



IAOPA (Europe) e-newsletter



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

[EASA to move against the N-register](#)

EASA has finally shown its hand on the issue of N-registered aircraft based in Europe, and the news is bad. The Agency intends to make it illegal for pilots domiciled in Europe to fly permanently in Europe on American licenses, which will come as a hammer blow to holders of the FAA Instrument Rating. An estimated 10,000 European pilots will have to convert to JAA or EASA licenses, by a process and at a cost that has yet to be established. In the case of the Instrument Rating, it is not clear whether any credit at all will be given for having an FAA IR when applying for a European equivalent. It will certainly mean substantial and costly additional training and the sitting of seven examinations. The number of pilots driven out of general aviation, or declining to come in, is likely to be high.

IAOPA is particularly aghast at the sweeping nature of EASA's intentions because they have nothing to do with safety.

Over the decades in which the current system has pertained there have been no safety issues with oversight, with instrument flying, with maintenance or any other factor. General aviation is being sucked into a trade war involving the big beasts at Boeing and Airbus, with protectionist tactics grinding up our own GA industry in pursuit of political point-scoring.

A European pilot who obtains a licence or rating in the United States will be required to undergo as-yet unspecified validation and checking on his return, and within two years will have to have converted the FAA document to the EASA equivalent, a process which will not be straightforward or inexpensive. In the case of the Instrument Rating, EASA plans to require the applicant to study for and pass all seven written exams and undergo flight training which will probably cost tens of thousands of euros even for pilots who've been flying safely for decades on FAA IRs. While it will still be legal to own an N-registered aircraft, the market in such aircraft will shrink, with some that have been modified to FAA STCs being rendered unsaleable in Europe. Those pilots who have American PPLs but cannot attain JAR Class II medical standards will also be adversely affected.

The plans, set out by EASA's Deputy Head of Rulemaking Eric Sivel in a note to AOPA UK, confirm IAOPA's fears that political chauvinism is taking precedence over safety and good sense. M Sivel says the proposals are stipulated in the Basic Regulation which covers everything EASA does. However, in talks with EC Transport Commissioner Daniel Calleja and others over the past five years IAOPA has been given to understand they could be flexed at the Implementing Rule stage. In its response to EASA's consultation on the implementation of its Flight Crew Licensing proposals IAOPA pointed out that if a state has issued a licence and a medical in accordance with ICAO standards, other states should accept it without adding onerous requirements. Now, however, we are being told it is set in stone.

The end result will be that if EASA gets its way, going to America for a PPL will be pointless; but how many of those who were contemplating it will now get EASA licenses instead? Of the FAA licence and IR holders now in Europe, how many will pay the money and take the time to convert, and how many will simply walk away? And at the end of it all, what will have been gained?

IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson is meeting IAOPA's lawyers in Brussels next week to discuss options.

Can UK commercial flight training be viable again?

The United Kingdom's flight training industry has held a crisis meeting to debate whether it has a viable future and has formed a working group with AOPA representation to establish whether it can combat the regulatory and cost pressures that are dragging it down. The meeting, attended by the major players in the commercial flight training industry as well as airlines and pilot organisations, heard that a would-be airline pilot must find up to £130,000 (€155,000) for an integrated training course including type rating, regulatory fees and finance costs before being able to apply for a job, with no guarantee of getting one. Student numbers are dwindling and quality is falling as only the richest can contemplate becoming pilots.

Unlike some other European countries, Britain does not allow any tax breaks on self-funded aviation training and charges students tens of thousands of euros in VAT. Costs cannot be written off during employment. Moreover, British airlines have little or no involvement in training; where Lufthansa, for example, trains several hundred pilots a year, British Airways' approach is entirely parasitical - it only poaches qualified pilots from other airlines.

