

Report from EPC2013 Organisers.

Dear all

This is a summary of the latest developments in preparation for the 2013 European Paramotor Championships in Estonia, addressed to the paramotor community all around the world, to all CIMA delegates, to Team Leaders, teams, pilots and assistants, involved in paramotoring and interested to develop this wonderful sport to a new level of quality, fairness, sportsmanship and fun. This document can also be considered as the first (or maybe the last) bulletin of the Organisers of EPC2013.

In case of any doubt of authenticity of the data present here or in case of interest about exact scenarios which were developing between the CIMA Bureau and the Organisers of EPC2013 lately, we are ready to deliver by email or to publish on the web the full correspondence between the CIMA Bureau and the Organiser, from the time of the CIMA Plenary 2012, up to this date and further if needed.

EPC 2013 background.

I have been initiating and organising numerous sporting events in the past 20 years, in various sports, lately most of them international and mainly in paramotoring.

My first FAI event as a competitor was EPC2008 in Poland which left many question marks for many pilots participating.

My first initiative towards organising EPC2013 in Estonia was expressed at WPC2009 in Czech Republic with few obvious reasons:

There was no bid for the next seasons (again).

There were no organisers interested.

There was a risk of missing these comps again after already one unsuccessful season.

Existing competitions were organised at the last minute and at levels well below any reasonable quality standard.

There were several serious issues with each and every event, needed to be addressed and it seemed nobody was really interested to get involved.

The voice of the competing pilots didn't reach the decision makers or was not passed on, or was just not heard.

Critical feedback from pilots and participating countries was not analyzed and not many conclusions were made by CIMA.

So, ever since we announced that we were interested in organising this event, we have been seeking to do it better than ever, with a completely new quality level, aimed exclusively at the competing pilots and smooth management of the whole event

If you read the Mission Statement from our Local Regulations, you will get exactly what I mean.

http://www.eppa.ee/eppa/f/epc2013_LR_draft2.pdf

From the first day of signing up as an Organisers we went right to the business and I initiated the first meeting right there in the Czech Republic, immediately after the last task (hopefully you remember if you were there). Everybody was invited and despite my wish to concentrate on a new approach in task development, content and management, it soon went out of my hands and ended up with strong critics against the existing CIMA system in several aspects (delegates, proposals, voting etc.). As we all know, after the WPC2009 there was a fatal gap in organising FAI 1st category paramotor competitions for 2 seasons in a row and with serious consequences, so every pilot could ask, what are CIMA and FAI doing if there are no competitions for two consecutive years?

Now as we know, many countries remain passive, not many new countries are entering FAI classical comps, many top pilots have retired from competition, many from FAI competitions, there is a serious lack of young generation pilots etc.

In fact I had been writing about some of these issues in the Estonian national report to Cima in 2011. Please check it out:

<http://wiki.fai.org/pages/worddav/preview.action?fileName=ESTONIA+report+CIMA+2011.doc&pageId=5996682>

After the 2011 CIMA Plenary when we made our final bid and presented EPC2013 successfully, we were working hard and in May 2012 we managed to organise successfully our 2nd test event to test everything for the forthcoming competition. We definitely didn't want to fail in any way.

After the last Plenary 2012, there have been enough time for everybody to look deeply at our documents uploaded into wiki but we also opened lately EPC2013 official webpage

epc2013.eppa.ee

This page is quite primitive in this stage but with all necessary documents and supportive visual materials uploaded from our 2nd test event and public air show from May 2012.

We also released recently a Facebook site for better exchange of information and communication between all competitors, organisers and public. Please take a look, share and participate:

[facebook.com.estppa](https://facebook.com/estppa)

We were hoping to let every country, team and competitor open up their information, profiles, concerns and worries, so we can really do all our best to provide the best ever Paramotor competition in the history of FAI.

In the nearest future we were planning to release the first video trailer of our event and to organise first media coverage about our progress in preparing such a great event.

We have already received bookings from different countries all over Europe and since this weekend was set as a deadline of final decision from the Bureau, we have been drowning in queries about EPC2013.

Proceedings from the last CIMA Plenary 2012.

Preparations for the EPC2013 have been the most complex of any of my previous experiences with international competitions. This one needed the most attention because of complexity of constantly varying rules and new conditions, high and unexpected expenses and finally, because of practically no support, trust and understanding from FAI and CIMA Bureau.

I admit and accept fully that we were late in presenting the final documents to the Plenary. This was our biggest mistake so far and we all are really sorry for that. This happened for several reasons, but one of them was my computer crash on 25th of October from a Skype virus (this can be confirmed by Wojtek Domanski, Monitor). Our drafts were almost ready for uploading but now we only managed to recover my hard drive one day before the Plenary at the airport and after a brief finish, uploaded everything in a hurry as fast as we could in the hotel.

I have been bashed by the CIMA Bureau members for this all the way, until today and probably further on and I accept it, as I deserve it, at least partly.

After some weird voting on our Local Regulations + Task Catalogue package, we were encouraged by many paramotor delegates from Europe (12) who voted for our package in full awareness of all our main modifications, including the new method of fuelling and the new approach to bodyweight handicapping.

