



IAOPA (Europe) e-newsletter



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

IAOPA Europe makes plans for better housekeeping

IAOPA-Europe's leading executives travelled to London on January 29th for a strategic planning meeting which has agreed to establish a co-ordination team to oversee the work of all those individuals attending committee meetings and Working Groups across Europe. With EASA in particular creating new Working Groups all the time, the job of keeping track and cross-referencing their work is becoming ever more complex, and the co-ordination team will have the task of reporting to IAOPA-Europe Regional Meetings on progress in every area.

Jacob Pedersen of AOPA-Denmark and Michael Erb of AOPA-Germany met with AOPA-UK's Martin Robinson to discuss how IAOPA-Europe manages its workload and operates its reporting systems, and to make sure it has the right people doing the right work. With EASA generating a new Working Group every other week, more must be done to ensure that IAOPA policy is followed in every case, and that information on discussions is fed back to IAOPA Europe as a whole. The co-ordinating team is likely to be five to ten people strong.

The mini-conference also discussed developments in areas such as emissions trading, in which owners of GA aircraft over 5,700 kg are likely to be caught, continuing work on Part M and SESAR, and what steps can be taken to ensure that the European Parliament's document on the sustainability of business and general aviation does not gather dust on a shelf. All these issues will be debated at the next IAOPA Europe Regional Meeting, which coincides with Aero at Friedrichshafen on April 10th.

*EASA's newest Working Group, looking at responses to its Notice of Proposed Amendment on Operations, met for the first time on January 25th. The comment response document on Ops is between 9,000 and 10,000 pages long, so it's got its work cut out. IAOPA's representatives are Jacob Pedersen (Denmark) and Jeremy James (UK). Jeremy is on a sub-group discussing general aviation issues, while Jacob sits on a sub-group on complex aircraft. There are two other groups, on commercial air transport and aerial work.



AOPA member discounts at Aero

IAOPA is participating on a new level in this year's Aero Friedrichshafen, which runs from April 8th to 11th, expanding the Association's presence to include presentations on current and future issues in European and world general aviation. IAOPA President Craig Fuller will speak at the opening reception, and will also address policy trends and issues in several presentations at IAOPA's expanded booth area, and at seminars with other key participants.

IAOPA General Secretary John Sheehan says: "IAOPA is co-operating with show organisers to spread the word about the

event. AOPA Germany and Switzerland will share increased exhibition space with IAOPA, emphasising the importance of all AOPAs in Europe. Additionally, there will be a small briefing area adjacent to our exhibition space where AOPA European officials and supporters will present topics of interest to attendees at the exhibition.”

AOPA members will receive a significant admission fee discount. For information, see www.aero-expo.com/aero-en/visitors/news.php.

Aero, held at Friedrichshafen Airport in southern Germany, continues to grow in popularity as Europe’s largest general aviation-only event, and from this year will be held annually. On display will be a range of aircraft, from very light jets to light sport aircraft to sailplanes and motorgliders and everything in between. A special emphasis is placed on alternative powerplants and fuels. Project Director Thomas Grunewald says: “Based on current data, we’re anticipating between 350 and 400 exhibitors in 2010, and a greater proportion of international participants.”

German owners caught up in seat belt row

EASA is proposing to issue an Airworthiness Directive which would require the replacement of tens of thousands of sets of safety belts in German-registered aircraft, at huge cost to owners and operators, when there is no safety issue that would justify such a move.

AOPA-Germany has objected strongly to the proposal, which is apparently the result of an argument between regulators, manufacturers and maintainers over approvals and paperwork. Not only are pilots and owners the innocent victims of an administrative disagreement, but it is not physically possible to comply with the AD.

