



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

EASA redrafts N-register proposals

IAOPA is continuing to work towards a sensible conclusion to the issue of third-country licences and registrations in Europe, which is affected by EASA proposals on flight crew licensing. Following a concerted IAOPA campaign, the European Commission's committee which oversees EASA's proposals - called the Comitology Committee - put back a decision on third-country licenses for two months to allow EASA to bring forward new proposals. EASA's new draft will be circulated to members of the Comitology Committee in the next two weeks, and a full deliberation is scheduled for December 8th.

EASA has made no secret of the fact that it wants to get third country aircraft - and specifically the N-register - out of Europe. But in the past it has said it would do this by "making sure there were no advantages to being on the N-register." It has, however, found it difficult or impossible to address the relevant issues, and seems to have opted for a 'train crash' approach which would be disastrous for general aviation in Europe. The flight crew licensing proposal is only the first stage in EASA's move against the N-register, with more to come in proposals on Ops. IAOPA believes these moves are politically motivated and have nothing to do with safety, and EASA regulation should not be used in political disputes.

Denmark abolishes its CAA

The Danish Ministry for Transportation has announced that the Danish CAA (SLV) will cease to exist as a separate authority from today. Henceforth all CAA activities will be handled by the Agency for Transportation currently dealing with road and rail matters. The Director of the Danish CAA left his position on September 1st, and the new director for the combined agency will be the current Director for the Agency for Transportation.

AOPA Denmark's Jacob Pedersen says the organisation is very concerned about this sudden move and fears that it will lead to a loss of competencies. He says: "The aviation industry is a very specialised business and needs a dedicated authority which fully understands the industry. The Ministry will not make any further comment at this time so it is unclear what is the reason for this surprising move. I suspect that it may be in recognition of the fact that more and more tasks will be moved to EASA level in the longer term."

General aviation is not the enemy

The leading Eurocontrol/NATO security group has accepted that general aviation poses little terrorist threat and must be co-opted rather than controlled by the security services. The conclusion follows a presentation to the group by IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson, who explained what general aviation is and how it works. The meeting threw up a few interesting issues, not least of which is whether GA pilots fully understand the hand signals they'll get

when jets or helicopters intercept them; if you don't know them, ask an instructor now.

The security group, called NEASOG, comprises military and civilian aviation and security organisations, and its October meeting began with the usual rumblings about people flying little aeroplanes from remote strips without anyone's permission. But by the end it had agreed that there is no need for measures to restrict the industry. Martin Robinson says: "We're now seen as the good guys, not the bad guys - partners with the security services rather than targets, and they know they need to keep open channels to GA to ensure they get good intelligence. We must of course remain vigilant, but GA is now accepted as a low risk in terms of threat."

The meeting discussed issues surrounding communications loss and interception procedures, and some authorities had to be reminded that many aircraft had no radio. It is clear that while interception is very rare, pilots should be fully aware of interception signals. In France, intercepting helicopters carry electronic message boards which can spell out instructions in any language - but in case of misunderstanding, they often have two snipers on board.



New airspace classifications for Russia

Russia has adopted new airspace classifications which should allow general aviation to operate without many of the bureaucratic procedures with which pilots have had to contend up to now. But the classifications, introduced from today (November 1st), are not as clear as they might have been and AOPA Russia is concerned that they have done little to improve the lot of the GA pilot. Airspace has become fragmented as airports and air traffic control providers have grabbed huge and poorly co-ordinated segments, some of them overlapping and intruding on each other; in many cases the Class G equivalent airspace is isolated, like islands in a sea of controlled airspace.

The changes are fundamental and mean that responsibility for flights now rests with the aircraft commander rather than a flight dispatcher. The pilot now needs to file a flight plan online, by phone or radio, inform air traffic control and be in possession of the met and aeronautical information. AOPA Russia is seeking a clearer, better-integrated system of airspace which allows GA pilots real opportunities to use their aircraft in an efficient way. A fuller explanation of the airspace changes can be viewed on the excellent Pilotweb online TV service - the English language version is at <http://pilottv.aviationtoday.ru/video/v2en.html?lng=en>

The station also carries up to date news from AOPA Russia, which is characterised as an organisation that has been fighting for the rights of Russian pilots for 12 years. It adds that only by working together through AOPA can pilots fight their corner.

