



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

United front on the N-register

Three of the strongest general aviation advocacy groups in Europe have joined forces to oppose EASA's plans to make it illegal to fly in Europe on a third-country licence for more than a year. IAOPA Europe, the European Business Aviation Association and the General Aviation Manufacturers Association have signed a joint letter to the EASA Comitology Committee which will deliberate on EASA's proposal, voicing general aviation's concerns and warning that the proposal will harm the industry.

The joint letter, signed by IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson, EBAA President and CEO Brian Humphries and GAMA President and CEO Peter Bunce, says the proposal will adversely affect thousands of European pilots, reduce safety levels and cost jobs. It suggests that the issue of third-country licences cannot be settled satisfactorily by EASA's 2013 deadline and should instead be dealt with through bilateral agreements between states.

EASA's stated intention is to "get the N-register out of Europe" and it originally intended to do so by ensuring there were no advantages to being on the American register. However, EASA regulation has remorselessly increased the advantages of flying under an American flag, so the Agency has effectively resorted to a "big stick" ban. There is no suggestion of a safety imperative; the move is purely political.

The joint letter points out that holders of the Instrument Rating would have to undergo the entire theoretical and flying skills testing process, incurring costs greater than €10,000 each, in order to continue doing what they've been doing safely, sometimes for decades. Many say this is not economically viable, given their age and number of flying years left, and they would be lost to the industry. The joint groups propose a validation process which "grandfathers" existing license holders, which they say would deliver what EASA requires in terms of oversight.

They add that bilateral aviation safety agreements (BASAs) will provide an appropriate mechanism with which to tackle validation and acceptance of third country licenses in future. BASAs are currently being negotiated with the USA and Canada, and the group says licensing annexes should be added. Europe's deadline for implementation should be put back in order to achieve a proper solution through negotiation.

The Comitology Committee is made up of representatives of member states, and it must support EASA's proposed regulations before they can go further. The issue of third country licences comes before the Committee again on December 7th.

Rethink on environmental regulations

EASA has put on hold its proposals to create 'one-size-fits-all' environmental regulations for European aviation following a number of negative appraisals from the industry. AOPA Sweden was among those who commented critically on EASA's Notice of Proposed Amendment 2008-15, which covers 'essential requirements for civil aviation

environmental protection'. AOPA Sweden's Fredrik Brandel says: "In a document of hundreds of pages we found many unsatisfactory proposals. For example, it says that prior to a flight, not only should the pilot make a flight plan but also an environmental flight plan - that is, plan the flight according to environmental conditions. Furthermore, airports were to be heavily regulated in matter of noise and pollution. We argued that all airports in Europe could not be regulated the same way, due to different conditions in terms of weather and amount of traffic. These matters should be regulated by local authorities.

"AOPA Sweden was not alone placing comments. Several other European organisations and companies submitted about a thousand comments, mostly negative. EASA thus made the decision to 'put the proposal on hold'. It makes you wonder why all the employees at EASA did not realise that before they wrote hundreds of pages of legislation that will not be applied, at least not for the moment. Anyway, European aviation does not have to comply with another new set of burdensome rules."

FAA proposes photo-licences

Photographs will be required on all US pilot's licences under new rules proposed by the FAA, and holders will have to pay an as-yet undetermined amount for the privilege. At the moment, holders of the 'tamper-resistant' plastic licences must carry some form of photo identification, but this requirement will be dropped in future. If the proposal is approved, all pilots will have a maximum of five years to acquire a new photo-licence, which will be valid for eight years. The cost will be \$22, although the FAA says this will rise in line with inflation. Furthermore, the FAA also expects designated 'verifiers' who certify that the photographs are indeed those of the licence holders to charge a fee which is unspecified and uncapped.

The FAA's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking says the proposal is a response to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. Once the rule goes into effect, all new certificate applicants will pay for the new photo-certificate. Current pilots would be transitioned either by a 'triggering event' such as picking up a new rating or flight instructor certificate. ATPs would have three years to obtain a photo certificate; commercial pilots would have four years; private, recreational and sport pilots would have five years.

Linate targets GA

Milan's Linate airport is seeking to ban all aircraft under 4 tonnes and has formally requested that the Italian Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC) create the necessary regulations. The airport's owners S.E.A. blame 'smaller aeroplanes' for several runway incursions and the brief closure of the runways on two occasions in the last six months.

AOPA Italy is in discussions with ENAC in an attempt to prevent the ban and to avoid further restrictions at Linate, but at the same time it is urging all pilots to be fully aware of procedures at the airport and to operate strictly in accordance with local flight regulations, paying attention to the so-called 'hot spots' map published in the Italian AIP. The runway closures were both caused by foreign pilots who were uncertain of aerodrome procedures.

Earlier this year Linate issued an extraordinary NOTAM demanding personal details of pilots and threatening to report them for negligence if they failed to enter them on its website. AOPA Italy protested that the move was an attempt by a GA-unfriendly company to frighten general aviation away from Linate, and it was revoked.

