



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

GA can fly high in the Single European Sky

The European Commission is getting increasingly concerned about the lack of real progress towards the Single European Sky, which according to Transport Commissioner and Vice President of the EC Siim Kallas is so important that it must not fail. IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson attended a Single European Sky (SES) workshop in Warsaw at which Matthew Baldwin, head of air transport at the Commission's transport department DGMOV, echoed Kallas's words. The over-riding concern of the Commission was the failure of member states to make headway towards implementing SES across Europe. Kallas told the workshop that states were too focused on national priorities and national airspace structures, and that the time had come to think about airspace as European.

In essence he was referring to the lack of progress being made on Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs), which are due to be completed by December 2012. While two small FABs have been established between the UK and Ireland, and Sweden and Denmark, the larger FABs such as the Central Europe block, which comprises six states and 17 Air Navigation Service Providers, are running in to difficulties. While some simply say the devil is in the detail, Martin Robinson believes that at the highest level there has been too much over-simplification. Now, Europe is getting ready to wield the big stick. Matthew Baldwin confirmed that where non-compliance is confirmed and not rectified in time, the Commission will consider all options at its disposal, including the opening of infringement procedures.

SES is building on five pillars: performance, safety, technology, airports and human factors. Improving the network aligned to performance plans set by member-states is driving performance: Eurocontrol has been confirmed as the network manager. Safety in Air TRaffic Management will fall under the extended remit of EASA, whilst the technology pillar falls to SESAR.

All this is important for GA because the EU Transport White Paper sets out Europe's goals with regard to developing all forms of growth in transport, while at the same time delivering environmental improvements. In aviation terms any growth has to be carbon neutral, the goal being to reduce emissions by around 40% by 2030. The politicians see SES and SESAR as the enablers for environmental targets, which are linked to Europe's action on global warming. Hence the high level of political support for SES. Martin Robinson says: "In all of this, GA is fighting to be heard, and while IAOPA in Europe is a leading player in the field of GA involvement with SESAR and SES, it's clear that we have to do more to ensure that we protect the long-term interests of GA. The Commission is keen to point out how the US has similar traffic volumes to Europe yet their costs are approximately 40% lower than Europe. Interestingly GA in the USA is nearly five times larger than GA in Europe. As I keep pointing out, GA has room for growth so long as the regulations that govern GA actually enable growth, and the benefits of that growth to the European economy could be significant.

"In the US, GA provides a \$103 billion economic benefit, which translates into millions of jobs, direct and indirect. In

Europe we estimate the economic value at between €30-40 billion. GA in Europe can create jobs as well as providing important transport links for business and tourism, particularly from the regions of Europe. Whilst Commissioner Kallas calls on member states to think in terms of what is good for Europe, IAOPA calls upon the Commissioner to look at GA in the pan-European context, and note how with proper development GA can play its part in developing the economic prosperity that Europe desperately needs."

Taking the shackles off Lebanese GA

IAOPA is working to open up the outside world to general aviation in Lebanon, where the inability to cross international borders means GA is dying on its feet. Members of AOPA Lebanon cannot fly north through Syria or south through Israel - the only way out is via Cyprus, 120 miles away across the Mediterranean. But Cyprus imposes such high costs and inordinate security restrictions on Lebanese pilots that it is proving impossible for them to use the island's two airports, Paphos and Larnaca.

In November Martin Robinson flew to Cyprus with AOPA Lebanon's Hadi and Haytham Azhari with the dual purpose of persuading the airport to revisit its handling charges - a piston single from Lebanon faces fees of €500 - and of talking to the government about easing restrictions on Lebanese pilots, which are not reciprocated; a Cypriot pilot may fly to Beirut with little hindrance.

On the subject of excessive handling charges, some progress was made. Larnaca airport, now privatised, has only two handling agents, whereas IAOPA is pressing the European Commission to suggest a minimum of four to ensure genuine competition. Thanks to Yiouli Kalafati of AOPA Greece, Martin Robinson was able to show the airport authorities contracts held by the same two handling agents on islands in the Aegean, where handling charges were capped at €20 for aircraft under three tonnes. Martin says: "Sometimes it's helpful to explain in plain language that GA doesn't need the services, doesn't need the airstairs, the catering, the push-backs, the baggage handling, that the airlines pay for through their handling fees. Like other airports across Europe, Larnaca is keen to encourage any bit of traffic it can get. The managers were very interested in the effect handling charges have, and I think genuinely receptive to arguments for significant reductions."

In meetings with government officials the economic value of general aviation was explained. Martin says: "We spoke of the the economic multipliers and their effect on the hotel, restaurant, tourist and other trades, and again, I think people were receptive to our arguments. From the security standpoint, it would be a positive move for a system of pre-clearances to be established, where pilots vetted through AOPA Lebanon could come and go without excessive demands."

Without a positive response from Cyprus, GA in Lebanon risks being snuffed out. Pilots are restricted to flying up and down their own coast from Beirut, and activity, already small, is falling.



