



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

### **‘Split the difference’ on safety?**

A high-level conference on ‘EU aviation safety management towards 2020’ brought together some 200 regulators and industry representatives in Brussels in January, including European Aviation Commissioner Daniel Calleja, EASA Executive Director Patrick Goudou, Brian Simpson MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament’s Transport Committee, Bo Redeborn of Eurocontrol and Nancy Graham of ICAO. And while little that is new was brought forward, there are reasons to be cautiously optimistic about some of the old things that were repeated.

On third-country registrations, Brian Simpson spoke briefly of the work that is being done on bilateral safety agreements, including those with the United States; referring to FAA licenses he turned to look directly at Patrick Goudou and said: “I just thought I’d mention it!” So we are not totally without friends in this debate.

Mr Simpson went on call for continued improvement in Europe’s already-excellent safety record and reiterated his call for change to be made only where it is necessary. M Goudou, saying EASA’s motto is ‘Your safety is our mission’, said EASA does not want to over-regulate, but that there needs to be clarification of industry’s role and responsibilities. He went onto talk about moving from a prescriptive form of regulating to a performance-based one, with more risk-based oversight founded on good safety data, which must be shared across Europe. While M Goudou clearly shares IAOPA’s concern that the lack of data makes for bad regulation, that hasn’t stopped the European regulatory express hurtling onwards to meet its arbitrary and artificial deadlines.

Patrick Gandil of the French DGAC said that the average number of aviation fatalities in France over the last five years had been about 60, which illustrates one of the major dilemmas of European harmonisation. The comparable number in the United Kingdom is 20 to 25; harmonisation leading to a ‘split the difference’ death figure would be difficult for the UK to stomach, while harmonisation on the French figure would be catastrophic.

IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson asked M Goudou and M Gandil how they made sure that new safety regulations did not themselves become safety risks? The second part of the question was how to achieve proportionality between safety and business growth in GA? Daniel Calleja answered by saying the question was “very interesting, but very difficult.” Neither of the two Patricks gave very good answers, saying it was difficult because of the diversity of general aviation. M Goudou said they recognised that one size does not fit all, and that GA is different to CAT, therefore they tried and introduce flexibility in the rules.

The conference concentrated largely on CAT; when Martin Robinson asked why speakers from general aviation had not been invited, there was no answer.

## Landing fee blow in Spain

Minimum landing charges at Spanish airports have been increased by around 300 percent, a new blow to general aviation in a country where GA is grossly under-developed even though VFR flying conditions are among the best in Europe. AOPA Spain has written to the country's Development Minister saying that Spain should be 'the Florida of Europe', but instead it puts every obstacle in the way of the GA pilot.

AOPA Spain says the airport network run by the national operator AENA, a *de facto* monopoly, is severely under-used, partly because of mandatory handling, parking limitations, fuel supply problems and terminal access. The tripling of landing charges from January 1st has not helped.

The letter seeks high-level negotiations to address issues which, it says, constitute 'a fatal blow to general aviation and aerial work and ensure the continued under-development of the sector' in Spain. Traffic levels are 10 to 20 times lower than those in northern European, and where a healthy GA industry might employ 50,000 people, it remains moribund. The small companies which predominate in GA are severely handicapped, contrary to the recommendations of the Spanish government's own 2007 Strategic Plan for the aviation sector.

The encouragement of GA tourism could be of great benefit to Spain, the letter says, and with the country's uncongested airspace and good weather Spain represents an attractive training option for all of Europe, with benefits which could match those of Florida if the obstacles were overcome.

In concert with the Royal Aero Club of Spain, the Aerial Work Association and the Aviation Schools Association, AOPA will be meeting ANEA officials in an attempt to have the landing charges increase alleviated.

## Italy improves firefighting regulations

More positive news from AOPA Italy, where Massimo Levy reports that a new agreement with the Ministry of the Interior's Firefighting Department means that small aerodromes need no longer keep at least three fully-trained and licensed firefighters available at all times - one will do, as long as he has a non-certified helper.

