



## About FAI

An introduction to the  
Fédération Aéronautique Internationale  
The World Air Sports Federation



## INTRODUCTION

The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, FAI - The World Air Sports Federation, was founded in 1905.

It is an IOC-recognised, non-governmental and non-profit-making international organisation with the basic aim of furthering aeronautical and astronautical activities worldwide. Its main responsibilities are ratifying world and continental records and coordinating the organisation of international competitions.

After more than a century of steady growth, FAI now has more than 100 member countries and provides a strong network for air sports participants around the world.

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## 1 ORIGINS

The start of the 20th Century was marked by the pioneering flights of pilots such as Clément Ader, the Wright Brothers and Santos-Dumont, the proliferation of aeronautical competitions, and the raft of increasingly rapid technological advances that confirmed it as the beginning of the modern aviation era.

A small group of visionary men recognised the need for an international federation to coordinate and give direction to the growing field of aeronautical activity. The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale was thus founded on 14 October 1905.

More than a century later, in spite of the emergence of new technologies and of numerous air sport disciplines, the objectives of FAI have essentially remained the same:

- To make evident the essentially international spirit of aeronautics as a powerful instrument for bringing all people together in mutual understanding and friendship regardless of political, racial or religious considerations, thereby helping to create international goodwill and thus build a better and more peaceful world.
- To promote physical and moral qualities, technical knowledge and skill as crucial to aeronautical activities and air sports.
- To bring together the air sports men and women of the world in international competition.
- To educate young people through sport in the spirit of mutual understanding and friendship.
- To co-ordinate its Members' separate efforts to further aeronautics and astronautics throughout the world.
- To ensure adequate access to airspace for all who wish to fly.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of information and discussion of mutual problems with other elements of the civil aeronautics world.

## 2 ORGANISATION

To fulfil its objectives and meet the evolving needs of each air sport and area of activity, FAI comprises the following elements:

- The General Conference, the supreme policy-making body, defines the aims of FAI, determines its Statutes and By-Laws, and elects the President and the Executive Board. The General Conference convenes once a year.
- The Executive Board is the principal executive body of FAI, responsible for implementing the policies and decisions made by the General Conference.
- The Air Sport Commissions control the activities of the different sports governed by FAI: Aeromodelling, Amateur-built and Experimental Aircraft, Ballooning, Drones, General Aviation, Glider and Power Aerobatics, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Microlights and Paramotors, Paragliding, Rotorcraft, Skydiving and Space.
- The Technical Commissions control non-sporting activities such as Aviation Medicine, Education and Environmental issues.

The member nations of FAI are represented by their “National Air Sport Controls” (NACs). At the General Conference, voting powers are held by FAI Active Members and by the Air Sport Commissions.

FAI Regional Vice Presidents are appointed by FAI Executive Board to increase the management resources of FAI and provide the Executive Board with a tool for effective regional presence and a mechanism to promote air sports in a particular region.

FAI Vice Presidents are the Vice Presidents representing Active Members and the Presidents of the Air Sport Commissions.

The FAI Secretariat is managed by the Secretary General, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the federation.

### 3 AIR SPORTS

The air sports governed by FAI are:

- [Aeromodelling](#)
- [Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft](#)
- [Ballooning](#)
- [Drones](#)
- [General Aviation](#)
- [Gliding](#)
- [Hang Gliding](#)
- [Microlights and Paramotors](#)
- [Paragliding](#)
- [Power and Glider Aerobatics](#)
- [Rotorcraft](#)
- [Skydiving](#)
- [Space](#)

### 4 FAI WORLD AIR GAMES

The [FAI World Air Games](#) is the premier international multi-discipline air sports event, fielding the world's top athletes. Flagship event of the Federation, the Games are a combination of elite competition and spectacular demonstrations that exemplify the very best that air sports have to offer.

With this multi-discipline event, FAI strives to foster new vocations and motivate new generations of air sports fans, while promoting ethical values such as mutual understanding and respect. Other objectives include the promotion of FAI and air sports, and the building of a legacy for the Games.

The 2015 FAI World Air Games was held in Dubai. It was organised by the Emirates Aerosports Federation and took place from 1 to 12 December 2015.

The previous editions of the Games took place in Turkey (1997), Spain (2001) and Italy (2009).

### 5 CHAMPIONSHIPS AND EVENTS

The awarding and supervision of international competitions is one of the main tasks of FAI. The rules – the Sporting Codes – drawn up by the Air Sport Commissions are used by national members to organise numerous competitions each year. World championships for each sport and discipline are generally held every two years, alternately with continental championships.

Every year, over 40 world or continental championships are listed on the [FAI Events Calendar](#), and many other sporting events such as Grand Prix, Cups and miscellaneous international competitions are organised in accordance with the FAI Sporting Code.

FAI is also keen to be part of the extended sports community through participation in multi-sport events, whether global or regional. Since 1997, sport parachuting has been part of the official program of The

World Games. Parachuting Canopy Piloting and Drone Racing will feature in the programme of the 2022 World Games in Birmingham, Alabama, USA. And in 2018, Paragliding were present at the Asian Games – an air sports first.

## 6 RECORDS

Since the beginning of aviation, pilots have always tried to surpass themselves: to fly further, faster and higher. New technology enables constant progression in aviation records, and generates useful spin-off applications: for example, the pressurized cabin invented by Professor Auguste Piccard to carry out the first flight in the stratosphere in 1931 – a world altitude record – today allows millions of passengers to travel comfortably on board aircraft that fly at the outer edge of the atmosphere.

Drawing up rules, and controlling and ratifying aeronautical and astronautical [World and Continental Records](#) represent an important part of FAI's activities. Since the first flights were recorded in 1906, FAI has registered some 18,000 World Records to date.

