



Welcome to the June 2011 enews of IAOPA Europe, which goes out to 23,000 aircraft owners and pilots in 27 countries across the continent

EU committee gives qualified nod to EASA-FCL

The European Parliament's Transport Committee has expressed reservations about EASA's FCL proposals but will not stand in their way, pending a further debate when all the proposals have been translated into all European languages. At a debate on May 25th MEPs were given sometimes-incomplete answers - the European Commission's representative claimed there were 'safety concerns' over FAA licences - and the Chairman of the Transport Committee, Brian Simpson MEP, said that the issue was America's refusal to accept European licences. "Is this a case of America dictating to us?" he asked. "If the US won't recognise ours, why should we recognise theirs?"

Some MEPs made very good cases on behalf of European pilots, notably the British Conservative MEPs Jackie Foster and Philip Bradbourn and the Austrian Green MEP Eva Lichtenberger. Ms Foster said that from a UK perspective, there had been a mutual recognition of FAA licences down the years and it wasn't a big issue. "Clearly the UK was okay with FAA-trained pilots and there were no safety issues," she said. Even though the deadline had been extended to 2014, Philip Bradbourn added: "This EASA decision threatens a long-standing status quo. It is a solution without a problem.

The domicile of the pilot is irrelevant." There was no reason to change the system, he said. "Is there any evidence that FAA licences are unsafe? Cost is a real issue. If pilots have to convert - it's estimated that some 68,000 pilots will be affected, and that's a very conservative number - the cost of retraining will be £125 million." The solution was quite simple, he added - in July the European Parliament should reject EASA-FCL until a firm bilateral agreement was found.

They received support from Ms Lichtenberger, who asked: "Are European pilot tests so outdated now that we are requiring unnecessary things from our European pilots? Is there also an element of age discrimination concerning medicals?"

But Brian Simpson said the European Parliament had passed the Basic Regulation with the European-licensing element included and could not now say it didn't want it. (The Basic Regulation was outline law written by the EC, on which EASA was then expected to put flesh.) "The solution seems to be mutual recognition of pilot licences," he said. "The issue seems to be the US not accepting EU licences."

For the EC, aviation policy director Matthew Baldwin said he believed the FAA licence issue was among those that had been 'satisfactorily resolved'. The EC had a 'clear mandate' from the Basic Regulation for the licensing of pilots residing in the EU. They were trying to settle this through an annexe to a Bilateral Agreement with the United States. He added: "In certain respects, we believe some of the US licences may need to comply with additional EU requirements for safety reasons."

IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson says: "While this issue was certainly in the Basic Regulation, that did not give EASA carte blanche to hang any baggage in pleased on it. The idea of genuine mutual acceptance of licenses and

ratings being enshrined in an annexe to the BASA is, at best, a very long-term expedient. Mr Baldwin's raising of safety concerns demands and explanation. Thousands of FAA licence holders fly in Europe every day, and have done for decades. On what is the claim of 'safety concerns' based?

The Committee is now waiting for the full translations before making a decision. The final proposals are expected to be published in November.

IAOPA to quiz Goudou

EASA Executive Director Patrick Goudou will be present at the EASA Advisory Board meeting on June 8th, where he will face questions from IAOPA Europe on FCL issues, and in particular how EASA is going to communicate what it is doing its bilateral discussions on licensing with the FAA. Martin Robinson says: "I think EASA has a duty to consult with industry on the content of the annexe, and we would welcome a more open dialogue on this issue."

Can EASA 'partnership' change the rules?

EASA's recently-formed Part-FCL Partnership Group met for the second time last week, with Nick Wilcock of AOPA UK is IAOPA's representative. The FCL-PG meets twice a year for a two-day conference in Cologne and has the following stated objectives:

- To reach a common understanding of the European system for pilot licensing;
- To provide information regarding possible gaps in Part-FCL discovered during the preparation of implementation, thus providing input to rulemaking activities in the field of FCL;
- To exchange mutual information on implementation issues to support the transition process;
- To develop a common understanding of the new rules with the help of EASA where interpretation of rules is needed;
- To exchange information and to discuss alternative means of compliance for the common understanding of how they are to be implemented;
- To provide input to the respective Advisory Group of National Authorities and Safety Standards Consultative Committee members (by way of the meeting results) for their task of prioritisation of rulemaking tasks, thus contributing to a strategic view on further improving Part-FCL;

Originally, there was an additional objective:

- To support EASA activities in the respective NAAs and Organisations/Associations.

However, at Nick Wilcock's insistence this has been amended, as it could well have conflicted with IAOPA's political lobbying rights. It now reads:

- To provide an EASA forum for NAAs and Organisations/Associations.

The next meeting will be in November; if you have FCL issues you wish to raise, please forward them to Martin Robinson no later than October 15th.

For the FCL-PG to have any worthwhile purpose, it is vital that EASA heeds our concerns and produces a methodology which enables swift regulatory amendment to be achieved. Currently there appears to be no such methodology available, and EASA rulemakers have shown scant interest in amending unsatisfactory legislative proposals.



