

Hang Gliding - Parapente (Paragliding)

In hang gliding, the pilot "hangs" (tied in a special harness) underneath the glider (a flying machine consisting of Dacron fabric and aluminium tubes of aircraft alloy), in such a way that his/ her body hangs in the air like a pendulum.

By shifting his/ her weight in the appropriate way and by taking advantage of the rising air currents, the pilot follows the desired direction moving along three axes: longitudinal, transversal and vertical. Depending on the degree of training, the pilot can reach a height of 5,000 metres and stay in the air for up to 10 hours.

The sport started in the '70s in the USA and Australia where it became quickly popular. In the years to follow, it became known all over the world and nowadays it is particularly popular in more than fifty countries. It was characterised as an Olympic sport in 1985, but has not yet been included in the Olympic Games programme.

In 1978 it was introduced in Greece and in 1999 it was included in the Hellenic Air Sports Federation (HASF). Nowadays hang gliding is becoming more and more popular in the country and as a result there are many clubs that can provide training for people interested in learning the sport.

Parapente (Paragliding) took its name from the French words "parachute" and pente (mountain side). It originated in the '60s from a NASA programme, but practically it was established in the mid '80s in France. The sport requires good physical condition, excellent technique, mental clarity and peace of mind, perceptivity, as well as knowledge of meteorology and aerodynamics (the latter being provided by special instructors). Depending on the weather, the parapente (paraglider) can reach a height of 4,000 metres and cover a distance of 2-2.5 km. The flights last a couple of hours and speed ranges from 48 to 60 km/h.

Greece has the ideal climate for parapente (paragliding) flights, since the drier the climate of an area or country is, the better it is for the development of the sport.

For more information regarding hang gliding and parapente (paragliding) in Greece, local clubs and the various events held all over the country, contact the:

Hellenic Air Sports Federation (HASF)

P.B. 70262 Glyfada, 166 10 - Athens

Tel: +30 210 9649 788, +30 210 9649 876 – fax: +30 210 9649 547