EASA says that as a result of an investigation on some maintenance organisations, it was made aware that safety belts manufactured by authorised (E)TSO approval holders had been maintained or repaired by maintenance organisations without holding approved maintenance data. It’s notice of proposed AD says: “EC Regulation 145.A.45 requires that (E)TSO approved parts and appliances can be maintained or repaired only if approved maintenance data provided by the (E)TSO approval holder are used, pending the loss of validity of the (E)TSO approval and installation onto the aircraft. Improper maintenance or repair of safety belts and torso restraint systems could result in failure of the said systems, which might jeopardise the occupant safety during turbulence or emergency landing conditions.

“For the reasons described above, this AD requires to inspect all safety belts and torso restraint systems installed on any aircraft to verify if they have been maintained or repaired by (certain named maintenance organisations) and to replace the affected safety belts and torso restraint systems with serviceable parts.”

The effective date of the AD is February 10th, and safety belts must be replaced within three months. AOPA-Germany, however, is calling on EASA to resolve its administrative difficulties some other way. In its response it says: “If there were indications that safety was compromised by the affected safety belts, immediate action would have to be taken and AOPA-Germany would support it. But there is no indication at all that a safety issue exists.

Instead the heart of the problem seems to be merely an argument on ‘formalities’ between EASA, national authorities, safety belt manufacturers and maintenance organisations. Aircraft operators simply must not become victims of this argument.”

Nobody is entirely certain how the argument started. In 2003 EASA took over responsibility for the airworthiness of aircraft in Europe. In Germany, safety belts had previously been maintained under authorisation of the German Luftfahrtbundesamt. EASA is now saying that safety belts that were maintained perfectly legally under the old German system are now illegal and must be changed. AOPA Germany’s response to the NAD says: “The AD would have an extremely negative impact. Thousands of general aviation aircraft are equipped with safety belts produced by the named manufacturers and maintained or repaired by the affected organisations. Our first estimate is that more than 30,000 safety belts would need to be exchanged in German-registered aircraft. As certified replacements for these are not available within the set deadline of three months in the required quantity, the affected aircraft would have to be grounded.

“Most of the affected safety belts were maintained under authorisation of the German Luftfahrtbundesamt for many years before EASA took over its responsibility, so it’s not understandable why even these safety belts repaired and maintained before 2003 should be affected by a conflict the maintenance organisations have with new EASA regulations.

“Because all affected aircraft operators had their safety belts maintained and repaired in good faith by organisations under the oversight of the Luftfahrtbundesamt and/or EASA, the question of liability claims against Luftfahrtbundesamt and EASA will definitely arise if the PAD comes into force as drafted.”

The AD affects only German-based maintenance organisations.

Saving the IMC rating - part IV

The UK Civil Aviation Authority has thrown its weight behind Britain's IMC rating, making its preservation a matter of policy. Up to now the CAA has given tacit support to AOPA's campaign to keep the rating, but at a meeting on January 25th CAA Chief Executive Andrew Haines told AOPA UK's Martin Robinson that the retention of the IMC rating was official policy. He added that Mike Smethers, who is Chairman of the EASA Board of Management as well as a UK CAA Board member, had been asked by the CAA to explore with EASA ways of allowing an equivalent to the IMC rating to continue to be offered, if only in the UK.

The CAA's explicit statement has given great heart to the campaign to save the IMC rating, a 15-hour flying course which teaches pilots to keep control of an aircraft in cloud and to land safely. It confers no additional privileges over the PPL apart from a small reduction in visibility minima, which are higher in the UK than in much of Europe. Renewed every two years with a stringent flying test, the IMC rating is credited with being largely responsible for the UK's good general aviation safety rate, despite Britain's unpredictable maritime climate. A safety audit carried out by AOPA UK showed that while between 20 and 25 people die in GA accident in Britain each year, the figure for other comparable European countries is much higher - about 90 in France, and 80 in Germany. In the 40 years it has been on offer the IMC rating has saved the lives of hundreds of British pilots, and many of them tell their stories in the current issue of AOPA's *General Aviation* magazine, which can be read online at www.iaopa.eu

While some countries would welcome an IMC rating equivalent, there is strong opposition to it in some circles, partly because of a misinformation campaign. AOPA UK has never sought to force the IMC rating on the rest of Europe, but under EASA all ratings must be offered equally by all countries, and no provision has been made for opt-outs. EASA does not want to ban the IMC rating and has tried hard to have it accepted, but unless there is unanimity, the current rules say it must be banned everywhere. AOPA UK has begun a political campaign to change this situation.