Despite a short time (only 3 days) to get comfortable with details of our Local Regulations, they were trusting us in our commitment and voted for this event to happen according to our best intentions. We really did appreciate that.

Only one vote was against and all others abstained for several reasons (not enough time to read, no knowledge to decide or no interest in paramotor sport etc.). The result was "NOT SUPPORTED".

My aim here is not to point the finger or to blame anyone but to show that there is something seriously wrong with existing voting system in CIMA and at some point something has to be done, otherwise there will be surprises similar to this one we are already facing or even worse and competitions will be cancelled again and again. It cannot be fair that European countries actively participating in competitions cannot decide over their sport amongst themselves or paramotor decisions cannot be made by paramotor community.

To solve the situation, the Plenary tasked the Bureau to find a way to approve our package. Not to repeat the result coming out of the Plenary's weird voting system where abstained votes were counted as „AGAINST" but to find a way out of this. Otherwise there weren't any reasons to give this matter to the Bureau, and to bury the event there and then.

All this had to be done before the 15th of December deadline, leaving 5 weeks for all possible discussions over any matters concerning our package.

In fact I offered Richard Meredith-Hardy to use all our time left after plenary right there in Lausanne before leaving, to deal with it right away and not to postpone anything.

It didn't work out and sadly afterwards there was no reaction to my approaches what so ever, regardless of my several efforts in trying to contact either Richard (President) or Rob Hughes (Secretary) by email or over the Skype.

Nothing happened until last week, just before the deadline, when I managed to get some discussions going with Rob Hughes about the Organiser Agreement.

Only then, was I told that our LR and TC could not be discussed before I had signed the OA, not quite the assignment given to the Bureau by the Plenary.

I couldn't remember such correlation set at the Plenary and as an example, even new French format of World Slalom Championships and its documents were approved without OA at the same Plenary. I explained immediately that this was not possible as LR+TC are basic documents of any competition and thus the main part of OA. We could not possibly sign a contract without understanding and accepting its content.

Meantime I did my best to succeed with OA to get it to the acceptable level of understanding and ready to be signed as and when our LR+TC would be approved. There were so many issues to deal with that it became quite hopeless to achieve progress in mutual understanding of highly legislative context in English.

There has been enormous pressure from Bureau members and FAI towards me as an Organiser to accept an OA template as it is and to sign it immediately without any concerns, or else, there will be no EPC2013.

All this, despite everyone concerned knowing very well that this old OA is considered outdated, confusing and had to be updated before this Plenary by FAI.
I was almost threatened several times that without signing OA immediately, our LR and TC will not even be discussed and EPC2013 would be cancelled.

Luckily we managed to keep our heads cool and concentrated on the best compromise in interpretation and changes necessary in OA to prepare it to the final stage as fast as we possibly could.

We managed to finalize OA at the last minute and when no one from the Bureau or from FAI were prepared to produce a correct final version, I did it myself and delivered it to the Bureau for the last check. It was not signed but accepted by both sides and ready for signatures.

With the matter of OA now solved, I naturally asked once again for the approval of our LR and TC, so we can sign and finally confirm EPC2013.
Sadly this didn't happen and in fact there were no questions and no replies regarding our LR+TC after the Plenary. Not from Bureau members, not from Delegates, not even discussion.

Until the very last minute when I've got a short comment from Jose Luis Esteban about our LR not being acceptable in at least the following:

- Changes from the template are not highlighted
- Numbering is different from the model
- Fuel weighing and bodyweight handycapping are not acceptable and there is nothing to discuss.
- If we cannot present an "acceptable" LR and TC, then the template LR+TC will have to be used for the championship.

I don't know the reason why we have been told this only now, few hours before the deadline with no other discussions?

But I am convinced once again that we did the right thing not to sign OA without the final approval of our LR and TC.

To give you a better idea of what I am talking about, it will be enough if I copy here my last reply to Richard on Friday evening, the last day before the deadline:

Hi Richard

...

*Now, as I see from Jose's comments, our LR are not acceptable and there is even nothing to discuss.
I don't know if this will be also the Bureau's decision but if it is so, we all were wasting our time for nothing.*

*This alone is a good indicator, why we need approval of our LR and TC before we can sign the OA.
Everybody can see that otherwise we could easily end up in (irrevocable) obligations we cannot take, which are not just unpractical but also illegal in many aspects.*

*Traditional fuelling method is outdated for many - many reasons, not only for the reasons listed in our proposal no. 27
(please read:*

<http://wiki.fai.org/display/cimaS10/27+%3D+Economy+tasks+based+on+weight+of+pilot+and+machine?focusedCommentId=15434629#comment-15434629>)

but also for several legal matters, being in conflict with S10, FAI Code of Conduct – Air Sports and the Environment, local laws of almost any country, EU regulations and finally with OA itself.

I've tried to explain the same thing each time I had given the chance at Plenary and I considered it solved since everybody who listened, seemed to understand. I am really surprised if we must go over this again.

