the competition myself as an official, I blog every day and sometimes several times a day with brief articles on contest developments with photos. This blog appears on the CIVA website. All Championships have websites of their own as well.

TechWatch

In the next few months, CIVA will be developing a new webpage which we have given the temporary name “TechWatch”. CIVA Project Manager will be Nick Buckenham of the UK.

TechWatch will provide a database of technical information on aerobatic aircraft, centering on mechanical malfunctions that users have experienced. Because each nation deals with mechanical problems in its own way and also because many of our aerobatic aircraft are licensed “Experimental”, owners and pilots do not have an effective way to communicate problems with their aircraft to other users. This failure or breakdown in communication has possibly led to failures occurring and costing lives. This is unacceptable.

In addition, over time TechWatch could serve as a database on mechanical issues that would be easily accessed (after perhaps a registration).

This new initiative is a result of discussions at the 2009 CIVA plenary meeting and is an international effort. Since German, American, Russian, and French-made aircraft are used by pilots all over the world, this initiative cannot be restricted to one country and its association’s members.

My thanks to Stéphane Desprez for helping structure the project and how it will go forward and to providing an FAI Project Manager as well so we can carry it out in an orderly and methodical way while at the same time, moving as fast as we can to get that information out there.

Conclusions

In summary, all of us in CIVA continue to learn from our events and come up with new ways to improve them. I am proud we are not too rigid to try new ideas but at the same time, we hold fast to our rules to give the pilots stable and predictable events in which to compete.

Some of the things I learned these past years which are worth repeating:

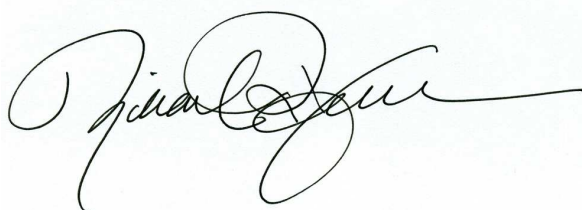
- There is well established and easy-to-use technology out there to improve communications at our Championships, to keep people well informed throughout the world, and to make competition organization more efficient. Commissions

should take advantage of all of them. Sometimes it is a matter of just knowing what is out there.

- It is very important to have emergency response and accident procedures in place. FAI provides an excellent document and this has been the basis of our Championships procedures. All Commissions should examine and implement such procedures.
- Websites are only useful if they are up-to-date and contain useful, recent information. “Blogging” on the CIVA website proved to be easy as I am sure it is on other Commission websites as well. FAI has been helpful in setting this up. I would recommend all Commissions to adopt this method of communicating. Otherwise, websites will not be visited by our constituents as they will be regarded as “old news”. Photos must be included.

Special thanks to Stéphane Desprez, Jean-Marc Badan, Cosette Mast, and Christine Rousson – the FAI staff with whom I had the most contact over the last year. It is wonderful to work with efficient and dedicated people.

CIVA will meet in plenary session in Oberhausen, Germany on 5-7 November 2010. Watch our website for updates.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael R. Heuer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael R. Heuer
President
FAI Aerobatics Commission (CIVA)