The crisis comes as British airlines are mounting a new campaign to have more regulatory costs heaped on general aviation and the training industry. British Airways, among others, is demanding that the UK CAA start charging general aviation for the use of the air, even in the Open FIR, in order to reduce its own charges. BA says: "We believe it is disingenuous for the CAA to suggest that commercial aviation should be forced to pay for the poor practice of GA pilots, i.e. improving the safety of controlled airspace due to GA pilots not installing, or not switching on, transponders. There is an equal obligation on GA pilots to maintain a high level of safety, the achievement of which is, to a large extent, within their gift. Whilst the CAA has identified that they see policy and practical difficulties in moving to charge GA for the services they receive British Airways is of opinion that this problem is potentially easy to solve with the introduction of an annual payment for all registered aircraft, that covers the costs of the services and prevents flying without radio, without met data and other information as the option is pay or don't fly."

IAOPA points out, however, that every GA pilot pays more fuel tax than the whole of British Airways, a massive de facto subsidy which makes a mockery of BA's claim to be hard done by.

The flight training organisations believe that asking the UK government to match the tax practices of other countries is a lost cause, so it must convince the airlines that they can profit by involving themselves in flight training. The main difficulty was seen as trying to talk to airlines about what they'd need two years down the line when they were concentrating on staying afloat for the next two hours. But with the training industry continuing to contract, doing nothing is not an option.

Dutch Mode-S fiasco rolls on

The tragicomedy of Mode-S implementation in the Netherlands continues to embarrass the authorities and cause endless problems for Dutch general aviation. Although initial problems in the Schiphol area have been partly resolved, the fiasco has spread to other parts of the country, which was the first in Europe to mandate universal Mode-S equipage.

All aircraft were forced to install the transponders despite clear and repeated warnings that ATC radar would be unable to cope. The result was that Mode-S returns in the Amsterdam area saturated the radar, creating a dangerous situation in which Schiphol traffic could not be clearly seen on ATC screens. The Dutch CAA was

forced into the humiliating position of banning that which it had so recently mandated in the low-level VFR areas around Schiphol.

Since then Schiphol's ATC radar system has been adapted to reduce the screen presentation of VFR traffic outside the TMA and CTR. Unfortunately, this means it cannot provide the low altitude traffic with ATC traffic advisories. But the problem has not gone away. The authorities also underestimated the amount of VFR traffic in less busy areas, and the same radar transponder saturation has emerged in areas outside the Schiphol TMA which are under control of military ATC. They too have had to place restrictions on the use of Mode-S.

Dutch pilots who were forced against their better judgement to spend thousands of euros on Mode-S transponders are livid that they are now prohibited from using them in much of their VFR airspace. Ary Stigter of AOPA Netherlands points out that other European countries treated the Mode-S issue with circumspection, introducing it piecemeal or not at all. Money has been squandered and safety degraded. The only positive factor is that the Dutch CAA has now positively confirmed that IAOPA's warnings of Mode-S saturation are absolutely true, and the rest of Europe is likely to be more sensible.



Linate demands personal data

AOPA Italy is opposing an extraordinary NOTAM from a private company demanding personal details of pilots and threatening to report them for negligence if they fail to enter them on its website. The NOTAM was issued by S.E.A, the company which operates Milan's Linate airport, and AOPA Italy sees it as an attempt by a GA-unfriendly company to frighten general aviation away from Linate.

The NOTAM reads, in part: 'In order to provide to general aviation pilots willing to operate to/from Milano Linate airport an exhaustive range of information concerning the airport operations and ground movements is now available (at) a specific safety website accessible at www.sea-aeroportoimilano.it by clicking on Aviazione Generale Linate. The site constitutes an important and decisive safety means towards incident/accident prevention. S.E.A., as Linate's airport managing company, recommends to the crew staff not based at Milano/Linate airport and with the need to use the Milano/Linate infrastructures to consult the website in advance by registering the requested personal data. In case of operational inconvenience, if the pilot has not previously completely consulted the information provided in the safety website, aerodrome operator (S.E.A.) on the premise that the negligent behaviour of the pilot may have contributed to the occurrence of the event, reserves the right to inform the national flight safety authority accordingly.'

In short, register your personal data on the company website or you risk being reported for negligence. AOPA Italy's Massimo Levy reports: "After discussing the NOTAM with our Board of Directors we decided to formally oppose its content for various reasons. The input for the NOTAM comes from the airport handling company and not from the Civil Aviation Authority. We do not know how it could be published without ENAC central office's approval but in Italy, during holiday season everything can happen.

