



CIA President's Annual Report to the FAI General Conference 2007 Rhodes / Greece

Highlights 2007

1. CIA Annual Meeting

At the 2006 annual meeting of the FAI Ballooning Commission in Moscow, the UAE NAC delegate, Mr Abdul Aziz Naser, made a proposal to hold the 2007 meeting of the Commission in Abu Dhabi from Wednesday 7 March to Saturday 10 March 2007. In this proposal, the delegate undertook that the UAE would provide, in addition to normal conference facilities:

- Free accommodation for Delegates, and Subcommittee and Working Group members (2 rooms per country)
- 50% reduction on airfares with Etihad Airlines (subject to confirmation)

Another proposal to host the meeting was made by Germany, host of the 2007 European Hot Air Ballooning Championship. This proposal was much less financially attractive to delegates. The result of the plenary session vote was: For Abu Dhabi - 23 votes, for Germany - 2 votes, Abstain - 1.

There was thus a massive vote in favour of holding the meeting in Abu Dhabi. However, the meeting had to be cancelled late in 2006, because we had received no further information about the arrangements proposed by Abu Dhabi. Germany was then asked if they were prepared to organise the meeting, despite losing the vote in Moscow. They refused. It was not possible to hold the meeting at the FAI headquarters in Lausanne, because all hotels there were full, as a result of the Car Show in Geneva. As a last resort, the CIA President therefore arranged the meeting himself, in his home city of Luxembourg. This meant that the FAI Ballooning Commission had to pay a total of Euros 19'413 in unbudgeted expenses. In these circumstances, where the FAI Ballooning Commission delegates accepted in good faith a proposal made by a duly accredited delegate of the Emirates Aviation Association, we believe that the EAA has an obligation to arrange reimbursement of this sum.

The CIA's 2007 Plenary meeting was thus held in Luxembourg from March 7 to 10, 2007. 25 NACs were present or represented. The FAI was represented by Max Bishop and Jean-Marc Badan. The meeting successfully dealt with its agenda and among the items discussed the following are noteworthy:

- CIA delegates reported on ballooning activities in their respective countries (2001-2006 statistics are available from the FAI secretariat)
- The delegates appointed and approved the FAI International Juries and key officials for the 2007 sanctioned events.
- The delegates welcomed the CIA's OLC SC's efforts that the CIA World On-Line-Contest project should become operational as soon as a suitable platform and portal had been found by FAI.
- The delegates decided to financially support the efforts of Europe Air Sports with 1,000.- Euros
- The delegates extensively discussed the reports of its Safety and Competitors' subcommittees and a presentation by Les Purfield on the "Increased Risk of Collisions at FAI Category 1 Events." The PowerPoint presentation is available as a separate file and can be downloaded from the Safety and Education Subcommittee Web page at: www.fai.org/ballooning/safety.asp
- The delegates took note of the result of a recent questionnaire in which three out of four pilots responding supported observer based competitions and strongly encouraged the organisers of the **18th World Hot Air Balloon Championship in Hofkirchen (Austria)** to stage the event with official observers.
- The delegates decided to grant a sanction to France to organise the **16th European Hot Air Balloon Championship** in Brissac-Quincé France (West France, near Angers) from August, 21st - 29th, 2009
- The delegates decided to grant a sanction to Russia for the organisation of the **World Hot Air Airship Championship** in Tsarskoye Selo (St. Petersburg), Russia, from June 21-28, 2008
- The delegates approved the new CIA Events Calendar, the 2007 budget and the 2006 accounts.
- The delegates decided that the CIA HALL of FAME scheme shall in the future become a "VIRTUAL HALL of FAME". The scheme shall be managed by the CIA, on a dedicated website, under the authority of the CIA Secretary.
- The delegates re-elected the CIA Bureau for one more one-year term.
- The delegates decided to accept an invitation from the Austrian delegate to hold the 2008 CIA Plenary meeting in Salzburg (Austria) from 5th - 8th March 2008.

2. Major 2007 CIA Events

15th European Hot Air Balloon Championship

The event was successfully held in Magdeburg (Germany) from August 16 to 23.