This is a major step forward because small Italian airfields are often closed because of the non-availability of fire cover. But on January 27th the Italian Civil Aviation Authority ENAC signed an agreement modifying the regulation, which has been in force for 30 years. The old regulation obliged small airport managers and flying clubs to spend large amounts of money on training, equipment and personnel. Training and exams are very strict, and only a small percentage of those who offered their availability could obtain the required licence. Massimo says: 'The fact that all this had to be obtained at local level meant that abuses were common, and that in many occasions this increased considerably the cost of the service. There are smaller airports in Italy where landing cost a few euros but compulsory firefighting service charges cost up to €25 or €30 per landing, even to flight schools. As well as reducing the requirement from three certified firemen to one, the new regulation brings certification of personnel and equipment to the regional level, reducing considerably the risk of abuse.'

"Small Italian airports, famous for being open or closed upon availability of firefighters, can now take a more optimistic view of their future. AOPA Italy can only thank the Italian CAA for having accepted our point of view and co-operated to help the Fire Fighting Department of the Ministry of Interior understand our position." \*During negotiations on similar regulations in the United Kingdom, AOPA UK was unable to find a single instance where mandatory fire cover at a GA airport had ever saved a single life.



## ICAO's language 'racket'

The Irish Aviation Authority is demanding a €40 fee for recognition of the English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment even though they are not personally making the assessment. The IAA say they will only accept an

assessment from an examiner who has their specific approval, and they refuse to accept that ELPs issued by English examiners might be valid. AOPA Ireland's Jim Breslin says: 'How daft is that? As the ELP assessment is an ICAO qualification and not necessarily an EASA one, it should be acceptable to them that many pilots do not necessarily hold an Irish radio licence.' AOPA Ireland is awaiting a meeting with the IAA on this and other matters.

Authorities across the world have effectively brought the new ELP requirements into disrepute by turning them into money-making sidelines for themselves and their 'accredited' English-language schools, while some countries have given their ATPLs Level 6 'expert' accreditation as of right - including, it is claimed, the Chinese. Some official language assessors are refusing to issue Level 6 'expert' credentials even to native English speakers because Level 6 never needs to be renewed, which cuts down their fees. IAOPA fought long and hard at ICAO to have less onerous language rules imposed on general aviation - a battle we lost. For many pilots, having to learn conversational English in order to cross any international boundary is a profound disincentive - especially where the western alphabet is not used.

## Cessna twin systems seminar on Jersey

Do you own a twin-engined Cessna? The Channel Islands branch of AOPA UK is supporting a seminar on engines and systems in April - the first time this seminar, which is very popular in America where more than 900 owners and pilots have attended, has come to Europe.

While the seminar concentrates on the complex systems of the Cessnas, it is valuable to any operator of Lycoming or Continental powerplants or mechanics working on them. And as the organisers say, increased knowledge translates into increased safety.

The seminar is run by Twin Cessna Flyers (TCF), established 23 years ago to represent the specific interests of aircraft ranging from the earliest 310s to the 421s. The seminar will be held on the island of Jersey over four days from April 7th to 10th, although it's possible to attend for shorter periods.

Jersey-based Cessna twin owner Paul Rennie says: 'Twin Cessna aeroplanes offer great performance in all weather conditions, but that capability requires complex systems. I went to FlightSafety in the USA and learned a huge amount about the aeroplane that reading the manuals hadn't taught me. It cost me over \$7,000 and at the end I was a much more informed, safer pilot, more capable of handling difficulties from bad weather to emergencies. With TCF coming to Jersey, we have the opportunity to learn from people with years of experience of operating and maintaining these fine aeroplanes. I really think this is imperative training for a twin Cessna pilot and shall attend as a refresher, and urge all those lucky enough to own or fly these great aeroplanes to attend as well as all budding twin Cessna pilots and owners.'

Have a look at the TCF website [www.twincessna.org](http://www.twincessna.org), where full details of the Jersey seminar are in the front page.

## Guernsey Rally change

The Guernsey International Air Rally, normally held in September, has been switched to June this year because of major runway work at the island's airport which is due to start in July. This will be the 40th Guernsey Rally, and its reputation has grown every year. It's a fun weekend, offering great hospitality and just incidentally, some of the cheapest avgas in Europe. Full details and an application form will shortly be available on the Guernsey Aero Club website [www.guernseyaeroclub.com](http://www.guernseyaeroclub.com)