"The content of the NOTAM is only a way to scare GA users and invite them not to use the airport. Milano Linate is a normal airport, unfortunately in the hands of a company that does not like GA.

"No-one has stated what is the purpose of the data collection. Consequently we consider it illegal. We shall appeal against it and, for the time being, we invite all GA pilots in Europe to ignore it."

Commercial pilots and butterflies fight to save Fürstfeldbruck from BMW

Support for AOPA Germany's fight to save the vital Fürstfeldbruck airfield near Munich from the car company BMW is spreading both geographically and across aviation sectors. The German Airline Pilots Association 'Vereinigung Cockpit' has written an open letter to the company asking BMW to reconsider its refusal to share Fürstfeld with general aviation, adding: "It surely is in the interest of BMW, which has its roots in the building of aircraft engines, to enjoy in future the reputation of 'fair partner' with the pilots of Germany."

Hundreds of pilots from as far afield as Australia, Argentina and Canada have written to BMW - which wants the airfield as a driving track - expressing their disquiet at the company's plans to shut out GA. They point out that they would be reluctant to buy cars from a company that is actively engaged in destroying a GA airport - a commercial factor that weighs heavily on BMW, especially as so many GA pilots control car fleets.

Fürstfeld is the only unrestricted GA airfield in that part of Germany and as such is a vital part of the GA network in Europe. AOPA Germany says it would be perfectly possible for GA to share the airfield with BMW - the former Cold War airbase has a runway almost 3km long, and aviation needs a small portion of it. BMW, however, wants it all. Dr Michael Erb, Managing Director of AOPA Germany, says: "There is enough space for joint usage. Even if BMW denies it, in Fürstfeld we have space in abundance to even operate an airport and, if desired, a Formula 1 track in parallel. A fundamental issue is that while BMW can go and drive cars almost anywhere, as an airfield Fürstfeld is irreplaceable."

Recently a number of small but powerful supporters of aviation use have been discovered - a butterfly named 'plebejus idas' has been discovered on the airport together with the ant 'formica fuscocinerea'. They form a very interesting symbiosis, with the ants feeding and raising the butterflies' young, and they have thrived during the years in which Fürstfeld was a busy airfield. Both are endangered and protected species which will make it more difficult for the environmental protection status of the airport grounds to be lifted.

Are you considering buying a new car? Perhaps you'd like to add your voice to those of the pilots who have told BMW of their concerns. You can email BMW customer.service@bmw.com or kundenbetreuung@bmw.de. Please send a copy to info@aopa.de

Greek handling charges

An agreement on charges between AOPA-Hellas and handling agents Olympic lapsed on September 9th, but two other handling agencies, Swissport Hellas and Goldair Handling, offer AOPA Aircrew Card holders major savings at the 39 airports in Greece. According to the Greek AIP you must accept and pay for handling at major airports if it is offered to you. AOPA Hellas has established agreements with ground handling agents for substantial discounts for AOPA members. The agreements include marshalling and transport/escort to and from an airport terminal and they are available only for valid AOPA Air Crew Card holders on private general aviation flights, including training. Commercial light aircraft flights are excluded.

Current Prices & terms

Swissport Hellas:

AOPA Hellas Air Crew cards : 18 Euro +VAT

Other IAOPA (AOPA International) cards : 24 Euro +VAT for up to 3,000kg MTOW

For more info read here http://www.aopa.gr/docs/web_swissport_handling_agreement.pdf

Goldair Handling SA

IAOPA Air Crew cards: 20 Euro+VAT for up to 3,000 kg MTOW

For more info read here http://www.aopa.gr/docs/web_goldair_handling_agreement.pdf

If you're flying to Greece, it's worthwhile to consult 'Flying In Greece - Useful Information' in the AOPA Hellas website at http://www.aopa.gr/en/infosdetails.asp?NEWS_ID=1

IAOPA-Europe Regional Meeting

The 123rd quarterly Regional Meeting of IAOPA-Europe is being held in Amsterdam on Saturday October 2nd. The agenda includes Single European Sky and SESAR; EASA Flight Crew Licensing, Ops and Avionics; ECAC/ facilitation; and updates on talks between IAOPA and European officials in Brussels. A full report will be carried in the next enews.

