

REPORT FROM THE 2025 PLENARY OF THE FAI BALLOONING COMMISSION

Held from 12th to 15th of March 2025 in Delhi, India.

The FAI Ballooning Commission (CIA) Plenary convened in Delhi, India, from March 12-15, 2025, addressing critical developments, competition regulations, and the strategic future of the sport.

The meeting opened with the CIA President's welcome, roll call, and the FAI Secretary General's financial review. He reported on FAI's recovery from past financial losses. Cost-cutting

measures and restructuring have strengthened FAI's financial stability, leading to calls for commissions to reinvest accumulated reserves into development initiatives. Another topic was transparency in the appeals process, with discussions on publishing case outcomes to improve openness and professionalism.

The Jury Board proposed key updates to the jury handbook, clarifying mandatory requirements, refining result verification, and allowing remote juries for select events. The CIA Board approved new jury members and training sessions for competition officials, focusing on verification, marking, and calibration.

The Balloon Live Team received significant attention, with multiple technical enhancements approved. A budget of 12,000 Swiss francs was allocated for a visualization tool, and additional funding was approved for a pilot ranking system, automatic provisional results updates, email notifications for electronic notices and a lot more. The team also committed to rewriting the Balloon Live app with a new software framework to improve functionality.

Safety remained a priority, with the Safety and Education Group announcing a revised safety officer qualification process. The group proposed a mandatory renewal every four years, though concerns were raised about limiting the pool of qualified personnel. The motions were finally withdrawn.

The Rules Subcommittee and Scoring Working Group introduced updates to AXMER 2025 rules, including a revised red PZ calculation method, modifications to AA protest and complaint procedures, and an exploration of using vertical speed data for competition safety improvements.

The Competitors Subcommittee presented survey results from 242 pilots across 29 countries, leading to recommendations on refining the world ranking system and adjusting respectful flying score penalties.



Future event planning was a key agenda item. The 2024 and 2025 event calendar was finalized, with Spain (Mallorca) chosen to host the 24th European Hot Air Balloon Championships after competing bids from Poland and Slovakia. Three countries—France, Saudi Arabia, and India—expressed interest in hosting the 2028 World Championships. A decision will be made at the 2026 plenary. The 2027 Junior and Women's World Championships were also discussed, with France, the USA, Poland, and Saudi Arabia submitting preliminary applications.

The Records Subcommittee committed to updating the notable flight list, modernizing record calculation software, and promoting the Sporting Badge program.

The Media Working Group received an allocation of 20,000 Swiss francs to continue development projects, including expanding the "Legends of Ballooning" and "Champions of the Sky" promotional initiatives. The plenary also addressed youth development, allocating 1,000 Swiss francs per country for youth ballooning camps in France, Germany, Lithuania, and the USA.

The Saudi Ballooning Federation presented an ambitious roadmap, including hosting the first Saudi National Championships and potentially the 2028 World Championships. The plenary also confirmed that the 2026 CIA Meeting will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with local organizers covering accommodation costs for delegates.

Special awards were presented, including FAI Air Sport Medals for Markus Haggene, Sebastian Eimers, Florian Michel and Tomas Hora. The Montgolfier Awards were awarded to Sam Parks (Contribution to the Sport), Christian Wagner and Stefanie Liller (Best performance Gas) and Clément Seigeot (Best performance Hotair). Jean-Claude Weber was recognized by the Hans Akerstedt award for attending 35 plenary meetings.

The meeting concluded with elections and recognitions. Claude Weber was elected as new CIA President, joined by Uwe Schneider (GER), Marc Andre (SUI), and Andy Baird (USA) as Vice Presidents, and Sanne Haarhuis as CIA Secretary.



Mark Sullivan was honored as "CIA President of Honor" for his long-standing service, and Hans Akerstedt and Richard Abruzzo were inducted into the CIA Hall of Fame.

The detailed minutes of the meeting will be available on fai.org in the coming weeks.

Altrier, March 19th 2025

Claude WEBER

FAI Ballooning Commission - President