

Opening Speech of Mr. L. A. de Lange

President of OSTIV

Your Excellency, Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentleman

Today it is the tenth time that I have the honour of addressing the representatives of the international gliding world on the occasion of the opening of an OSTIV congress.

In almost all my speeches, I have tried to deal with one or more facets of the task that OSTIV fulfils for the promotion of gliding. Since these speeches are published in the OSTIV Publications you all know so well, and can therefore be reread, I had expected that at least those people who play an important part in the world of gliding, either on a national or on an international level, would know what exactly is OSTIV's position.

I regret to say that on two occasions during the period that now lies behind us, I found that this was not the case. In this anniversary speech, I will therefore try once again to give you a good idea of the aim of OSTIV, as laid down in its Constitution, of its relation to and co-operation with the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, the FAI, and of the special character of the OSTIV congresses.

The aim of OSTIV is first and foremost to promote the further development of gliding by obtaining a wider and more thorough knowledge of the sources of energy in the atmosphere, and by stimulating the development of the sailplane, aimed at improvement and simplification of the construction, application of new materials, perfection of the flight characteristics and improvement of their performance and safety. Propagation of the results of study and research, both through the spoken and the written word, is a vital part of this.

Secondly, OSTIV seeks to promote and co-ordinate efforts to use the sailplane in order to collect new scientific and technical knowledge for the benefit of aviation in general.

The interests of gliding as a sport, together with those of other air sports, private aviation and air touring, are promoted internationally by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.

Active members of the FAI are those organizations in the various countries within whose province lie the air sports, private aviation and air touring in that country.

The aim of the FAI is to further in every possible way the unhindered pursu-

ance thereof, and furthermore to give regulations for and to certify records, to make rules for and to authorize competitions, and to institute badges of achievement, thus stimulating the performance of man in air sports and thereby air sports themselves.

The FAI has set up a special Committee for every activity. Within the framework of the aim, the Commission Internationale du Vol à Voile (CIVV), for instance, deals with the problems of pursuing gliding as a sport. The resolutions of the committee require the approval of the General Conference of the FAI.

Since the performances of man in the sport of gliding are strongly influenced by the degree of knowledge of the sources of energy in the atmosphere and by the technical quality of the available sailplanes, there is a clear relation between the aims of the OSTIV and of the FAI.

So wide is the field of OSTIV, and such are the specialization and expert knowledge required to carry out its aim, that the organizations in the various countries – National Aero Clubs, Gliding Associations, Federations and Societies – after having set up a study committee as early as 1930, in 1948 decided to found a separate independent international organization for this in addition to the FAI.

Active members of this organization – the Organisation Scientifique et Technique Internationale du Vol à Voile, OSTIV for short – are those members of the FAI who head an active gliding movement in their own country. In both organizations, FAI and OSTIV, the highest authority is the General Conference, which determines the policy and whose approval is needed for the proposals put forward by the lower organs, such as the CIVV and the Sailplane Development Panel, respectively. Right from the start, the intention of the active members of the two organizations has been that the OSTIV – and especially the OSTIV Sailplane Development Panel – should assist the CIVV in problems for which technical knowledge and understanding are necessary.

Such a problem was the setting up (in 1956) of the Standard Class, in addition to the Open Class which already existed and in which every sailplane for which a Certificate of Airworthiness

had been issued could be admitted to the world championships, without any further restrictions.

Quite rightly, the help of OSTIV was enlisted to draw up rules for admission to the Standard Class.

However, with the progress of technology the rules for the Standard Class had to be amended. The Chairman of the CIVV, at a joint meeting held in Junin on February 23, 1963, therefore asked the OSTIV Sailplane Development Panel «to examine the desirability of modifying the current Specification for Standard Class sailplanes, based on the progress of the technology, and to advise the CIVV in accordance with the results of its study».

The Panel of OSTIV completed its study in 1964 and submitted a detailed proposal to CIVV. The main changes proposed were the admission of a retractable undercarriage and to permit the use of fixed hinge flaps.

The admission of a retractable undercarriage did not lead to problems, but the permission of fixed hinge flaps on Standard Class sailplanes gave rise to extensive discussions between the members of CIVV who represented their National Aero Club or national Gliding Organization in this international committee. Hence it was March 1971 before specific defined fixed hinge flaps had been admitted to this class of sailplanes.

Having attended the discussions on this subject in both international bodies – CIVV and OSTIV – I observed that representatives of the same National Aero Club or national Gliding Organization expressed opposite opinions in these bodies. I wondered how such a disagreement was possible, for CIVV and OSTIV themselves in general do not have opposite interests.

The answer must be that the representatives in both organizations on the whole have different backgrounds, and, giving their own views on a given subject in CIVV or in OSTIV, respectively, it looks as if the national organization they represent takes two different points of view on the subject. This shows that a better co-ordination is desirable within the national organizations having representatives both in FAI and OSTIV.

It is in the interest of good teamwork between these international organiza-

tions that the representatives should discuss joint problems beforehand with each other and with other experts in their own national organization, and should thus determine a joint point of view, the standpoint of their organization to be put forward in both the FAI and the OSTIV.

This way, it is possible to avoid that these representatives present their personal views as «the opinion of their country» and that the resolutions passed by the FAI and by the OSTIV are contradictory to each other.

It would be very useful for the discussion on a countrywide level if the Chairmen of the CIVV and of the Sailplane Development Panel were to give a clear explanation of each item on the agenda with mutual interests when announcing it, stating the arguments in favour and those against.

The necessity of good teamwork between FAI and OSTIV, between CIVV and Sailplane Development Panel, in short: between those who pursue gliding as a sport and those who are interested mainly in the technological and scientific side, is shown also in the agreement between FAI and OSTIV, which states that the OSTIV congresses will be held during the same period

and in the same place as the world championships.

Since the World Gliding Championships are usually not organized near a major city with congress buildings and universities, where there are halls with the most modern technical equipment, this decision in principle means that the OSTIV has deliberately put direct contact with the glider pilots, meteorologists and technical people at the gliding site above the glamour and comfort which usually characterize international congresses.

OSTIV congresses, therefore, are not meetings of scientific and technical experts, but forums with experts, for the benefit of gliding, all of whom, however, belong to the world society of glider pilots or have very strong ties with it. The programmes for the technical and scientific sections of the OSTIV congresses are prepared by the respective chairmen. It is the responsibility of the President – in co-operation with the organizers in the country where the world championships and the congresses are held – to ensure that the OSTIV congress runs smoothly.

In this connection I should like first of all to express my sincere thanks to you, Excellency Bojanić, for the strong support given by you and your Am-

bassador to The Netherlands, His Excellency Milutinović, at the stage of the preparations when the special character of the OSTIV was not generally known here.

We are deeply grateful, also, to the Aeronautical Union of Yugoslavia and the Technical University of Beograd for their invaluable help during the preparations for this congress. The pleasant and enthusiastic help extended to me during my visit in March by Prof. Popović, Prof. Josifović, Mr. Mitrović and Mr. Kucera have made a deep impression on me.

I shall never forget the way you, Your Excellency, entertained me at the end of the successful visit in March last, and the pleasure of tasting your country's excellent slivovitz lingers with me.

Finally, I should like to thank those who have spoken before me for the friendly words addressed to our organization. At long last we have touched down in the country from where your brilliant compatriot Boris Josip Cijan served the OSTIV with all his heart for so many years.

It is therefore a great pleasure to me, here in your beautiful country Yugoslavia, to declare the XIIIth OSTIV Congress opened.