



## PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS 9 April 2020

Dear Colleagues, I do hope that you, your families and your friends are avoiding contact with Covid-19.

The stats from around the world are not good and we need to remember that, even when countries start to gain control of their outbreak, their health care systems will continue to be under stress for some time.

The Airports Council International (ACI), stated, on 1 April, that "it is reasonable to foresee faster recovery in domestic passenger traffic but that international passenger traffic recovery will take longer." The reason for the difference being that any international flight implies reciprocal permissions and various States will emerge from the current crisis at different times with varying pace of relaxation of the recently imposed restrictions.<sup>1</sup>

This on-going situation has a number of implications for the FAI and our activities which I wish to address in these musings.

### FAI Sanctioned Championships

Decisions regarding postponement or cancellation of sanctioned championships are being made by the appropriate ASC in consultation with the organisers. The situation regarding gatherings of people and sports activities are different country-by-country and so the organisers of events are best placed to monitor their national requirements and to advise the ASC.

Our ASC Presidents and their bureaus are doing a great job managing these situations and communicating with their sports people. We can expect it to take some time before Cat 1 Championships can be held due to the restrictions in border crossings and the absence of international flights; both factors preventing people from being able to attend events.

### ASC Plenaires and Elections

The same situation (border crossing, international flights, gatherings of people) impact on the ability of Commissions to hold plenary meetings and elections. This is unavoidable in the present circumstances. The Executive Board has confirmed that a Commission President and Bureau shall remain in office and manage the business of their Commission until it is feasible to hold meetings and have elections post the Covid-19 restrictions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://centreforaviation.com/members/direct-news/economic-analysis-shows-covid-19-is-an-existential-threat-to-airport-business-520255>

## FAI Staff

The FAI office is being run remotely with minimal attendance at the office and a daily staff meeting via video. This is working well due to good planning with tools, laptops and remote access being in place for all since the 10<sup>th</sup> of March.

We are benefiting from adjusted work schedules and staff have reduced overtime and taken vacation time. There will be a real workload-reduction from now on with the reduction in sanctioned events and the general lack of activity and we are looking at being able to further reduce staff costs as a result.

The Swiss government has introduced financial support packages to avoid staff being released and we are applying for that government support.

We are participating today, with other IOC Swiss-based IAs, in a conference call to be jointly hosted by the IOC and the Swiss Confederation, along with the Canton de Vaud, to discuss existing and potential financial support programmes for Swiss-based IAs.

## Members

We recognize that many NACs have been significantly impacted by the current crisis, that meetings and events are cancelled or postponed, that offices are closed, that volunteers are having to focus on other priorities, and that people are unable to practice the air sports they love, or to plan for activities in the near future.

Please be assured that we will be here to support you in re-establishing your air sports when life returns to normal.

## General Conference 2020

As already advised (*Musings dated 16 March 2020*) the 2020 General Conference will not be held in Wuhan, China.

The probable long-term impact of travel restrictions and lack of international flights can now be expected to also impact on the original October dates for the General Conference. The EB do not want to put everyone in the same situation as happened in 2019, with late changes to the GC plan. As already advised, we are currently reviewing options for the location of the GC.

The EB has decided, therefore, to aim to hold the 2020 General Conference in early December 2020. This timeframe will be re-evaluated in June.

We are also considering options for a minimalist conference, completing the necessary statutory business only, including the elections for the board. And we are investigating how to maximise the involvement of people via on-line tools to facilitate participation.

## FAI 2020

The FAI 2020 project lacks the momentum that I had hoped to achieve. However, the impact of Covid-19 is having a similar effect as might have been expected from the project: we are having to look very carefully at what we do, why and how to best achieve those objectives.

The FAI 2020 group have confirmed that the focus of the organisation should be on records, awards and safe, fair and efficient championships. As we now start to have time to consider the future for the FAI, the board will start planning how the organisation could deliver these outcomes.

## IOC

As you will know, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics have been delayed until 2021. The choice of dates in 2021 clashes with the IWGA World Games planned for Birmingham in 2021, so this event (at which we participate) will now be held in 2022.

## The Bottom Line

I appreciate that there are people out there who are frustrated that their event or meeting has been postponed or cancelled. That is the reality of the current situation for everyone.

I do not expect any FAI sanctioned event or activity to either sidestep government requirements or to consciously disadvantage individuals by seeing them excluded from activities because of travel restrictions.

This is going to be a longer journey than we all first thought. We will get through this and we need to be ready to reinvigorate our sports when we are able to again gather to experience the joy of flying.

As always, I welcome your feedback and your views on other FAI matters of importance to you.

Best regards and stay safe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Henderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Henderson  
President, FAI  
9 April, 2020