Fürstenfeldbruck - we name the guilty party

The pretence that BMW was not the driving force behind the attempt to close one of Germany's most important general aviation airfields has been stripped away by a series of media articles which place the Bavarian car company at the heart of moves to shut out aviation. AOPA-Germany has been fighting to retain the former Luftwaffe base at Fürstenfeldbruck outside Munich as an airfield, and organised an international write-in campaign by pilots who were concerned about buying cars from a company that was actively engaged in destroying a vital GA airfield. BMW, however, blamed local politicians. But it is now clear that the authorities were acting solely in the interests of the car company, which has enormous influence in Bavaria. The Mayor of the local community of Maisach, Hans Seidl, has now stated unequivocally that without BMW, there would have been no move to prevent general aviation using Fürstenfeldbruck.

The company wants to turn the airfield into a speeding track for drivers of high-powered BMW cars and motorcycles. AOPA-Germany submitted a plan to allow BMW to share the airfield with general aviation, but the car company refused. The loss of Fürsti will throw 200 people out of work and leave the area without a GA airfield. BMW keeps its private jets at Munich International Airport, which is not available to the rest of GA.

The Süddeutsche Zeitung reports that the Bavarian State Government's plan for the continuation of aviation at Fürsti were trumped by a counter-concept promoted by Maisach "whose central point was always BMW". The newspaper says BMW is to purchase a 130-hectare tract of the airfield on which to allow novices to drive at high speed from 6am to 11pm seven days a week. Local opponents of aviation who claimed the airfield's 109 movements a day were too noisy now face having 140 BMW drivers a day without a break.

Many are questioning whether BMW can conform to the stringent environmental restrictions met by the airfield; in a story headlined 'Environmentalists brake on BMW plans' the Munich Merkur reports that the League for the Environment and Nature Conservation in Bavaria objects to the removal of protection status from Fürsti on commercial grounds. Maisach Mayor Seidl provoked laughter from environmentalists as he spoke publicly about the benefits to the community of the BMW driving track.

AOPA-Germany Managing Director Michael Erb says: "Fürsti isn't lost yet. We still have a chance if BMW cannot get environmental clearance to build and operate their facility. They already failed several times with their attempts to show compliance with the flora and fauna habitat, whereas the GA airport never had any problems living in a peaceful coexistence with the protected wildlife. In case BMW finally has to abandon their plans to relocate the flora-fauna-habitat, the GA airfield with its 200 employees will have a chance to be considered as an economically important option again. I wouldn't buy a car from a company which is actively destroying airports - what about you?"

Anything you want to say to BMW? Email kundenbetreuung@bmw.de



Part M shows up EASA's shortcomings

As we reported in the last IAOPA-Europe enews, EASA recently conducted a Europe-wide review of Continued Airworthiness issues under the Part M maintenance requirements. It has been demonstrated across Europe that Part M has increased the cost of maintenance by between 25% and 50%, thereby removing money that could be used to fund flight time and improve safety. Certified maintenance outfits - CAMOs - have been reporting a slow-down in the number of aircraft maintenance cycles, which indicate that less flying is taking place generally. While not all of this results directly from Part M, a large proportion of it does.

Prior to EASA's establishment in 2003 there was no uniform maintenance program for general aviation aircraft in Europe. EASA developed a system which we refer to as Part M - however, during the initial discussion with GA representatives it became clear that Part M, and the introduction of the CAMO system, was going to create difficulties for GA - that is to say, that part of GA in which the aircraft have an EASA Certificate of Airworthiness. The problem in 2003 was that GA did not fall under JAR 145, therefore there was no possibility of a straight transfer of any pre-existing JAR maintenance system. In order not to hold up the EASA legislation, it was agreed that the Agency would have until 2005 to design a system that would automatically become law. The GA community argued against many of the proposals, citing them as over-cumbersome and heavily bureaucratic. EASA put out a tender for external consultants to review the issue, and a group known as AirEuroSafe was selected, but many of their recommendations were ignored by the Agency.

The recent review of Part M has come about because of the high level of protest from across Europe. EASA wisely decided to conduct a review before the European Commission forced them to do so. Some 180 people took part in the workshop, and all said that Part M was not a good system for the oversight of GA aircraft. Martin Robinson says: "It seems that EASA has listened, and we welcome this. But more importantly, they need to act to make the necessary changes to Part M that will render the system affordable for GA as well as providing for a proportionate level of regulatory oversight and continuing airworthiness. IAOPA feels that much of this could have been avoided had the original consultation been handled in the correct way, with proper regulatory impact assessments and cost-benefit

analyses. The Agency needs to trust the industry more in the development of regulations, rather than creating the confrontational system that exists today."