Fürsti case in January

AOPA Germany reports that the Bavarian Administration Court is expected to deal in January with the case of Munich's Fürstenfeldbruck airfield, which the car company BMW wants to turn into a driving track and which AOPA is fighting to keep open. 'Fürsti' is the only unrestricted GA airfield in that part of Germany and is supremely important to general aviation. AOPA contends that BMW could easily share the massive airport - it was formerly a Cold War airbase - with

GA, but BMW wants it all. Further, AOPA points out that while BMW could drive its cars anywhere, the loss of Fürsti would be a permanent blow to GA. AOPA Germany Managing Director Dr Michael Erb wants to thank AOPA members all over the world who have written to BMW expressing their disquiet that a company with such a strong aviation heritage should seek to cause so much damage to general aviation, and pointing out that very many GA pilots are in decision-making positions on car fleet buying. Dr Erb says: "International pressure has certainly helped our cause. If you haven't made your views known yet, you can email BMW through customer.service@bmw.com or kundenbetreuung@bmw.de. Please send a copy to info@aopa.de."

AOPA Ireland opens dialogue with IAA

IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson and a delegation from AOPA Ireland met with the Chief Executive of the Irish Aviation Authority Eamonn Brennan and a group of his senior staff last month to discuss general aviation issues. The meeting was the first between GA and the IAA in several years and opened an avenue of communication which can be built upon. The atmosphere was cordial rather than warm, and both parties agreed that safety was the first priority. The IAA has embarked on a survey of general aviation and AOPA Ireland will be assisting with its work.

Irish airfield threats

AOPA Ireland is facing an issue which could adversely affect every airfield in the country as a protest group seeks to establish in court that a licensed aerodrome breached the terms of its planning permission by allowing a skydiving club to operate there.

Erinagh airfield near Nenagh in County Tipperary is under pressure from a newly-formed 'Airfield Action Group' which has obtained two injunctions against the owner. The case will be heard in the High Court in the next few weeks. The anti-airfield group says the presence of the skydiving club is contrary to the Planning Regulations Act and is persisting with the case even though the skydivers have moved elsewhere.

AOPA Ireland says that if the case succeeds there will be implications for every airfield in Ireland, licensed or otherwise. Erinagh airfield now needs to prove it has been in operation for more than seven years, and the owner is seeking records of anyone who made a landing or departure from Erinagh prior to 2003. If you have it in your log book, please email timhanly@hotmail.com

AOPA Ireland is setting up an 'Airfield Watch' scheme following an incident of theft from a quiet private strip. Two radios and a transponder were stolen from separate aircraft, and although suspects were seen, the local police station is only manned for a few hours a week and the witness was unable to summon help. The Airport Watch scheme, similar to that which is in operation in USA and other countries, will be up and running within 3-6 weeks.

Foreign flights for LSAs

IAOPA's representative to ICAO Frank Hofmann has presented a paper advocating one of the resolutions that came out of the World Assembly in April, namely that Light Sport Aircraft be accepted as real aircraft for which real licences are required, so that their pilots and engineers could amass credits towards private and commercial licenses. IAOPA believes LSAs - or VLAs, as they are called in Europe - should not be debarred from flying internationally. The Bahamas has become the first nation to allow American LSA pilots to arrive in Light Sport Aircraft, even if they don't have an FAA medical. The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation has organised the first International Bahamas LSA Fly-In from December 10 to 12.

Survival after ditching

AOPA Germany is organising a sea survival training event in Sweden in March and is inviting members of every European AOPA to take part. The course covers every aspect of post-ditching survival and aims to give pilots a better chance of getting out of an aircraft and into a raft, and of surviving in the sea and attracting rescuers. The company which runs the courses, Scandinavian Safety Training Centre AB, is long-established and provides safety training to a number of professional organisations. See their website at www.sstcab.se. Date will be March 31st 2011. If you'd like more information please contact Michael Erb at AOPA Germany - erb@aopa.de.

Fighting for access to Tel Aviv

AOPA Israel has met with military and civil chiefs at Tel Aviv airport in a renewed attempt to gain access to Israel's largest airport. General aviation is excluded from LLBG by executive order of the military on the grounds of heavy traffic, but AOPA points out that traffic at Tel Aviv is actually fairly light and there is no congestion. AOPA Israel Chairman Yaron Efrat and a small AOPA delegation met with the commander of the military half of the airport, but although the commander expressed a willingness to accommodate GA, he seemed unable to do anything about it. The AOPA delegation also met with the Chief of Operations at the Civil Aviation Authority, who agreed that there was no point excluding GA if there was no actual traffic congestion at the airport. Yaron Efrat says: "It is a treacherous road and the end is still a long way away."

Destination China?

Just as Europe makes general aviation ever more difficult, China is heading in the opposite direction. The Chinese government is planning to open up its lower airspace to allow the industry to operate freely. AOPA China, which currently has only double figures of members, believes that within a few years it could have 10,000. The country will begin next year to try out a system under which airspace below 4,000 metres will be separated into three categories - areas under control, areas under surveillance, and areas where aircraft can fly freely after reporting their intentions. Some 80 percent of China's airspace is controlled by the People's Liberation Army. Up to now, pilots have had to request permission for every flight, which could take several days to come through. The state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China wants to be what it calls "a world-class general aviation solution provider" by 2020.