

CIVL President's Report to the FAI General Conference 2009

Sporting Activity and Competition Review

It is a pleasure to be able to report again an increase in both Hang Gliding and Paragliding activities internationally. More than 250 Category 2 competitions were sanctioned worldwide. It is nice to see that in FAI sanctioned Paragliding Accuracy competitions, for example, in addition to European member countries and Japan, other Asian countries including China, Chinese Taipei, Malaysia and Indonesia are now represented. As a result, the number of PG Accuracy pilots now on our database has increased dramatically by 25% to 818. In the FAI World Paragliding Accuracy Championships held in Croatia, a record 17 countries were represented. Certainly the inclusion of Paragliding Accuracy in the World Air Games 2009 has contributed to increasing interest in this discipline worldwide.

In fact, the number of registered pilots and FAI sanctioned competitions in all CIVL disciplines has increased again in 2009. Our sport continues to be dominated by Paragliding XC, with some 6000 registered competition pilots - four times the number of hang gliding pilots. Furthermore, at the World PG Championships in Mexico, 44 FAI member nations participated, probably the highest number in any CIVL sanctioned competition to date.

In 2009 there were three CIVL-sanctioned Category 1 World Championships, plus the HG & PG elements of the World Air Games, and six practice events for Category 1 championships planned for 2010.

2009 Category 1 Championships were:

- World Paragliding Cross Country Championships at Valle de Bravo in Mexico
- World Hang Gliding Cross Country Championships at Laragne in France
- World Paragliding Accuracy Championships at Ivanec/Trakoscan in Croatia

2009 Test events for 2010 Category 1 Championships were:

- (Pre-) European Hang Gliding Cross Country Championships at Ager in Spain
- (Pre-) European Paragliding Cross Country Championships at Abtenau in Austria



- (Pre-) European Paragliding Accuracy Championships at Inonu / Eskisehir in Turkey
- (Pre-) World Hang Gliding classes 2 & 5 and class 1 Championships for women at Tegelberg in Germany
- (Pre-) Asian Paragliding Cross Country Championships at Yoshinogawa in Japan
- (Pre-) World Hang Gliding and Paragliding Aerobatics Championships at Omega in Italy

It is thanks to the NACs that support these events, the event organisers and all the volunteers who invest their free time in assisting to organise the competitions, that we are able to run and enjoy these competitions in a safe way. In the past years we have already referred to the lack of enough qualified volunteer officials for our steward and jury database. Although we have trained some new stewards in the past year, this is a continuing concern that might risk the validity of future championships. We again are asking the NACs and HG and PG federations to help encourage volunteers for these roles.

Future Championships

During the CIVL Plenary Meeting in February 2009 in Hall in Tirol in Austria the following Category 1 competitions for 2011 have been awarded:

- The World Hang Gliding Cross Country Championships to Sigillo in Italy
- The World Paragliding Cross Country Championships to Piedrahita in Spain
- The World Paragliding Accuracy Championships to Kuncice pod Ondrejnikem in the Czech Republic

Online competitions

CIVL began the trial season of its WXC (world XC online contest) in October 2008. There are already 70,000 registered flights from 5,000 pilots with flights in 76 countries. Total flown distance overall is 1,400,000 km.

Safety

Following the February Plenary, CIVL has instigated a number of new safety initiatives. The "HG Pitch Stability" Working Group, the HG Subcommittee and the CIVL Bureau are continuing to work on a permanent ruling that will contribute to HG safety. Hang Glider Sprog Angle Measurement was started during 2008, with a positive response from pilots. This year, a more strict measuring process was undertaken at the HG World Championship in Laragne. Pilots are considerably better informed about the possible dangers of incorrectly adjusted sprogs.



Sadly, there was a fatality during the World Paragliding Championships in Valle de Bravo in Mexico (Stefan Schmoker from Switzerland). In fact, there were some alarming figures from this competition: 2 badly injured competitors, 5 mid-air collisions and 13 reserve parachute deployments.

Some additional safety concerns:

- Some mid-air collisions are not taken seriously by pilots
- Cloud flying seems to be a regular and sometimes intentional occurrence.
- There are insufficient rules covering minimum standards for some flying equipment

As a result, a Paragliding Safety Working Group was established at the Plenary Meeting in February. This Working Group is tasked to look at further ways of improving safety in paragliding competitions and liaise with the CIVL Safety & Training Subcommittee. Issues include: setting standards for flying equipment including helmets and harnesses,

The Pre-European PG Championship in Abtenau in Austria was a very safe competition, where no incidents or accidents happened.

The CIVL Bureau, the HG & PG Subcommittees and the Safety & Training Subcommittee realize that much more work needs to be done to improve safety in our sports. Safety is and stays the CIVL's 1st priority!!

Altitude Verification

All pilots use GPS devices for recording their flights. The downloaded tracklog is used for scoring purposes. It can also be used to check for infringements of altitude and airspace limits, and sometimes to provide evidence to prove (or disprove) cloud flying. However, some instruments have only GPS sensors, some barometric sensors and some have both. The Altitude Verification Working Group is discussing whether to regulate which type of sensor should be used to ensure consistent and accurate altitude measurements.

The World Air Games

Hang Gliding and Paragliding were well represented in the World Air Games with 4 disciplines: HG & PG Aerobatics, PG Accuracy and HG Speed Gliding. We especially thank the "FAI WAG coordinator", Jean-Marc Badan and the HG and PG experts, Dennis Pagen and Louise Joselyn, for their contributions, work and energy to make this event a success.

Volunteers

Concluding this report I wish to thank all the volunteers, like the people in the worldwide HG & PG federations, the people working for the NACs, the people in



the organisations of the many competitions worldwide, the members of the CIVL Subcommittees and Working Groups, the CIVL Bureau members and the enthusiastic staff at the FAI headquarters in Lausanne, who make it possible that the HG and PG pilots worldwide can enjoy our sports in a responsible and safe way.

Special thanks to the Secretary General of the FAI, Max Bishop, who will soon leave the FAI. I think that not many people know how much Max has done for Hang Gliding and Paragliding in addition to his work for the FAI and other air sports. I wish to thank Max for all his advice and guidance over the years, and wish him a healthy and happy "retirement". It has been a pleasure to work with him and I am sure that we will miss his enthusiastic devotion to our sports.

Flip Koetsier
CIVL President