President's Annual Report

F.I.S.A. – International Federation of Aero- and Astrophilately Societies
Reporting Period 2024–2026

To the 52nd General Assembly of the F.I.S.A.

Gmunden, August 28, 2026

Dear Delegates,
dear friends of aero- and astrophilately,

With this report, I would like to look back on the past two and a half years and, at the same time, provide an outlook on the upcoming tasks and goals of the FISA.

The period from 2024 to 2026 was a time of transition for our federation, but above all, a time of new beginnings. We have stabilized the FISA organizational structure, intensified our international cooperation, and launched important new projects.

Today, we can say: The FISA is vibrant, well-connected internationally, and prepared for the future.

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1. Assumption of the Presidency and New Beginnings in 2024

The beginning of the reporting period was marked by a unique situation.
After Dr. M. U. Bedrich Helm had to resign his position for health reasons in 2023, our Vice President, Dominique Petit, initially assumed the interim leadership of the FISA. At this point, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dominique Petit and our Secretary General, Stefan Bruylants. Both of them played a crucial role during a difficult period, ensuring that our organization remained operational and that a smooth transition was possible.

At the beginning of 2024, I was entrusted with the leadership of the F.I.S.A. and confirmed by the delegates at the 51st Congress in Versailles. I accepted this position with great respect for the history of our organization and, at the same time, with the conviction that the F.I.S.A. has an important task for the future: Aerophilately and astrophilately must maintain a strong, visible, and forward-looking voice internationally.

2. The 51st FISA Congress in Versailles 2024

A particular highlight of 2024 was the 51st FISA Congress and General Assembly, held on May 29, 2024, in Versailles. The Congress was superbly prepared and conducted by the Cercle Aérophilatélique Français. My special thanks go to our French friends for their hospitality and excellent organization. The Congress was not merely a formal General Assembly. Above all, it was a testament to international cooperation and personal exchange. At that time, the FISA united 26 member societies from 15 countries with more than 2,500 collectors. These included 18 aerophilately societies and eight astrophilately societies.

The admission of new societies was particularly gratifying, including the Air Mail Society of India, the Sociedad Argentina de Aerofilatelia, and Zeppelinpost e.V. from Germany. This clearly demonstrated that F.I.S.A. remains attractive to national and international associations.

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3. Our Strategic Goals

We already defined a number of goals for the coming years in Versailles.

The focus was primarily on:

• stronger international representation of aerophilately and astrophilately,
• more intensive cooperation with F.I.P.,
• further development of the exhibition rules,
• improved communication between member societies,
• modernization of our digital offerings,
• the introduction of an international digital membership,
• and the promotion of young talent and new exhibitors.

Our aim was not merely to manage, but to shape the future.

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4. Cooperation with the F.I.P.

A key concern in recent years has been closer cooperation between F.I.S.A. and F.I.P.
Aerophilately and astrophilately occupy a special position within international philately. Our task, therefore, is to represent its interests objectively and constructively to international philatelic bodies.

We have specifically addressed the further development of the guidelines for the evaluation of aerophilately exhibits.

This is not just about technical evaluation issues. It concerns the fundamental question:
What do we understand by modern aerophilately today?

In our opinion, historical documents of early aviation, especially from the period before the First World War, deserve appropriate consideration. The F.I.S.A. will therefore continue to seek dialogue with the relevant F.I.P. commissions and contribute its expertise.

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5. International Digital Membership – IDM

One of the most important innovations of this term is the International Digital Membership (IDM).
The idea behind it is simple: A member of an FISA member society should be able to access the digital offerings of other FISA societies in a simple and cost-effective way.

With this, we want to overcome the barriers that previously existed due to national memberships, different payment systems, and distances.

The IDM is therefore more than just a technical project. It is a tool for connecting our collectors. Numerous member societies have already participated in the project. By the end of 2025, eleven societies were actively involved; the FISA website now lists thirteen societies participating in the IDM.
Our goal must be to further expand this offering and involve as many member societies as possible.

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6. Communication and the F.I.S.A. Bulletin

Communication within the F.I.S.A. has also been further developed.

After many years without a printed bulletin, we created a new, digital version of the F.I.S.A. Bulletin at the end of 2025.

The classic bulletin, which had been published since 1960 and was an important link within our organization for decades, could not be continued in its original form due to the high printing and shipping costs.

With the new digital bulletin, we have tried to combine tradition with the possibilities of the present.