Luckily I am not the only one to pay attention to this subject. Please also read Marugan report on the fuelling but also

regarding OA: <http://wiki.fai.org/download/attachments/12386360/WMC-WPC-2012+Organiser+report.pdf>

I am not sure if traditional fuelling method will be used in paramotor events ever again but for Estonia it is out of question.

So there is rational and legitimate reason to sign OA only after approval of our basic documents for EPC2013 and we are ready for it as soon as we get Bureau's approval.

*With regards,
Paap*

Furthermore, I would add that this traditional fuelling method will hopefully never be used again and will disappear forever from paramotor competitions. We should all be happy about this and look forward to an alternative procedure.

So, I was been forced to sign a major contract, which is perceived as outdated and which appears to be IRREVOCABLE, without even knowing whether our LR and TC would be approved, in which form or if we would be forced to make changes that we could not accept afterwards.

Now, as a result, the situation is even worse because we have been excluded from any discussions over our package so there has been no chance to adopt anything, we have been threatened to sign the contract against any reasonable legal practice, the deadline has passed and there is no decision from the Bureau either.

No questions, no replies, no one to speak to and no one to ask from.

What should an Organiser do in such case?

Signing the OA is obviously not an obstacle here anymore in principle, since it is now agreed and ready to be signed by us, once our LR+TC get approval from the Bureau.

We could negotiate over our LR+TC but:

- a) there was no one from the Bureau to discuss it with before the deadline and now there is no time to discuss it
- b) there is nothing to discuss, as said by Jose Luis
- c) the deadline is over

I have been accused not only of being late with presenting our package to the Plenary but also of stupidity, prevarication, procrastination and filibustering.

The easiest option for us would be to withdraw our bid and the case would be closed but this would not help to organise EPC2013.

Since the atmosphere between the Bureau and the Organiser is now far from reciprocal trust and understanding at the moment, it will be rather difficult to negotiate anything from now on.

SUMMARY

Estonia is fully ready for EPC2013 and we, as Organisers, will accept the final decision from the Bureau, on whether or not they support our proposed event.

We have a very clear view of how we would like to run the Championships, thanks to our experience in running competitions and to the help and feedback we have received from competing pilots, Team

leaders and other European organisers. We are very proud to have put together a budget of a quarter of a million euros, thanks to some support from Estonia, the European Union and several other sponsors.

The Bureau has been very unhelpful since the Plenary, right up to the deadline, to discuss some of the aspects they did not approve from our Local Regulations and Task Catalogue.

In an ideal world, European pilots should decide themselves over the matter of their Championships, but we all know that within the current CIMA system, the paramotor community cannot shape their sport without approval from the microlight community and Europeans bids can be influenced by the vote from other continents.

The December 15th deadline has passed and we are still waiting for the Bureau to give EPC2013 the go-ahead or to cancel it.

We can tell from all the incoming emails and from Facebook that the European pilots and nations are keen to participate. They are obviously satisfied with our Mission Statement and are trusting us, as pilots, to deliver a top event.

It is not really possible to postpone the final decision anymore since we have already lost over one month in preparations and this would be bound to affect the quality of the event. All our preparations have been on hold since the Plenary and each day which passes without a decision bears a financial loss.

We were very disappointed when our event did not get the full backing from the Delegates at the Plenary, and when the Bureau was tasked to look into the Local Regulations and Task Catalogue before the December 15th deadline, on behalf of the Delegates, we thought this was an opportunity to debate and demonstrate our new proposed procedures.

Sadly, this five-week period was mostly wasted by the Bureau with no constructive debate whatsoever.

We set out to organise a paramotor event. We have plenty of energy and enthusiasm and crucially we are very passionate about our sport. What we were not prepared for, are the politics and the complicated procedures that thrive within CIMA and FAI. This has resulted in tremendous frustration and disappointment.

This sport is already suffering from a lack of interest from Organisers, with often only a single bid, or with no valid bids at all for some years.

If a country such as Estonia with the experience, the will and the means to organise an event comes forward, only to be given hurdles and hoops to jump through instead of support, then the future is very bleak indeed.

There must be something very wrong somewhere within the CIMA regulations and procedures that makes our wonderful popular sport die as far as competitions are concerned.

When our efforts have been commented by CIMA Bureau: "It is better to have no championship than having a bad championship", then this shows there is no confidence at all in our ability to deliver a meaningful championship.

So, what happens next?

Estonia is ready to host EPC2013 as described in our Local Regulations and Task Catalogue. The deadline for debate and consultation has passed. It is not for the pilots or the Teams to decide. It is not anymore for CIMA Delegates to decide. Ultimately, it is now for the four members of the Bureau (Richard Meredith-Hardy, José Luis Esteban, Wolfgang Lintl & Patrice Girardin), to decide whether EPC2013 is going ahead or not.

Estonia, zero points! L'Estonie, zéro points!

With regards,
Paap Kolar
EPC 2013 Head of the Organising Committee
EPC 2013 Competition Director
FAI CIMA Delegate for Estonia
EPPA Member of the board
Skype: p4kop4ko
+372 5051015
paap@paap.ee