



*Fédération
Aéronautique
Internationale*

Progress Report

of the

FAI Safety Expert Group - SEG

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Background

The FAI Safety Expert Group was established in May 2012.

In order to establish good working processes and to get used to the working methodology, an initial set of tasks were given to the nominated Experts.

Otto Lagarhus (EB Director) functions as the interim Point of Contact (PoC) until the FAI General Conference (OCT 2012), at which point a PoC will be nominated from one of the selected Experts.

The PoC also participated in the discussions, and attempted to stimulate discussion by providing specific suggestions as ideas. Conclusions appear at the end of the report, in red.

Tasks assigned to the SEG

The following tasks were assigned:

In the opinion of the SEG, provide answers to the following questions :

- 1. Evaluate the content and suggestions in the letter from IPC (attached as WP to the group) and, if applicable, make recommendations for changes in the FAI Safety Expert Group policy statement.**
- 2. Produce a broad overview of the safety work taking place in the various Air Sport Commissions (ASCs) and provide suggestions for effective cooperation and communication between such ASCs in order to benefit from being part of the FAI structure.**

Additionally, the SEG should provide a suggestion for further tasks, based on their experience and expertise, and their current assessment of the safety challenges in air sport activities.

Supplemental Info re. inputs and discussion

Some main issues - Expert A:

Relevant to Task 1:

"The final responsibility is national", but it leaves a space for common frames or trends if they bring improvements.

- The "FAI SEG policy " can be rewritten, keeping the same philosophy, to avoid the issues mentioned by IPC.

Conflict SEG/Safety Sub-Committees (SSCs): The SEG will need to ensure we are not pushing against SSCs; I guess we are more a coordination and mutual information group than an organization trying to supersede them.

Relevant to Task 2:

The typical Safety Sub-Committee (SSC) is not sufficiently structured nor adequately active in recent years. The work is often done by the discipline subcommittees. Incident reporting is currently sporadic but being refined. Many activities have fundamental flaws, linked to the freedom culture: They

start without reading aerodynamics theory or safety literature others had already paid for. Even being more advanced now, it's still hard to reach every pilot, practicing lonely in their remote valley, instead of together in organized centers. A certification system relates equipment and pilot skills, and the specific competition requirements in the specific section seem quite efficient. Nevertheless, non competing pilots can't rely on any copilot or structure to prevent them forgetting some unforgiving device, and the safety subcommittees (and SEG in the future) could push for more "fool-proof" designs. In that way, if we can achieve it, the pilot loneliness could be a strength in providing safer equipment.

We found a particular concern: During the safety mandatory briefings in category 1 events, the pilots don't pay sufficient attention. We are seeking advice in psychology and communication to make those briefings really reach their goal, and thereby raise the safety consciousness.

Some main issues - Expert B:

Launching a group of flight safety in air sports is an excellent idea. Accidents during FAI sport events, National, Continental and World Championships are much more seldom than during popular, touristic or recreational flights. However, they happen anyway and we should try to reduce its number as much as possible.

In my opinion the first phase of our work has to be creating of some kind of data base collecting all known accidents, happened last years in all disciplines of air sport: GA, gliding, parachuting, ballooning, hanggliding and paragliding, microlight and paramotor sports.

I propose to ask every Expert in SEG to send information on known accidents, happened in FAI competitions, including following data:

- Sport event (year and venue).
- Category of aircraft.
- Consequences for crew / pilot (Death, injury)
- Damage of aircraft
- Investigation of accident (State Commission, Police,
- Event Organizers or others)
- Short description of circumstances and reasons
- either official (eg State Commission Report)
- or known from creditable sources.
- Conclusions.

Some main issues - Expert C:

A very useful report of various issues in air sports in the USA was provided; very good information for assessing safety issues. (Not included in this report, available on request).

Additional points from PoC:

To Task no 1: There are varying opinions of the issue brought up by IPC regarding our Safety Policy statements. The majority of the Expert are of the opinion that we should be able to modify the statement to satisfy both the FAI EB and the IPC.

To Task no 2: I think it is safe to conclude that we see a large variation of activities and degree of structure in the safety work of the various ASCs within FAI; this is also my own experience from the Norther European scene. Strengths and weaknesses exists in each area; we need to identify the strengths and see what we can do to use them "across borders" in the various ASCs, for the benefit of the totality of FAI.

In order to better describe the present status, information from the safety work in other ASCs would be of assistance.

