



IAOPA-Europe e-news, August 2009

Welcome to the e-news of IAOPA-Europe, which goes out to 23,000 aircraft owners and pilots in 27 countries across the continent

SESAR: IAOPA speaks for GA

IAOPA has been selected to represent general aviation during the next phase of the SESAR programme, which aims to put in place an efficient air traffic control system for Europe.

Because of the cost of being involved with the 'Joint Undertaking' which is working on SESAR there was some doubt as to whether IAOPA could afford to buy a place at the table for the second round of the work programme. The risk is that if the debate is left solely to rulemakers, airlines, ANSPs and major manufacturers, GA's future access to airspace and airfields may be restricted. IAOPA was fully involved in the first round of SESAR, the definition phase, after pledging a €400,000 bond, and as a result it was able to fight for GA's rights. IAOPA-Europe has once again found it possible to underwrite its involvement in the development phase, which starts work on September 7th, and has been notified by Patrick Ky, executive director of the SESAR Joint Undertaking, that it's bid to provide user expertise to the SJU.

Dr Michael Erb, managing director of AOPA-Germany, who managed IAOPA's involvement in the definition phase, says that while not everything that's coming out of SESAR will please the GA community, the situation would have been much worse had IAOPA not been directly involved in the deliberations.

SESAR is part of the Single European Sky programme, which is designing an all-new ATC system for modern aviation and capable of far greater efficiency.

EASA OPS NPA is critically flawed

Consultation on EASA's OPS-NPA closed on the last day of July, and IAOPA has made almost 50 critical observations on the proposals.

The response document has been collated by Jacob Pedersen of AOPA-Denmark, who sat on the OPS.001 Working Group which supposedly wrote the document. Jacob has often pointed out that despite this, new proposals kept creeping in of which OPS.001 had no knowledge.

Among the most important responses is the fact that the document is so badly written that it is almost impossible to follow. To find the answer on a single regulation, the pilot of a non-commercial complex aircraft must look up nine different places in the document. The document is written to satisfy lawyers, not to explain the rules, and EASA's online tool is no substitute for clear regulation.

In addition, regulations should always be proportional, and those which require one-man operators of small aircraft to hire consultants to audit their operations should be abandoned.

Regulations which would require non-commercial operators to carry greater fuel reserves than commercial flights should also be revisited. Other fundamental problems IAOPA has highlighted include the requirement to carry oxygen above 10,000 feet, which would force pilots in the mountains to fly dangerously low in areas where they have operated safely for years; the proposals that VFR aircraft should carry certain equipment and conform to restricted minima when there is no demonstrated safety gain; the new regulations' repudiation of the concept of 'VFR on top' would be a dangerous retrograde step; accelerate-stop distances as set out in the proposals are meaningless for single-engine aircraft for which the concept of a 'V1' speed is meaningless; PLBs should be an acceptable alternative to ELTs; and the proposal that helicopters should be forbidden from flying beyond autorotational distance from land without having floats fitted is nonsense in the absence of any safety case for it.

The full list of IAOPA observations on the OPS NPA can be read on the IAOPA-Europe website at www.iaopa.eu

Lebanese GA discriminated against in Cyprus

Aviation authorities in Cyprus are operating an illegal and discriminatory ban on general aviation aircraft from Lebanon, and AOPA representatives in half a dozen countries are working to try to resolve the situation.

Hadi Azhari, chairman of AOPA Lebanon, operates Cessna Citation Mustang jets on an AOC, but has been refused permission for the aircraft to land in Cyprus. The bizarre reason given is that the aircraft are under five tonnes, and are therefore banned from Cyprus. Ioannis Papaiacovou of AOPA Cyprus approached the Cypriot authorities for an explanation and

was told that no aircraft under 5,700 kg coming from Lebanon would be authorised because of a request made by the Americans after 9/11.

Ioannis says: "That was eight years ago – America forgot about it, but Cyprus continues to impose restrictions. We have told them that this is nonsense, but they say if Lebanon sends a bigger jet, they will accept it."

Hadi Azhari says: "Cyprus must wake up to the existence of business jets. They save money and help the environment – there is no need to send a bigger jet if we have only one passenger on board! Where is the logic in this?"

The ban would certainly appear to be illegal under international law. Cyprus airport is listed in the ICAO regional plan and as such is a public airport, open to everyone. For security reasons, a country can ban traffic from certain countries, but this has to cover all traffic from that country, not just GA or certain smaller aircraft, and it must be time-limited and properly promulgated in Notams.

Through John Sheehan, general secretary of IAOPA, an approach is being made to ICAO in Montreal to get the Cypriots to respect the law and lift the ban.

**Stop Press: In the face of IAOPA's pressure Cyprus has relented and will allow private jets to land, but IAOPA will continue to pressure the authorities to accept piston-engined aircraft from Lebanon – there should be no discrimination by type.*

More, cheaper avgas in Greece

Hellenic CAA has announced a radical change in the refuelling situation in Greece which will further help to boost general aviation in Greece.