Charles Lindbergh's historical flight across the Atlantic Ocean, and Yuri Gagarin's first human flight into space are amongst the great aeronautical and astronautical achievements recorded by FAI. All air sport disciplines are represented in FAI World and Continental Record Archives, from human-powered flight at one extreme, to space flight at the other.

## 7 AWARDS

Prestigious [medals and diplomas](#) allow FAI to give public recognition to those who have made outstanding contributions to aeronautics and astronautics, especially in the field of sporting aviation. Many of the recipients honoured by FAI, for example Jean Batten and Bertrand Piccard, have had their names closely associated with the history and developments of aeronautics and astronautics.

## 8 EDUCATION

FAI strives to [raise public awareness and understanding of air and space activities](#), especially among young people who represent the future of aviation and air sports. To this end, FAI has developed several programs aimed at explaining flight, and teaching young people about the many fascinating careers within air sports and aviation.

Experience shows that teachers and pupils have a latent interest in aeronautics. When correctly integrated into traditional school programs, themes relating to aviation and space add a new dimension to the teaching of history, geography and physics. The educational material made available helps teachers to create a stimulating environment for their pupils. FAI also runs an annual [Young Artists Contest](#) and the [FAI Recommended Museum scheme](#).

## 9 WOMEN WITH WINGS

FAI is committed to encouraging women to take part and compete in air sports, a field in which they are currently under represented. To this end, the FAI website regularly features inspirational articles about and interviews with women who fly. The aim of this series of articles titled [Women with Wings](#) is to raise awareness of those women already in air sports, and to encourage others to get involved.

From world firsts to competitions and world records, women have been pioneers throughout the history of aviation and air sports. From the barnstorming days of Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, and Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia, to Seiko Fukuoka, twice FAI Women's World Paragliding Champion and multiple world-record holder, women can - and do - set the air sports agenda.

## 10 INNOVATION

Just like their predecessors who, at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, envisioned the huge potential of aeronautics and founded FAI, today's decision makers are already planning how [FAI will face future trends and challenges](#).

One of FAI's main priorities is to encourage new recruits to take up air sports, and to improve the visibility and attractiveness of these sports to the media and the general public, including young people. Among FAI's long-term projects are the exploitation of FAI's aeronautical heritage and fund of expertise, the further development of the World Air Games concept, and the encouragement of new technologies and sports such as drones and indoor skydiving.

## 11 MEDIA & INFORMATION

Fast, loud, hair-raising: there is no doubt that air sports are exciting. And now, technological advances allow us to get fans and spectators up close and personal with the thrills, spills and awe-inspiring feats being accomplished hundreds of metres up in the sky - opening up the wonderful world of air sports to a new mass audience.

From traditional broadcast media to the phone in your hand, multi-platform digital media is helping to bring the exhilaration and joy of air sports alive for millions of viewers around the globe.

Social media used by the FAI includes:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Flickr](#)
- [Youtube](#)

FAI sends out a [regular email newsletter](#) containing news, interviews and updates about FAI-related international events and records.

The [FAI Members Info](#) service is a regular bulletin designed to improve the communication between the FAI Executive Board and the FAI Office with all FAI Members around the world.

FAI also [provides resources](#) for journalists and others in the media, and helps them find the information and material they need.

Furthermore, FAI collaborates with and provides content for the [Olympic Channel](#): a global platform where fans can experience the power of sport and the excitement of the Olympic Games all year round.

## 12 FAI IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY

Represented at the International Civil Aviation Organisation ([ICAO](#)), FAI takes an active part in the decision-making process relating to flight safety, pilot training and licensing, and air space regulations.

The International Olympic Committee ([IOC](#)) recognised FAI as an Olympic Federation in 1985.

FAI is a member of the Global Association of International Sport Federations ([GAISF](#)), of the Association of IOC Recognized International Sports Federations ([ARISF](#)), and of the International World Games Association ([IWGA](#)).

## 13 SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP

Attracting new sponsors and commercial partners is part of FAI's role. Building and maintaining productive commercial relationships allows FAI to focus on its core role of developing air sports around the world.

[LeaseWeb](#) is an official FAI Partner and hosts FAI servers, including the FAI website. It is a leading cloud-hosting provider, serving more than 17,500 customers. Founded 20 years ago in the Netherlands by two pilots, the company employs nearly 500 people from over 35 countries across its international offices and data centres in the US, Singapore, the Netherlands and Germany.

[Noosphere Ventures](#) is the FAI Global Technical Partner. The US asset management firm has developed an event management system in cooperation with FAI to provide applications that include creating event websites, integrating with FAI databases, receiving scores from external scoring systems, and allowing competitors and organisers to communicate in an effective way.

## 14 COVID-19 INFORMATION

The FAI has issued technical and practical recommendations on air sport operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are compiled in a document which also provides useful links to WHO and other organisations such as the UK Civil Aviation Authority.

- [Air sports and COVID-19](#)

## 15 FIND OUT MORE...

... FAI activities: Please consult the various internet links provided throughout this document, as well as those listed below:

- [News](#)
- [Statutes and Sporting Codes](#)
- [National Member organisations](#)
- [Competitions \(Sporting Calendar\)](#)
- [Records](#)
- [Awards](#)
- [FAI Young Artists Contest](#)
- [Information for the media](#)

... flying: Please contact the national organisation representing [FAI in your country](#).



Fédération Aéronautique Internationale  
Maison du Sport International  
Avenue de Rhodanie 54  
CH-1007 Lausanne  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 21 345 10 70  
[www.fai.org](http://www.fai.org)  
[info@fai.org](mailto:info@fai.org)