



Welcome to the January 2010 enews of IAOPA Europe, which goes out to 23,000 aircraft owners and pilots in 27 countries across the continent

Validator now proposes alternative IFR routes

Eurocontrol has taken action on the suggestion made by IAOPA-Europe through SESAR that the online route validator be extended to provide an automatic IFR route proposal feature. Since December 13th the validator has incorporated this capability, which makes getting an IFR flight plan accepted by the computer much easier.

This will eliminate one of the greatest hassles for GA IFR flights in Europe - finding a route from A to B that the Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU) will actually accept. In many cases, the computer would reject flight plan after flight plan, even though after they were accepted, flight plans were rarely flown as filed in the real world. Jacob Pedersen of AOPA-Denmark says: "For longer trips through Central Europe, this was a task that could easily take hours, even using commercial flight planning software."

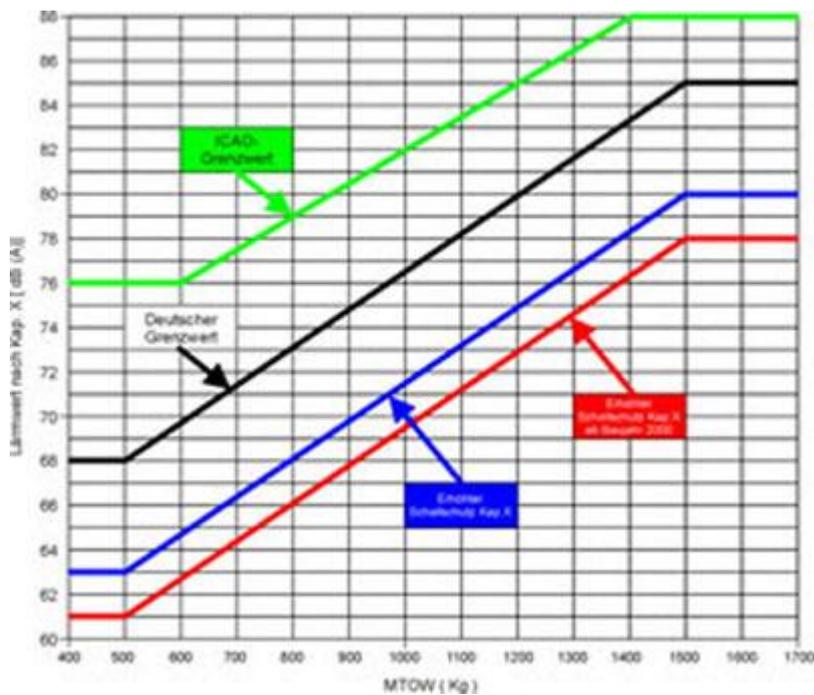
The CFMU's own route proposal tool currently appears as a 'propose' link beside 'validate' in the Flightplan Builder, if the plan fails to validate on 'store'. In some cases the tool will propose a direct point-to-point route, even if none is entered on the flightplan. The CFMU says it will develop the tool as experience dictates.

Our thanks go to Eurocontrol and all those who supported the provision of this excellent upgrade. Please note that you need a free login to access the 'Protected Applications' section of the website www.cfm.eurocontrol.be/cfm/public/subsite_homepage/homepage.html



New German noise restrictions cause problems

Older aircraft which have been allowed time to meet Germany's stringent new noise regulations have found that the deadline for compliance passed on January 1st 2010 without the technology having been developed to make the required reductions possible in all cases. Germany's Airfield Noise Protection Order - 'Landeplatz-Lärmschutzverordnung' - restricts the freedom to fly of aircraft which are not clearly below ICAO noise standards. That's the green line in the accompanying graphic, which allows an aircraft over 150 kg MTOW to



produce a maximum of 88 decibels. The restriction applies at German airfields with more than 15,000 movements per year. The red line on the graphic, corresponding with a maximum of 78 decibels for a 1500 kg-plus aircraft, must be reached if you want to fly traffic patterns on weekends, in the mornings and after dark.

Dr Michael Erb of AOPA-Germany reports that older aircraft built before the year 2000 were allowed a bonus of 2 dB(A) - the blue line on the graphic - but that this bonus ended on December 31st, 2009. "It will be both technically very difficult and financially very expensive to make these affected aircraft now 2 dB(A) more silent," Dr Erb says.

