



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

2024 FAI Awards Ceremony: Honouring air sports' greatest contributors

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 20 November 2024 – **The prestigious 2024 FAI Awards Ceremony, a pinnacle event in the world of air sports, took place last night in the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Hosted by the Saudi Aviation Club (SAC), the ceremony recognised and celebrated the women and men who have made extraordinary contributions to aeronautics and astronautics.**

The event marked the **commencement of the 118th FAI General Conference**, which has drawn delegates representing FAI member organisations from across the globe.

FAI President David Monks and SAC General Supervisor Dr. Ahmed F. Alfahaid presented the Medals and Diplomas to the distinguished awardees who were present at the ceremony.

FAI GOLD AIR MEDAL

- Sebastian KAWA (POL)
Sebastian Kawa was awarded the FAI Gold Air Medal, FAI's highest accolade, for his dozens of triumphs in international championships, his significant contribution to aviation promotion through publications and televised programs, and his admirable engagement in humanitarian aid during the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine.

Sebastian Kawa commented: *"I never dreamed that one day I would become the first Pole to receive this prestigious honour. This FAI Gold Air Medal stands as a powerful testament to gliding's significant role in aviation history and its potential for future innovations. Although often overshadowed by more prominent aviation milestones, gliding has been a crucial driver of aeronautical advancements. Sport thrives on competition, which in turn MOTIVATES development. Gliding has consistently pushed the boundaries of pilot skill, aerodynamic design, and meteorological forecasting. Moreover, it offers a unique perspective, allowing us to witness the beauty of our planet from silent heights."*

LOUIS BLÉRIOT DIPLOMA

- Miguel A. ITURMENDI COPADO (USA)
For his powered aeroplane world record of 4959 metres in altitude in C-1b Group 6 (electric) on 2 June 2023 in Minden, NV (USA).

Miguel A. Iturmendi Copado said: *"This Louis Blériot Medal Award recognises our achievements in electric aviation, and our quest to demonstrate to the aerospace community that the electrification of general aviation is not only possible now, but also offers a better, cleaner and more efficient option for society in the near future."*

PAUL TISSANDIER DIPLOMA

- Ayed ALKASME (KSA)
For his contribution to the Saudi Aviation Club, efforts in launching and hosting airshows, and his support for aviation education and culture.
- Peter HARSFALVI (HUN)
For his contribution to Hungarian aviation through leadership, dedication, and unwavering support for aviation competitions.

Peter Harsfalvi said: *"Receiving the Paul Tissandier Diploma from the FAI is a significant honour for me. It represents a recognition of my contributions to the field of aviation, and it is incredibly*

rewarding to be acknowledged by such a prestigious organisation. This award not only celebrates past achievements but also motivates me to continue pursuing excellence in aviation. I am grateful for the support and encouragement from my peers and mentors, which has been instrumental in reaching this milestone."

- Mayank NAGPAL (IND)
For his contribution to Indian aviation through dedication to aviation safety and his leadership in the realm of skydiving.

Mayank Nagpal said: *"Receiving the Paul Tissandier Diploma is an absolute dream come true. It's a testament to the countless hours of dedication, training, and passion poured into the sport. This honour recognises the thrill of pushing boundaries and the joy of soaring through the skies. It's not just an award, but a celebration of the incredible journey and the unstinted support of the Indian Air Sports Fraternity and Armed Forces that makes it all possible."*

HENRI MIGNET DIPLOMA

- Frédéric MARON (BEL)
For his contribution to the development of an aircraft, creating a new type of gas balloon that is hydrogen certified and fully customised through the use of innovative materials and designs, achieving a lighter aircraft and greater flight ranges.

Frédéric Maron said: *"Receiving this Henri Mignet Award from FAI is a profound honour, celebrating the innovation and commitment behind the development and construction of my hydrogen balloon. This recognition fuels my passion for pushing the limits of the sky through innovation."*

Editor's Notes

- [Full list of all 2024 FAI Awards winners and their citations](#)
- [Information about the different awards](#)
- [Pictures of the Ceremony](#)
- [Pictures of the awardees only](#)
- [Sebastian Kawa's biography](#)
- [News: Gliding pilot Sebastian Kawa's awarded with FAI Gold Air Medal](#)
- [118th FAI General Conference website](#)
- [Conference logo](#)

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About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

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