Time to buy an Audi?

Car company BMW is one of the major players behind the attempted destruction of a vital German general aviation airfield in order to establish a car testing track, and has rebuffed all attempts by AOPA-Germany and the airfield's operators to establish joint use of the facility.

Fürstenfeldbruck is a former military airfield in Bavaria - an area afflicted by recent airport closures - and one of the most important in Germany. It has a 1400-metre runway and offers service for all categories of business and private aircraft up to 5,700 kg. Following the closure of the former Munich Riem International Airport and the nearby Neubiberg Airport, 'Fürsti' is the only remaining landing facility for GA in the Munich area able to cope with all categories of GA aircraft. The only alternative has a runway of 408 metres, and the closure of Fürsti therefore represents a major strategic loss to all of Europe's general aviation.

AOPA-Germany has been fighting the closure of Fürstenfeldbruck through the courts as well as by political means, but it's an uphill struggle. The German Department of Defence announced after Christmas that they would give up the airport status of the grounds, and as soon as this was done arsonists set fire to eight aircraft at Fürsti, burning one of them out. AOPA has offered a €4,000 reward for their conviction and filed an objection at a Munich court to maintain Fürsti's airport status.

BMW, which has great influence in Bavaria, has been working hard to gain a lease on Fürsti as a new test track. Ironically, BMW has a strong aviation heritage, having since 1918 built some of the world's best aero engines and even having a logo based on a propeller. It keeps a fleet of Gulfstream and Falcon business jets at Munich International Airport.

AOPA-Germany, which has a shareholding in the company which manages Fürsti, says there is absolutely no reason why a GA airport and a car track cannot co-exist to mutual advantage. Dr Michael Erb, Managing Director of AOPA Germany, says: "The BMW Group has been approached various times by the airport operator with recommendations for a joint usage of the airport grounds as both a general aviation airport and a BMW test drive and training centre. But all these offers have been turned down by the BMW Group. Our attempts to establish a constructive dialogue on this matter have been ignored."

If Fürsti were to close, the nearest full GA facilities would be at least 90 minutes away by car at Augsburg and Ingolstadt - the latter being, coincidentally, the home of BMW's arch-rivals Audi.

Austria raises licence charges by 50%

With effect of the January 1st 2010 Austria raised licence charges by 50%, while some other charges were increased by

100% and in special cases by more than 700%. Joachim Janezic of AOPA Austria says: “This increase of charges, together with some other rising

Costs, causes pilots and flight instructors who do not fly professionally to quit flying. AOPA Austria has decided to declare the fight against these charges to be the “topic of the year”.

On the initiative of Lennart Persson of AOPA Sweden, a process has begun to establish comparative charges in every European country, a process which AOPA Austria welcomes. Joachim Janezic says: “Austria strongly supports AOPA’s ‘all over Europe charges study’ and will provide legal and financial support to special cases up to the highest courts.”

EASA publishes Part M handbook

EASA has published a complete Part M manual, both as a printed handbook and as a PDF, explaining its rules on maintenance. This is a first for the Agency, and it has been welcomed by IAOPA which has long expressed concern at the lack of clarity in EASA rulemaking. AOPA-Denmark’s Jacob Pedersen says: “AOPA strongly welcomes this initiative by EASA and congratulates them on the initiative. AOPA has for several years pointed to the fact that it is almost impossible for the aviation end user to keep track of EU regulation, since new regulations are published as fragmented amendments and not in a consolidated version, like the JAR system used to provide. The new publication also combines both the hard law and the associated acceptable means of compliance. It does not make the regulation any less complex and it does not solve many of the problems that AOPA sees in Part M, but at least it makes the regulation more accessible, and that in itself is also a step forward. AOPA looks forward to seeing similar publications published for other areas of EASA regulation.”