79 competitors flew 20 tasks, and the new European Champion is François Messine from France (15.161 points). Second place went to **Uwe Schneider** (Germany, 14.613 points), and third place to **Markus Pieper** (Germany, 14.260 points).

51th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett

The event should have taken place in Bruxelles (Belgium) from September 13th to 22nd 2007, organised by the Royal Belgian Aero Club and its affiliated Ballooning Federation. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled by the event organisers just prior to take-off, due to the fact that the organisers were unable to secure the required flight permits/ATC clearances from the Belgian ATC authorities. Leading to this fiasco was the fact that the organisers insisted on a launch site close to Brussels International Airport, and did not heed the CIA's advice to move the event to a less ATC vulnerable venue (e.g. St. Hubert in the Belgian Ardennes, from where the Coupe was successfully launched in 2000). It is very unfortunate that this prestigious event had to be cancelled for ATC reasons, a first in the long history of the event, and it is to be feared that this cancellation may serve as an example and argument for future cancellations. The CIA therefore will have to look very closely at the existing GB rules and at its event sanctioning program, to analyze the shortcomings and to take the necessary steps to avoid any risks for a repeat of this situation. Organisers, officials and competitors went to great length to make the 2007 Coupe GB a successful event, but the inflexible attitude of a few has demonstrated that our activity runs a serious risk of becoming irrelevant if we do not carefully manage our organisers and our environment. The 2007 GB event organisers will most certainly be faced with severe consequences (financial compensation requests from the pilots, dissatisfied sponsors, etc.), and the CIA will certainly be seen as a not having taken the necessary steps to avoid this fiasco. The next CIA meeting promises to be very interesting in this respect.

3. Other CAT1 events successfully staged in 2007:

World Balloon Trophy & Honda Cup 2007	AX	Echternach/Luxembourg	25 th to 29 th July
1 th Coupe d'Europe & Ladies World Cup	AX	Mainfonds/France	2 nd to 5 th August
2007 OMV Challenge & Worlds Test Event	AX	Hofkirchen/Austria	15 th to 23 rd September
7th MOL Cup & AX Championship	AX	Debrecen/Hungary	2nd to 6th October
2007 Tochigi AX International Championship	AX	Tochigi/Japan	20 th to 25 th November

4. FAI Championships to come:

18 th AX FAI World Championship	AX	Hofkirchen / Austria	13 th to 20 th Sept. 2008
8 th BX FAI World Championship	BX	St. Petersburg/Russia	21 st to 28 th June 2008
2009 World Air Games	AX/AA	Torino/Italy	7 th to 13 th June 2009
16 th FAI European AX Championship	AX	Brissac-Quincé/France	21 st to 29 th August 2009

5. FAI Class A and B World Records

FAI has approved **10 Airship and 9 Free Balloon World Records** during 2006. Details of these records are available on the FAI webpage at http://records.fai.org/balloons/#history_A

6. FAI / CIA Awards

Montgolfier Diploma-best performance Gas Balloon	Philippe De Cock and Ronny Van Havere	Belgium
Montgolfier Diploma-best performance Hot Air Balloon	Dr. Vijaypat Singhania	India
Santos Dumont Gold Airship Medal	Stanislaw Fuodoroff	Russia
CIA Hall of Fame Inductees (posthumous)	Masashi Kakuda	Japan
CIA Hall of Fame Inductees (living)	Don Cameron	UK

7. General considerations

Although ballooning is apparently doing well, the activity is struggling with the same problems as other Air Sports Commissions (air space, licensing, airworthiness, equipment, medical, etc.), and in addition with some homemade ones that have not yet been properly addressed by us:

- safety issues at our events,
- modernisation of our existing competition formats,
- development of attractive sporting events for the media and public,
- communication with the grass roots balloonists,
- rapid aging of our pilot population and the difficulties to recruit new pilots,
- small proportion of female pilots and competitors.

These are the major challenges for ballooning in the future, and we are grateful for the assistance provided by the FAI Members to help us tackle these issues. NAC support is vitally important and only through the participation of their delegates in our Commission's work can we achieve positive results. It is my honour and pleasure to acknowledge the support provided by our delegates, the FAI Secretary General and his staff in Lausanne, and to sincerely thank them for their efforts on behalf of the CIA.

J.C. Weber,
President, CIA