IAOPA is asking the EASA Advisory Body (EAB) to note our comments regarding the poor performance of EASA in the field of developing a continuing airworthiness regulation for GA, and to impress on the EASA Board of Management the urgency of the need for the Agency to deliver proportionate regulations, supported by proper regulatory impact assessments. In order to ensure that this happens, the Board of Management needs to make sure that there are checks and proper independent oversight of impact assessment outputs. Furthermore, IAOPA believes that all rules coming from EASA should be subjected to a two-year review to check whether the rule is achieving what it set out achieve, and to consider the impact on the sector of aviation to which the rule applies.

IAOPA invites the EAB to note our comments and to develop a future EAB opinion for the EASA Board of Management on how the agency can improve its rulemaking and consultative processes which will lead to a smoother rulemaking system and better relations between the Agency and industry.

Iceland: 'We are not alone in fighting the battle'

AOPA Iceland, a relative newcomer to the business of IAOPA-Europe, is already seeing the benefits of involvement with the AOPAs of other countries. The chairman of AOPA Iceland, Valur Stefansson, attended the Regional Meeting in Poland in October, and here gives a resume of the situation as seen from Iceland:

"The general aviation sector has had its ups and downs this year. The battle against the Part M regulations being forced upon the GA sector, and originally designed for commercial aviation, is important. These regulations do not improve safety at the GA level and only provide costly and burdensome paperwork. We have had to combat lack of understanding from the Iceland CAA and the Ministry of Transportation, and assume that fear of the EU is the underlying cause of their not requesting exemptions for Iceland's GA fleet. We reason that because Iceland's borders lie at least 440 miles away from the nearest EU border, Iceland should not be set under those rules.

"We agree fully with Mr. Eric Sivel, the Deputy Director of Rulemaking of EASA, when he admitted that the Ministries and the relevant CAAs in various countries have interpreted the rules to narrowly, and that is the big problem. We are still optimistic and hope that one day we can work together with the ICAA and the Ministry of Transportation for better GA regulation.

"Co-operation with other AOPAs in Europe is of enormous value to AOPA Iceland. Attending the Regional Meeting and seeing the unified measures taken to improve the standing of GA in Europe makes us feel that we're not alone fighting the battle. At least we see the effects of belonging to a larger AOPA group when issues are debated with the ICAA. We are not alone!

"ICAA has granted an exemption to commence work with Annex II as 1,200kg, in accordance with suggestions from EASA itself in an NPA. Because of this exemption we have enjoyed a great summer, with lots of flying done, landing competitions and fly-ins - and without any volcanic eruptions. A fantastic airshow was held at Reykjavik airport in August, with thousands of attendants celebrating the 70th anniversary of the airport. There we enjoyed the company of a few WW2 veteran pilots from the No 269 Squadron that were here during the war, including the first pilot to ever land at the airport, Hugh Eccles.

"Safety, fantastic freedom and fun. Those are the aspects of GA we want to promote, and we want to have the ICAA by our side in doing that, instead of fighting us because of EU bureaucracy that they are misinterpreting."

Swiss AOPA magazine now available as an App

AOPA Switzerland's publication 'Position Report' (known as Pos Rep) is now also available as an App under the name 'AOPA.ch'. The Pos Rep appears six times a year in German, French and English and covers a broad spectrum of topics from GA in Switzerland and the EU. The App enables the reader not only to carry the Pos Rep with him, but also to amend it with remarks, copy, highlight, search and send articles. It also provides an automatic link to the maps referred to in the articles, and can include videos and other features. The App is included in the membership fee of AOPA Switzerland and can be bought by everyone else at a price which just covers expenses. Once you have downloaded your App from the iTunes store you have to send the UDID number of your iPad to AOPA Switzerland (office@aopa.ch) so they can register you and clear your access.

AOPA UK features on new aviation website

AOPA UK has joined with the aviation website Airsoc.com to extend its reach to members and non-members alike across the world. Airsoc, which describes itself as the world's first aviation classified social network site, was launched in November. It carries up to the minute news articles and items for sale, and allows users to interact with other pilots. The site trawls the Internet for stories of interest to pilots, advertises aircraft and kit, and brings aviation enthusiasts together. Site use is free of charge. Check out the AOPA UK pages, which also include information about IAOPA, at <http://airsoc.com/orgz/browse>

World Assembly in South Africa

Now is the time to book your place for the 26th IAOPA World Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa, if you haven't done so already. 2012 is IAOPA's 50th anniversary, and there will be a special celebration at the World Assembly to mark this milestone. The IAOPA World Assembly takes place Cape Town between April 10th and 15th 2012. The World Assembly, held every two years, is an opportunity for the 69 AOPAs around the world to get together to discuss a common approach to the problems facing general aviation. Airport and airspace access, security, user fees and the environment are the major issues scheduled for debate at this important forum, and experts on each topic will address the Assembly. At the end of the conference, which takes place at the Spier Hotel in Stellenbosch, there will be an opportunity to visit Stellenbosch Flying Club, where flights over the Cape area can be arranged in fixed-wing aircraft and gyrocopters. AOPA South Africa has also arranged with local travel experts to create bespoke tours for delegates who wish to spend longer in South Africa. For full details and registration information see www.iaopa2012.co.za