Come to the IAOPA World Assembly!

The Israeli Association of General Aviation invites all AOPA members to the coming IAOPA World Assembly, which will take place in Tel Aviv from June 6th to 11th 2010.

Yigal merav, AOPA-Israel’s webmaster and organising Committee member, says: “We kindly urge you to make early registration in order to secure your place and to enable us to better prepare and plan for all events. Time is flying, and there are only 130 days left to the IAOPA World Assembly.”

All details of the World Assembly are available on the website www.iaopa2010.com.

Please note that this is the first World Assembly in which everything is available to potential registrants via the internet. No registration kit will be sent out by mail, as used to be the case in recent years.

The website gives full details of the programme for the Assembly, including the events put on for accompanying persons. A number of tours have been arranged, including an all-day tour of Jerusalem on the Wednesday. Yigal says they have already had inquiries from about 20 pilots intending to fly to Tel Aviv from the UK and Italy and adds: “We welcome any inquiry or question and gladly will assist you with your planning.”

Israel has about 1,500 private pilots, and of its 700 registered civilian aircraft, 600 are in the general aviation category. AOPA has some 600 members in the country. It has focused much of its efforts in recent times on reducing costs, arguing that the more a pilot flies, the safer he becomes.

Icarus flies again



AOPA Hellas and the Icarus 2010 Organising Committee cordially invite you to participate in Icarus 2010, the second International Aero Expo to be hosted at Tatoi Airfield outside Athens. Icarus Aero Expo Athens 2010 is the only international business and general aviation exhibition in southern Europe, which is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets because of its excellent weather conditions and infrastructure availability. Yiouli Kalafati, President of AOPA Hellas, says: "The world of aviation now has an opportunity to introduce itself and explore the untapped potential of the region while paying a visit to Athens, at the crossroads between East and West, a bridge to the Middle East."

In June 2008 AOPA Hellas organised the first International Aero Expo Athens which proved to be a huge success with more than 40,000 visitors, 60 exhibitors representing 108 companies, 20 seminar speakers, 105 aircraft, and an air show with the participation of civilian and military aircraft. This flying start gave AOPA Expo Icarus 2008 one of the premier positions among European Aero Expos.

The second Icarus Expo Athens will again be hosted at Tatoi Airfield (LGTT), and will feature an air show with civil and military planes, trial flights for the public, seminars with keynote speakers, and free access to the Hellenic Air Force Museum and to a unique private war bird collection at Tatoi.

Yiouli says: "The events of the 2nd International Aero Expo Athens are being organised under the auspices of IAOPA Europe. Given the recognition of IAOPA among the international general aviation community, the organisational support of the Hellenic Air Force and the support of the Greek Government, Aero Expo Icarus 2010 is bound to be a resounding success with even more resounding benefits for the region's aviation key players. So come along, and we'll give you a true Greek welcome!"

Malta seeks information on FAA costs

Ivan Gatt of AOPA Malta is trying to gather details of how FAA licence endorsements or validations are handled in different countries. Dr Gatt writes: "We have heard - this however needs to be confirmed - that some schools in Italy will endorse the FAA

licence and issue an Italian licence for a fee of €85. But would this be a permanent endorsement, or is this fee just for a temporary endorsement?" You can contact him at ivan.gatt@mma.gov.mt

*Dr Gatt is relinquishing, with a heavy heart, the post of President of AOPA Malta after five hard-working years at the helm. The Association's rules state that a President cannot hold office after five consecutive wins, so he must hand the baton to another member. There's nothing to prevent him standing for President again in future, which he has confirmed he intends to do. "In the meantime, take good care and the very best wishes to all my AOPA colleagues," he says.