The decibel scale is logarithmic, which means that if one sound appears 10 decibels 'louder' than another to the human ear, it is in fact 10 times more powerful than the fainter one. A difference of 20 decibels corresponds to an increase of 100 times in intensity. A further reduction of 2 dB(A) is therefore very difficult to achieve, especially with older, less complex aircraft. It is estimated that 2,600 of the 9,686 single-engine aircraft under 2 tonnes MTOW on the German register are affected.

Dutch pilots in Natura 2000 test case

Two pilots have been prosecuted in Holland for disturbing animals in the Natura 2000 area called Oostvaardersplassen, south of Lelystad Airport, by low flying. AOPA-Netherlands supported the pilots in court, but they were each fined €250 even though the judge concluded that they contravened no aviation law. AOPA-Netherlands will now support an appeal to a higher court to establish whether Natura 2000 regulations trump air law.

Natura 2000 sites have been established across Europe to protect birds and animals in sensitive ecological areas.

Concern has been expressed over the establishment of sites to encourage birds close to airfields, with the Finns requesting clarification from the EU after they established that 120 Natura 2000 sites in Finland were within 15km of an airport, potentially increasing the dangers of bird-strikes to aircraft. In a submission to the EU ten years ago, the Finnish government said: "Although the objective of the Natura 2000 network is to protect natural diversity in the EU, this must not take place at the expense of aspects relating to the safety of EU citizens." The EU replied, however, that proximity of an airfield could not be a valid reason for non-selection and said individual states and ICAO were working on bird-strike safety measures.

Oostvaardersplassen is a polder reclaimed from the sea in 1968 with the intention of creating an industrial site, but it was never built on and has become an important area for wildfowl. Ary Stigter of AOPA-Netherlands says: "The Liberal Party in Parliament have posted questions to the Ministers of Transport and Nature, and we will keep you informed on this case."

Bum rap for the EC on TMA charges

The European Commission's charging policy which covers en route charges has from January 1st 2010 been expanded to deal with terminal navigation charges. However, no air navigation service provider outside Germany and Austria has yet to announce an intention to levy terminal navigation charges on VFR flights or aircraft under two tonnes.

The EC has moved to strike a better balance between en route and terminal charges in Europe. The Commission has been under pressure to change the charging structure because en route ANSPs get the lion's share of revenues while terminal service providers do a greater proportion of the work than their income reflects. Some 215 airports are affected by these changes. Our report in the December 2009 enews that the EC's changes would lead to new charges assumed that because the new charging regulation allows ANSPs to levy terminal charges on sub-two-tonne aircraft and VFR flights, they would do so. The charging regulation says "states may exempt" certain traffic from terminal charges, which is an important difference from the regulation on en route charges, which says "states shall exempt" VFR and sub-two-tonne traffic.

However, there is no indication that eligible airfields will impose new charges on sub-two-tonne aircraft. Only Austrian and German ANSPs will not exempt smaller aircraft from terminal charges, which adds between €20 and €30 to the cost of using some airports in those countries, although in these two states aircraft weighing less than 1.2 tonnes may pay less than they were paying last year. In Sweden, TMA charges have been introduced at two major airports, Stockholm-Arlanda and Göteborg-Landvetter, but flights by aircraft under two tonnes are specifically exempted from charges. (VFR flights by aircraft above two tonnes are subject to en route charges in Sweden.)

The EC is concerned that it has been wrongly cast as the 'bad guy' on TMA charges when its intention is solely to iron out charging anomalies. The aim, according to the EC, is to ensure that "the principles of transparency, fair allocation and justification of ANS costs and charges as well as user consultation be implemented... to this effect, en route and terminal costs need to be identified and charged separately." The Commission says it expects that states will be operating an exemption from terminal charges after January 1st for aircraft currently exempted from en route charges, with the already-known exceptions of Germany and Austria. In most EU member states, all airfields with fewer than 50,000 commercial movements annually are exempted from terminal charges, while some above that threshold may also be excused. The EC adds that there are planned changes to the charging regulation to prepare for the implementation of the ANS performance scheme in 2012. These changes will be beneficial to airspace users as they will restrict the ability of air navigation service providers to charge users, and actually put a maximum limit on charges.