Our goal is to provide regular updates on:
• activities of member societies,
• exhibitions,
• new publications,
• research results,
• special philatelic documents,
• F.I.P. developments,
• and F.I.S.A. activities.

We rely on the cooperation of all member societies in this endeavour.

The F.I.S.A. It thrives on the information its members share with one another.

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7. Exhibitions and Promotion of Aerophilately

The F.I.S.A. cannot itself organize large philatelic exhibitions. Our strength lies rather in supporting international exhibitions, awarding sponsorships, providing expertise, and connecting members with qualified judges. The reporting period was also very active in this area.
Among others, the following should be mentioned:

• AMSIPEX 2025 and AMSIPEX 2026 as international online exhibitions,
• BERNABA 2025 in Bern,
• Aerophilately Symposium in Ulm in 2025 and 2026

The development of virtual exhibitions, in particular, shows that aerophilately can also utilize new forms of presentation. AMSIPEX has set interesting trends here with new concepts, a Novice Class, and digital judging sessions. This is a path we should continue to monitor and support.

Another important element of our work was the aerophilately symposia in Ulm.
These events facilitate intensive professional exchange across national borders. They also demonstrate that our work cannot be limited solely to exhibitions and competitions.

Research, literature, personal encounters, and the exchange of knowledge are equally essential to the future of the F.I.S.A.

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9. Strengthening Astrophilately

The F.I.S.A. is not exclusively an organization for aerophilately.
Astrophilately is an equal part of our international federation.

We must therefore ensure that both areas are adequately represented and developed within the F.I.S.A. For the future, this means in particular:

• equal attention for aerophilately and astrophilately,
• stronger joint activities,
• better international networking,
• and appropriate consideration of both areas in exhibitions.

This goal will also be an important point of discussion during our meetings in Gmunden.

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10. The Year 2026

The year 2026 will be dominated by our 52nd F.I.S.A. Congress in Gmunden.

The Congress will take place as part of the Phila-Toscana 2026 exhibition.

The fact that we can combine the congress with a philatelic exhibition aligns with our strategy of closely linking F.I.S.A. events with the international exhibition scene.

My special thanks go to all our Austrian friends and the organizers in Gmunden for their work in preparing this congress.

The Austrian Post is supporting the event with, among other things, a special stamp, a corresponding cover, and a special postmark. The philatelic documentation of the congress will also be given special prominence.

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11. Looking to the Future

The 2026 congress marks the beginning of the next phase of our work.
In my view, the coming years should be characterized by five key priorities:

1. More Members and Stronger Member Societies
F.I.S.A. must offer tangible benefits to existing and new societies.

2. Increased International Communication
Digital technologies now allow us to collaborate in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago.

3. A Stronger Position with F.I.P.

We must represent the interests of aerophilately and astrophilately with expertise and unity.

4. Fostering Young Talent
We must attract new collectors and exhibitors.

The future of our hobby depends not only on the number of existing collections, but also on our ability to inspire people with their history.

5. Modern Forms of Presentation
Digital exhibitions, online seminars, digital libraries, and international communication platforms are becoming increasingly important.

However, we must not abandon the traditional values of philately.

Digitization should complement personal philately—not replace it.

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12. Acknowledgements
At the end of this report, I would like to express my gratitude above all.

My thanks go to the entire F.I.S.A. Board for their excellent and trusting cooperation.

I would especially like to thank:

Dominique Petit, our Vice President, for his many years of experience and support,

Stefan Bruylants, our Secretary General, for his tremendous organizational work and for managing F.I.S.A. communications,

Eckhard Förster, our Treasurer, for his responsible management of our finances,

as well as all other members of the Board and all delegates from our member societies.

My special thanks also go to all those who lead our member societies at the national level, publish our journals, organize exhibitions, conduct research, publish, and thus keep our shared passion alive.

13. Closing Remarks

Dear Friends,

when I assumed the office of President in 2024, I was aware that F.I.S.A. faced challenges.

Today I am convinced:

We have accepted these challenges – and we have taken important steps forward.

The FISA is an organization with a long history. But a long history alone does not guarantee a future. Our future depends on whether we are willing to evolve.

We must preserve our tradition without remaining stuck in the past.

We must utilize new technologies without losing the importance of personal interaction.

And above all, we must do one thing:

Pass on the enthusiasm for the history of aviation, space travel, and their postal documents to the next generation.

That is what the FISA stands for.

That is what I, together with the Board, intend to continue working towards in the years to come.

Thank you for your trust, your cooperation, and your friendship.

Johannes E. Palmer

President of the FISA

Gmunden, August 28, 2026