We are informed by the FAI Head Office that previous attempt to forward questionnaires to NACs regarding safety activities have produced minuscule returns, and are therefore not considered an effective tool.

I therefore conclude that we need to use specific («pointed») contacts in ASCs and NACs, in a more «top down» approach, if I may use that expression.

Example of discussion/work process

Exchange of views on safety philosophies (quotes):

My safety credo is this sentence found in the medical world: "Every system is perfectly designed to achieve exactly the results it gets" - Donald Berwick. For me it means the fatalities are like "written" in our organizations, as an accident is written in a poor design, even if it occurs 30 or 50 years later. We talk about safety, but maybe only few understand what it is. There are no morals or justice in safety, just cold physical laws. If it can fail, it will fail, and the human brain always ends up failing.

The free flying statistics are low and hard to still reduce, but our image is a disaster, as each fatality makes its way in the TV news and the spectator's brains, for their whole life. From the experience in my national structure, I'm supposing power struggles. The federations, the ASC, various working groups of manufacturers and testing houses defining the future norms; they seem not to pull all in the same direction.

Maybe even FAI already cut it's own "only world organisation" authority, when it at times states that it is «dealing only with competition», 1% of the overall practice? And now we have the Internet paradox: communication is so easy that everyone is overflowed by junk mail, and ends up not answering anymore. We see this tendency in the subcommittees. If safety is about changing minds, behaviors, equipment or organization, it explains why it at times is as heavy as a black hole.

IPC can probably give advice to other disciplines within FAI. It would be interesting to understand how and why they have progressed so far. Is it because skydivers are more keen to obey rules and procedures than other air sport persons? I am looking to SEG to assist in dealing with these issues, or be an international advisor, not necessarily setting rules, but at least proposing coherence between all, and having the necessary courage to speak out.

Sharing of information from an Expert re. work in one ASC SSC; potential useful for other ASCs:

Areas of activity of IPC's Technical & Safety Committee:

- ★ Data Collection Tool. FAI website-based tool for collection of data on accidents and incidents. The data was lost in the website crash, but the aim is to have it re-entered and the tool brought back into use.
- ★ A Safety Report conducted annually. This is a detailed study of parachuting activity and fatalities.
- ★ An Annual Report on the use of Automatic Activation Devices (parachuting safety devices).
- ★ The issue of Information Notices, regarding safety, technical and equipment issues, as these issues arise. The Information Notices are posted on the web site and e-mailed to T&S Officers worldwide, ensuring maximum distribution.
- ★ Item-specific surveys on safety, technical, equipment and medical issues in parachuting.
- ★ Advice to national parachuting organizations seeking to establish safety standards in their countries.
- ★ The occasional organization and running of Technical Congresses. This activity has diminished and is of little importance now, due to the ease of dissemination of material by electronic means.
- ★ Support for regional organizations, ASIANA and COLPAR, in their work of promoting parachuting safety issues.

Preliminary conclusion

Task 1:

Evaluate the content and suggestions in the letter from IPC and, if applicable, make recommendations for changes in the FAI Safety Expert Group policy statement.

The SEG notes the IPC views. There is no doubt that the work of the IPC within the safety area is state of the art and probably a «best practice» within FAI. However, there are still areas for improvement which gives the present wording relevance. The SEG majority believes better wording could be found, satisfying the EB and IPC.

We suggest that 2 Safety Experts are charged with drafting an alternative wording for the FAI Safety Policy. This then must be provided to the full SEG for approval/modification, and then forwarded to the EB.

Task 2:

Produce a broad overview of the safety work taking place in the various Air Sport Commissions (ASCs) and provide suggestions for effective cooperation and communication between such ASCs in order to benefit from being part of the FAI structure.

The practice in the various FAI Air Sport Commissions vary widely. We have not found a high degree commonality in approach to the safety issue, and the methodology and practices vary from high focus/activity to little focus and no specific safety activities. (This must not be read as to mean there a no focus on safety as such; we have been identifying specific activities, and it should be noted that all of the FAI ASCs have «imbedded» safety in their operations).

In the opinion of the SEG, there is quite a lot to gain in developing an FAI suggested structure/guide for safety work. This need not be «invented», as certain ASCs have already developed such structures/guides («best practices») that can be modified to be used as the «official FAI guide» for the benefit of all air sport disciplines.

It is suggested that this task is extended, with the objective of developing a suggested (rudimentary) general guide for safety work within FAI.

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