No more avgas at Schiphol

AOPA-Netherlands reports that Amsterdam Airport has terminated the supply of Avgas. Shell and BP did not want to invest in a new filling station due to lack of profitability. The airport authority does not wish to take over the service for the same reason.

Poland works on vital Air Law amendment

Blazej Krupa has been reappointed as President of AOPA Poland, which has now grown to more than 100 members. A new group of officials includes Pawel Korzec, Slawomir Kubiak, Marek Kulczycki, Krzysztof Wojtkowiak and Wojciech Roman. The Association has identified its main domestic aims which include working for the removal of harmful

provisions of the AIP banning training flights within Warsaw CTR, campaigning for increased access to airspace around Warsaw Babice airport, and working to reduce the abnormally large network of low military airways. AOPA is taking an active part in the legislative process towards a major amendment to Polish Air Law, including the abolition of the current requirement that persons can only be issued with and retain a pilot's license if they have no criminal record.

Instead it is proposed that only a court of law can prohibit a person convicted of a crime from applying for or retaining a pilot's license, which may apply if for example he or she was convicted of causing an accident while under the influence of alcohol. Legislation is also moving towards the introduction of registered and non-registered airfields. Thanks to AOPA's intervention the amendment now foresees that all types of flight operations will be allowed at airfields, including commercial air transport operations (air taxi) for aircraft not exceeding 5,700kg or nine passengers, provided that the owner of the airfield has the support of the authorities of the municipality and the Polish Air Navigation Services Agency. Should flight operations exceed 14 days in a 12 month period, then the airfield will need to be registered with the Polish Civil Aviation Authority (ULC).

UK IMC rating must be saved

AOPA-UK is mounting a campaign to save the British IMC rating, which is under threat because there is no European consensus to adopt it across the continent. The IMC rating is a 15-hour flying course which teaches low-time pilots to keep control of aircraft and to land safely in IMC. It confers no additional privileges over the PPL apart from reduced visibility minima. In the 40 years it has been available in the UK there has been no credible suggestion that it is unsafe; during that time the Civil Aviation Authority has been audited at least 20 times by ICAO and no negative comment has been made on the rating. It is renewed every two years by rigorous flight test. AOPA-UK has collected scores of testimonials from pilots who believe the IMC rating saved their lives in unpredictable British weather. Some 25,000 British pilots have obtained the rating, and the Civil Aviation Authority has found only one fatal accident involving an IMCR holder in IMC conditions in 40 years. AOPA-UK believes the IMC rating is in large measure responsible for the fact that Britain's GA safety record is better than most of Europe, despite the UK's maritime climate.

Supporters of the rating point to an incident near Aberdeen in which a foreign pilot was caught out 'VFR on top' and a number of commercial aircraft and oil industry helicopters had to be diverted to find a hole in the stratus to allow him to descend safely. Luckily, they found one - but AOPA-UK does not want to see safety reduced to that sort of level. EASA does not want to ban the IMCR - it has said it merely wants to harmonise ratings across Europe - and it has tried to establish a consensus across Europe in its support, but some countries say they do not want the rating, or cannot adopt it because of airspace restrictions. It therefore faces being killed off in Britain because there is no mechanism whereby a national rating can be attached to an EASA licence. AOPA-UK says this means a proven lifesaver will be lost to GA for reasons of bureaucratic tidiness. AOPA-UK's Martin Robinson says: "We do not wish to force the rest of Europe to adopt the IMC rating, although we believe opposition to it is largely based on misunderstanding and misinformation.

We believe that killing the IMC rating would be like banning the use of seat belts in cars in Europe because other countries thought them unsafe or didn't have them." AOPA is asking all GA pilots to write to members of the UK and European Parliaments and is supported in its campaign by the British Air Line Pilots Association, the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators, the Royal Air Force Flying Clubs Association, the General Aviation Safety Council and many other aviation groups. Martin Robinson says: "It is significant that all those with experience of the IMC rating wholeheartedly support it, whereas those who oppose it seem to have a tenuous grasp of its purpose and operation. It is not a matter of losing privileges but a matter of life or death for British pilots, and we are determined to maintain it in the UK.

Some system must be found whereby the IMC rating can be attached to an EASA licence, for use only in the United Kingdom or other states which choose to permit it."