



## **Report from the FAI Environmental Commission to FAI General Conference 2008, Saint-Vincent, Italy**

### **Current Activities of FAI Environmental Commission (EnvC)**

#### *Annual Meeting*

The annual meeting of EnvC took place on 12 January 2008 in Frankfurt, Germany. Five delegates, two alternative delegates, and one country observer attended. The topics discussed included:

- Progress of development of FAI EMS Code - Environmental Management System (EMS) for FAI Air Sports Activities. This project is discussed in more detail below.
- World Air Games – Current status and potential involvement of EnvC.
- Translation of Articles – The delegates agreed that funds for further translations will be requested should written information material of environmental importance for worldwide promotion be identified.
- Checklist for Environment-Friendly Air Sport Events – A desirable project for which promotion material in German language is available that could be adopted to develop a guideline to air sport event organizers worldwide. No volunteer was identified yet to take over the lead for this project.
- Country reports on various topics presented by Delegates and Observer – Climate change/pollution, noise and social impacts originating from airfields, limitations of take-off numbers per airfield and season, limitation on availability of AVGAS fuel (100LL) and alternative fuel types.

#### *Draft FAI EMS Code - Environmental Management System (EMS) for FAI Air Sports Activities*

This project to develop and implement a FAI EMS Code for FAI Air Sports Activities was conceptually launched in 2006.

FAI encourages air sport participants globally to stand for the principles of environmental protection and nature conservation. EMS can be used to improve and better control processes which can influence and impact the environment. Industry on a global basis has recognized this and applies EMS since many years. The same concept can be applied by air sports to improve and better control its air sports related processes.

FAI promotes the implementation of EMS for FAI air sports activities. The purpose is to demonstrate to the public that air sports are aware of influences and impacts to the environment and are seriously considering and implementing means to limit such impacts.



The FAI EMS Code defines how existing international, national, and other recognized EMS standards are applied within the context of FAI activities.

Progress to substantiate the Code was made in 2007 and 2008, and the following milestones were achieved:

- January 2008: Presentation and discussion of first draft version to annual meeting of EnvC.
- By April 2008: Comments from EnvC delegates were received and integrated into Code.
- April 2008: Circulation of Draft EMS Code to FAI Air Sport Commission Presidents and FAI Executive Board.
- 10 May 2008: Presentation and discussion of Code at meeting of FAI Executive Board and FAI Sport Commission Presidents in Lausanne.
- June 2008: Constructive comments from IGC and CIA were received reflecting the specific modes of operation and the use of FAI terminology.
- July/August 2008: Evaluation of comments and incorporation into new version of FAI EMS Code.

The FAI EMS Code for FAI Air Sports Activities is about ready for publication and use. It will be presented during the General Conference 2008. We look forward to discussions.

## **Other Topics of Interest to EnvC**

### ***Steadily rising Energy Costs***

The increasing prices in fuel, especially aviation fuels are of real concern to air sports. As air sports practitioners we should reconsider and change our routine behaviours now. While sport aircraft designers and manufacturers are developing engines and technical equipment for alternative fuels or alternative power sources, this process will take time. We should be aware of such developments and support them.

Projects such the Solar Impulse are examples of the visions we should be aware as a chance for change.

### ***Generation of Alternative Energy on Flying Sites***

Alternative and regenerative energy sources such as from windmills or photovoltaic panels are meanwhile generally available. While large windmills potentially pose a safety concern in the vicinity of flying sites, small windmills and photovoltaic power generation units could be installed nearby or on flying sites (e.g. on hangar roofs). Such alternative energy can be:

- Stored in batteries at locations which are not connected to the public grid, or



- Fed into the public grid to generate financial revenue.

Battery stored electrical power can be used for air sports related purposes:

- At locations which are not connected to the public grid for convenience during weekend operations,
- For air sports related purposes (e.g. winches to launch aircraft, radio communication, workshops, cooling or heating devices, etc),

While the generation and use of alternative energies may just be convenient at remote locations, some countries subsidize the generation of alternative power for supply to the public grid. Under such conditions a return of investment is possible within about 10 - 20 years. Interested air sports practitioners should explore these options locally.

### *EASA and Environmental Questions*

The attention of Chris J Nicholas, President of Honour, FAI Environmental Commission has been drawn to the publication of the latest NPA from EASA: No. 2008-15 of May 29, 2008 which includes a considerable discussion of environmental concerns.

There is recognition that it is possibly not the business of a “safety” agency to concern itself with issues that do not impact on safety. E.g.

#### *Question 2*

*a) The Agency is interested in knowing whether stakeholders agree that airport design and airport operations that are covered by safety regulation in the EASA system should also be regulated for their environmental impact through the EASA system.*

*b) The Agency is interested in knowing whether stakeholders agree that land use planning around aerodromes is better regulated at horizontal level, taking into account all sources of noise/pollution, rather than from an aviation perspective only.*

Chris’ message was distributed on 6 June 2008 to the delegates of EnvC with no reaction so far. Therefore, I appreciate and welcome that the UK delegates to EnvC and the General Aviation Awareness Council UK want to elaborate a position to these questions of EASA.

### *Change of Permits of Airfield*

A number of cases came up during the past year in Germany and I am sure that similar cases occur elsewhere, where existing airfields intended to the change their permit status, e.g. because they wanted to increase the number of tows by powered aircraft, etc. This requires administrative action by the aviation authority who asks the local administration including the local nature protection agency for a statement on impacts on (1) the local nature inventory with regard to endangered species, especially birds, and (2) the impact of the



changing noise to the surrounding. The local administration can and often does impose restrictions or does not agree with the change of permit status.

It is therefore advisable that an air field operator planning a change of the permit status is well prepared regarding the administrative requirements and the environmental conditions which will be reviewed. A law person should be consulted, the impacts on the local nature inventory and the noise impacts should be known, so that discussions with the authority take place on equal basis. Expert reports describing the local nature inventory and noise predicting calculations are generally of value.

### *Birds in Flight*

For powered aircraft pilots, a meeting with birds in flight will probably be seen as a major concern for bird strikes.

Glider pilots, hang- and paragliders, however, see bussards, raptors, storkes, etc. accompanying them in flight as welcome indicators of lift. They outperform the aircraft within seconds creating some enviousness but more so an admiration of their performance and beauty. Often such birds, e.g. the Red Kite, can be seen circling thermals from just above the ground, exposing their fabulous abilities gained by evolution over millions of years. We all should be more open and sensitive to see and recognize such wonders of nature and to strive keeping nature intact.

This paragraph describes more my personal relationship with nature than it provides information for the purpose of this report. However, in my view, EnvC is not only a technical commission advising FAI but represents a group of air sports people who are more thoroughly involved in environment and nature considerations for the benefit of FAI.

Dr. Michael Goth  
President, FAI Environmental Commission

30 August 2008