Partnership again discusses IMC rating

EASA representatives were uncomfortably reminded at the Partnership Group that EASA had given firm political commitments to find a solution for the UK IMC rating, and that if its Notice of Proposed Amendment fails to do so,

then EASA will be held to account.

“This will *not* go away,” Nick Wilcock warned. The EASA people asked only how many IMC ratings are issued each year, and how many people would be affected by its abolition. While the UK CAA has gone quiet on this issue, it is believed to be working behind the scenes to find a workable solution.

IAOPA Europe helps promote interests of Lebanese GA

IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson met with the Lebanese Transport Minister and the head of the CAA in Beirut last week and made progress on integrating GA interests into new policymaking bodies. The Lebanese are currently rewriting their rulebook and are looking at both EASA and the FAA for a lead; EASA has been active in Lebanon trying to influence them to follow the European model, but Martin Robinson was able to point out where FAA rules would be less detrimental to the establishment of a functioning general aviation industry.

Together with Hadi and Haytham Azhari, who run AOPA Lebanon, Martin met with the Minister of Transport Ghazi Aridi, acting DGAC head Daniel Haibe and Director of Safety Regulation Tony Hashem. Mr Aridi said he was extremely pleased that IAOPA-Europe was taking an interest in Lebanon and the development of GA. Martin says: “The Lebanese are shrewd enough to realise to see how the land lies. I gave him copies of the European Parliament’s Sustainable Future for General and Business Aviation document and explained to him the aims of the industry. He sent me on to the acting head of the DGAC, Mr Haibe, where we had a similar discussion. They have a new committee just getting under way, and AOPA has been invited to take part. Mr Hashem, who is responsible for the new committee, is keen to ensure that what they decide is in the best interests of Lebanese GA. We spoke of the certification of aircraft with mogas engines, which can reduce the high cost of flying there.”

Hadi Azhari said after the series of meetings: “For a first visit, the achievements far exceeded our expectations.” Lebanon has many problems. It’s possible to rent a C172 in Beirut for \$275 an hour and a Lance for \$400, but pilots can fly only to two military bases, and are allowed only to do touch-and-goes there. While this satisfies the cross-country requirement for a licence, it’s a poor basis for a GA industry. Flying abroad means landing in Cyprus, only one hour away - but aircraft from Lebanon are subjected to a €500 handling charge, which is not levied on local aircraft. Martin says: “The Aero Club meets in Beirut every Saturday, and they have the same passion for flying that we have. Their problems certainly put our own in perspective.”

Stay above 1,000 feet in the Netherlands

Good news on flying over Natura 2000 areas in the Low Countries, reports Ary Stigter of AOPA Netherlands. An environmental consultancy has concluded that general aviation poses little or no risk to plants and wildlife in the 162 Natura 2000 areas in which they have special protection. AOPA-NL and Dutch Airports (KNVvL) have asked the departments of Transport and Environment to investigate whether general aviation has an impact on wildlife. The departments engaged a well-known environmental consultant called Bureau Waardenburg to do the investigation.

Waardenburg recommended that a maximum annual average of five passes of GA at 1000 feet or higher is acceptable for preservation and restoration of wildlife. Basing its research on the present use of airspace and today’s traffic patterns, Waardenburg calculated that the average number of passes in only a few locations was five, and in most locations it was less than five. In four locations they concluded that some airfield patterns be changed.

This conclusion is a great assistance to allow the Natura 2000 management to include aviation in their management plan without further research. If they want more restrictions, they must provide scientific research to back their request.

The Code of Conduct for GA in the Netherlands urges GA to fly above 1000’ AGL as far as safe operation allows. AOPA-NL urges all pilots, including our international colleagues, to comply with the code of conduct and fly above 1000’. The minimum altitude of 1500’ over the Dutch Wadden in the north of the country is still applicable, excluding the corridors to Texel (EHTX) and Ameland (EHAL) as indicated on the Low Countries chart.

RM and World Assembly Arrangements

The next Regional Meeting of IAOPA Europe will be in Krakow, Poland, on October 1st. Arrangements for the 26th IAOPA World Assembly to be held in South Africa, in April 2012, are proceeding. AOPA-South Africa is planning a series of events to complement the three days of discussions and planning that form the centerpiece of the assembly. The

World Assembly, at Stellenbosch, also marks the 50th anniversary of IAOPA.

Greek Fly-In

AOPA-Hellas and Egnatia Aviation, a Greek flight training organisation, are having a fly-in and air show at Kavala this weekend - see www.kavalafly-in.com. More than 100 GA aircraft are expected to participate, from ultralights to modern twin-engine aircraft. The Italian Pioneer Aerobatic Team will perform, flying Extra 300s. AOPA-Hellas founder Anton Koutsoudakis says: “The most important news is that this is the first time general aviation providers and users are sitting together with local communities, and plan to use general aviation as an instrument to enhance the area’s economic situation. The spectacular air show will be advertised as a tourist attraction. The thousands of visitors will be good news for a big number of small businesses. AOPA-Hellas is very keen to underline the economic benefits which may come out from GA in a remote area of the country.”