

Report from the FAI Environmental Commission to FAI General Conference 2009, Incheon, South Korea

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of EnvC took place on 17 January 2009 in Frankfurt, Germany. Three delegates and three alternative delegates attended. The key topics discussed included:

- On-going challenges to raise awareness among the NACs and ASCs for environmental issues and getting delegates of EnvC actively involved. Environmental matters are the responsibility of all, rather than solely of the EnvC. The number of participants attending our annual meeting demonstrates the low importance of the matter despite the fact that “the environmental challenge” is always used by senior management in NACs and FAI to find attention. I recall one exemplary statement: “In our country we have many challenging environmental problems raised by government and the public but apparently no pilot or functionary takes an interest to take it serious.”
- Follow-up on the FAI EMS Code - Environmental Management System (EMS) for FAI Air Sports Activities. Especially the Norway alternative delegate and the German alternative delegate presented some additional insight and ideas (see below).
- There is concern on the ongoing use of AVGAS 100LL fuel for powered aircrafts that still results in emissions of lead into the environment - Simple calculations show that tons of lead are annually exhausted in even small countries, not to speak of the global figures. Note: lead is a toxic element. Alternative fuel (MOGAS) is available and appears to be quite economic for decreasing overall costs of aircraft operations. Aircraft engine manufacturers need to change their design standards. We, the air sports community, have influence for use of alternative fuels, and even biological fuels are meanwhile available (e.g. a US based manufacturer presented his concept to potential customers at AERO 2009, Friedrichshafen, Germany).
- New Governmental Challenges, in particular EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency) bring up environmental topics from an air space regulatory perspective, basically driven by aspects of commercial aviation. This is a challenge to be faced not only by EnvC. Other countries experience similar challenges.
- The delegates presented country reports on various environmental topics. Please see the meeting minutes on the FAI webpage.

Follow-up on FAI EMS Code - Environmental Management System (EMS) for FAI Air Sports Activities

This FAI EMS Code - was enacted at the FAI General Conference 2008. We consider this a major achievement of EnvC but the resources to further develop the idea and to provide tools and procedures has not really advanced in 2009 due to lack of manpower. Milestones can be reviewed in the 2008 report of EnvC. No application from any club or air sport activity to be awarded with a FAI EMS Code Certificate and Flag was received to date.

While he generally acknowledged the FAI EMS Code initiative, Norway’s delegate proposed that it should be simplified as far as possible to make it more useable at grass root level. This proposal was supported by a number of suggestions.

In the January meeting, the German alternative delegate presented the outline of the “Sport Audit Luftsport” approach to establishing a type of environmental management system tailored for air fields. This far developed approach is already in its implementation stage and could be used as a proxy mechanism for air sports activities to achieve FAI EMS. The full German approach to achieve the European Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) for Air Sports is a four-layer step-by-step

process, in which respondents are led through a series of questions and checklists in order to complete each level of the Scheme. Sample documents and tools are supplied to enable the respondent easily to prepare the required paperwork. So far, this material is only available in German language but search on funding for translation is underway.

Other Topics of Interest to EnvC

Several delegates from NACs provided input for this report on their current environmental initiatives and plans:

Germany

- Training material on “Nature Protection for Pilots” for the licensed and pilot in training is available as booklets, folders and on the DAeC environmental website (<http://www.daec.de/uw/>). This is professionally made and enables the user to get simple, basic information how to better behave in nature and in flight. To note: the entire effort of creating this material was funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection (BFN).
- There is also a publication from BFN how to apply the Natura 2000 and Bird Protection Guidelines of the European Union. While this may be quite special information, it presents two examples where air fields are exemplarily described as habitats enabling survival of rare and endangered species.
- The “Sport Audit Luftsport” approach will likely be funded again in 2010, and may enable other European countries clubs to participate, if they find a German partner club.

Italy

- Promotion of photovoltaic energy use for utilities on air fields.
- Regular evaluations of noise impacts of flying activities on the surrounding environment and residential areas, and the development of appropriate take off and landing procedures and flight patterns around air fields.
- Development and implementation of appropriate waste disposal concepts for local air fields and clubs.

Switzerland

- Annual Report 2008/09 Switzerland - Switzerland continues to benefit from relatively mild environmental pressure on general aviation. Activities against general aviation are practically limited to mountain landing sites. The Swiss government has started to put forward the implementation of its definition of landscape rest zones where aerial activities will be prohibited.
- Definition of landscape rest zones - The Swiss government has started to put forward the implementation of its definition of landscape rest zones. Within their boundaries, aerial activities will be prohibited. The Swiss regulator (Federal Office of Civil Aviation - FOCA) will hold the first stakeholder meeting on September 16, 2009.
- Mountain landing sites - Pressure is rising from various ecological groups to close existing airstrips in the Alpien mountains. The Aero-Club of Switzerland und its affiliated associations for powered flight, glacier pilots, helicopter pilots, helicopter operators, local aero-clubs, etc. orchestrate the arguments to keep all mountain landing sites open to the benefit of mountain flying, education, training etc.
- Migrant and aquatic bird reservations - Eight new sites for migrant and aquatic birds have been defined where aviation activities including model flying are prohibited.
- Aircraft Piston Engine Emissions Data - FOCA has initiated a project to measure aircraft piston engine emissions. All Swiss aircraft have been classified according to their engine emissions. In future, new engines will be incorporated in the list and further improvements of the data and calculation methodology are planned.
- Aircraft noise abatement - In a joint effort, FOCA, FOEN (Federal Office for the Environment) and the Aero-Club of Switzerland have distributed a CD containing an educational program for noise abatement procedures to be followed by all Swiss pilots.

USA

- There seems to be very little ongoing regarding environmental awareness from sport aviation activities in the USA. It appears not to happen. One reason for thinking that is that there is absolutely no feedback to the USA delegate who is a very communicative person. Not even complaints saying "FAI/you can't tell us what to do".
- On a local basis a west coast glider club is finally making preparations to install by year-end a photovoltaic-charged battery electric system to use instead of the current Diesel generator system which will still be used for backup when there is not enough sun to keep the batteries charged or when the usage is greater than battery capacity.

Finances

This topic, quiet for some years, comes up again. The President of this Technical Commission is not able to attend the General Conference 2009 because there is no funding for travel expenses. While still appointed as delegate by the NAC, the status of FAI Commission President excludes me from refunding. The FAI appears also not able to resolve this issue, as the same situation happens to other delegates to commissions who are not reimbursed by their NACs. It is, however, correct that some NACs carry a high burden for sending delegates to air sports and technical commissions of FAI for the benefit of all air sports globally.

I am raising this issue as the continued efforts of FAI to raise third party funds have reportedly resulted in some success. Can some of these funds be assigned to the "poor" technical and air sports commissions of FAI?

Solar Impulse

This project of Bertrand Picard is certainly the most interesting project of our time in the technical environmental arena. We all should follow this effort closely to find out what modern engineering can make possible. This is not only important for aviation but for our all live. I am curious how we live, commute, get power, and fly in some 10 – 20 years.

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President, FAI Environmental Commission

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