'Grandfather rights' changes the regulatory landscape

IAOPA is seeking advice from its Brussels lawyers over an EASA statement to the effect that it has no power to abolish any established national practice - a statement which opens up a whole new vista of regulatory possibility. The statement was made during a meeting to discuss the UK's IMC rating, which Britain wants to retain but which some other European countries do not want. EASA's representatives said anyone in Britain who had an IMC rating would be allowed to continue using it for life because EASA did not have the power to take away any privilege already granted by a national authority.

IAOPA's lawyers have been asked to unearth the precise wording of whatever EU law allows this - it is certainly not aviation law - but it seems to offer a solution to some of the intractable problems associated with harmonising licences. In France it could allow the continuation of the *brevet de base*, which the rest of Europe does not want. For the UK, as well as the IMC rating it might solve the problem of the Basic Commercial Pilots Licence, a national licence which allows PPL instructors to carry on doing their jobs.

Martin Robinson says: "This is such a seismic shift in EASA's position that it must be fully clarified in plain language. Often EASA hides behind legal semantics, a dreadful position to be in when you're making aviation safety rules, and

you can read many things into what they say. But this is too important.”

The UK IMC rating is a course of at least 15 hours which pilots are encouraged to complete after their PPL. It teaches them to keep control of an aircraft in IMC, and to return safely to the ground using whatever instrument approach is available. Tens of thousands of British pilots have obtained the rating over the past 40 years, and it is seen as one of the main reasons why the UK’s safety rate is so good, despite its unpredictable maritime climate. EASA’s one-size-fits-all approach means the IMC rating cannot be adopted across Europe because some countries do not allow IMC flight outside controlled airspace. AOPA UK, with the backing of the UK CAA, seeks to preserve the IMC rating for future generations of pilots as well as those with ‘grandfather rights’.

GA and the environment

Discussions over general aviation’s problems with Natura 2000 sites are coming to a satisfactory conclusion in the Netherlands, where AOPA has been working to convince government officials and environmental interests that general aviation poses no threat to wildlife. Some 162 areas in Holland are designated nature reserves under the Europe-wide Natura 2000 programme, and some of them impinged on flying sites, particularly those used by helicopters. Now, a new draft report indicates that AOPA’s representations have been successful and it is accepted that historically, general aviation has not had an adverse effect on wildlife in these areas. With the exception of a small number of specific wetland areas, restrictions which affected approaches to flying sites are likely to be reconsidered. The Netherlands recently elected a new government which has decided to merge the departments of Transport and Environment into a Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. Ary Stigter of AOPA Netherland says: “We are confident that this amalgamation will help to speed up decisions on matters affecting both transport and environment, like Natura 2000.”

AOPA Israel joins with LSA group

AOPA Israel had initiated a joint meeting with the Israeli Light Sport Aircraft Association’s board and both parties have agreed to join forces in future activities such as fly-ins, navigation rallies, flights for the community, dialogue with the authorities, legislation and other aviation issues. This development was made possible by a change of approach by the newly elected LSA association chairman and the recent passing of updated LSA legislation by CAA. Israel LSA association has 450 members with 160 aircraft and will host the next year world LSA championship at LLYO, with the active assistance of AOPA Israel.

Not EASA but Eurocontrol

Following our story about the problems arising from the Mode-S transponder mandate in the Netherlands (IAOPA enews, October 2010) Mr Jules Kneepkens, EASA’s Head of Rulemaking, has written to Ary Stigter of AOPA Netherlands to point out that it is Eurocontrol, rather than EASA, which was responsible for the mandate. We are happy to make this clear.

Sponsored message: Electronic VFR Textual Information

Recently Jeppesen Text Viewer (JTV) was made available to European VFR Manual subscribers. This electronic alternative for the textual and graphical information contained in the front (non-charting) portion of Jeppesen VFR Manuals enables subscribers to reduce paper usage and access electronic textual information for the complete library of 29 European countries available. JTV is offered as a free of charge add-on to any VFR Manual subscription.

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