Under old legislation, all general aviation refueling in Greece was by law restricted to big international oil companies like BP and Shell for 'safety reasons'. Since demand for such fuel was very low, the big companies operated only a handful of refuelling stations – only eight out of 42 Greek airports provided refuelling capabilities, and that was restricted to avgas 100LL; no mogas was available.

Recognising that the refuelling situation was a major obstacle to the development of GA, the new HCAA leadership has taken bold steps to attack the problem. Under new legislation it is now legal for all GA organisations like flying schools and aero clubs to open and operate their own refuelling facilities. Yiouli Kalafati of AOPA-Hellas says that these new stations will be able to offer both mogas and avgas at much cheaper prices. "As soon as the new legislation was published, more than 10 GA operators declared their decision to build their own refueling stations and start operations before the end of 2009," she said. "It is anticipated that

almost all Greek airports will have GA refuelling capabilities before the end of 2010. Thus, we hope, GA in Greece will take another leap forward.”

En-route charging back on the agenda?

Is the exemption for sub-two tonne aircraft from en-route navigation charges again under threat? At a meeting of the EC’s Industry Consultation Body, IAOPA-Europe senior vice president Martin Robinson asked about the timescale for amending the current charging regulation. The European Commission representative responded by saying that due to the amendments contained in the Single European Sky II package, redrafting would be necessary.

Martin Robinson says: “I expressed concern in respect of how the existing exemptions to aircraft under two tonnes would be applied to the proposed Functional Airspace Blocks, but the Commission made no comment. However, at a meeting last week when I again sought clarification, the Commission said they expect to have a rough draft of the changes available by the end of 2009. “The Commission also made it very clear that they see the future charging regulation as the backbone to the performance of the system. However, the SES II package has not yet been formally adopted as it needs to be translated in to all the European languages.

“Interestingly, but not surprisingly, Eurocontrol has applied for the role of monitoring the system’s performance. Eurocontrol also has a mandate to review the rules of the air and to present its findings within ten months of receiving the mandate.

“The Commission spoke about the need to contain ATM costs as it has been reported that due to the downturn in commercial traffic, some ANSPs have been increasing charges to those airlines still operating.

“Next in line for the Presidency of Europe is Sweden, who have given advance notice of their intention to focus on aviation environmental issues...”

Disharmony on ELTs

AOPA-Germany is seeking agreement from aviation authorities to leave decisions on how to apply ICAO’s recommendations on ELTs to EASA. As things stand, the authorities in France, the Netherlands, Britain and Germany interpret ICAO’s requirements on ELTs entirely differently. Germany mandates aviation-certified 406 MHz ELTs for all aircraft, Holland requires fixed, portable or manually-activated ELTs or PLBs – personal locator beacons – for international flights, while the French demand either 406 MHz ELTs or PLBs in all aircraft in French airspace. Britain has exempted general aviation aircraft from carrying fixed ELTs.

Other European states are leaving the matter to EASA, which hopes to find a Europe-wide solution by 2012.

Dr Michael Erb, managing director of AOPA-Germany, says: "Unfortunately the German Ministry of Transport has stressed to us that it does not want to move away from its ELT regulations, whatever EASA may decide. They have, however, confirmed that portable aviation-certified 406 MHz ELTs are acceptable, and only aircraft certified after October 1st 2009 are required to have fixed ELTs. Having a portable ELT means it is not necessary to obtain an EASA 'minor modification' approval, which clearly reduces costs. Portable solutions cost well under €1,000.

"The situation is confusing and unacceptable. AOPA is asking all authorities to make no rulings on ELTs until EASA has had a chance to create a Europe-wide solution."

EASA: 'We'll listen to GA...'

EASA's executive director Patrick Goudou has announced that 'dedicated focal points' for general aviation are being established at EASA, with Matthias Borgmeier nominated as the contact man for what Mr Goudou calls 'non-commercial GA' and Willy Sigl the man to talk to for 'commercial, business and other GA'.

Mr Goudou says: "The purpose of my decision is to further enable stakeholders' involvement in the development of the Agency's policies for general and business aviation."

Both men work in the Rulemaking Directorate, which has been criticised for paying lip service to the idea of consultation with industry, but not really acting on industry's concerns.

Raid on Reggio

AOPA-Malta is small but active. Last month it organised a flight out to Reggio Calabria in Italy for its members. The flight consisted of five Maltese aircraft, a Diamond DA40, a Diamond DVB20, a Cessna 172, an Aero Commander 112 and a Beech Baron, all flown by Maltese crews. Northern Europeans might be interested to know that the weather was CAVOK as usual at this time of year. Dr. Ivan X Gatt, president of AOPA-Malta, was responsible for the trip's logistics and has promised similarly planned flyouts in the coming month. The stated reason for the trip was to improve navigational skills, but Dr Gatt points out that improving the brotherhood of pilots is equally important. "Special thanks go to MIA for organising our flawless land-based transport, MATS ATC for their unfailing patience, and the airport officials at Reggio Calabria," he says. Malta itself is well worth a flying visit at any time of years, and AOPA-Malta will be pleased to provide information to GA pilots.

