

IAOPA-Europe Enews - March 2012

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



Random birth for EASA-FCL

Confusion and uncertainty surrounds the implementation of EASA-FCL across Europe, with different countries establishing different timetables for compliance and minimal coordination between national aviation authorities. The original implementation deadline of April 8th 2012 has been abandoned and states are planning to introduce EASA-FCL any time between July 2012 and April 2013. The European Commission has decreed that every state complete the transition by April 2014, so the later they begin implementation, the less time they have to do the job.

The arbitrary nature of these deadlines troubles IAOPA Europe. While EASA-FCL is inextricably bound up with Operational Requirements and Authority Requirements, the deadlines for these do not coincide, and states will be forced to adopt laws which are not fully developed. EASA has been brought into disrepute by the hurried adoption of poorly thought-out regulation, and the aviation industry has paid the price.

The United Kingdom, it seems, had learned nothing from its precipitate and disastrous overnight adoption of the JARs, which led to bizarre anomalies such as pilots having to take exams for which there was no syllabus and engineers having to adopt schedules which made no sense at all. The UK now intends to be first to adopt EASA-FCL, and will do so from July 1st 2012. Other countries intend to stand back and watch what happens – Germany will postpone adoption until the last possible date, April 8th 2013, as will Spain and France. Greece is aiming for December 8th 2012. Other national authorities simply shrug their shoulders when asked when EASA-FCL comes into effect. In Iceland, which is not a member of the EU and therefore has more complex systems for incorporating EASA diktat into its regulations, adoption may even run beyond 2013.

Whenever adoption is begun, states will be taking on half-understood regulation which will be profoundly affected by rules which have not been completed. It will be impossible to calculate how much EASA-FCL will cost, and given that the new burden of cost is certain to drive some smaller operators to the wall, it seems perverse to force through adoption only for the coup de grace to be administered by the follow-up punch. For instance, flight training organisations which have operated for years as 'registered facilities' will have to become 'Approved Training Organisations', and will have to be inspected and audited by their national authorities. In the UK, it is said that the minimum cost will be £1,000, (€1,200) simply to be allowed to continue doing what they've been doing for years. In addition, every course an ATO offers will have to be audited and approved by the national authority, and it is not clear how the cost implications of that are to be handled. There will also be expensive requirements for new operations manuals and procedures training, and some one-man-bands will throw in the towel. But they'll be required to start training for EASA licences before they go out of business.

IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson says: "We are rushing into this because of arbitrary deadlines set by the EC many years ago for no practical reason. In the UK, we must by law have Regulatory Impact Assessments, but they seem to have been abandoned for EASA regulation. A little caution might go a long way, but our CAA seems determined to risk a rerun of the JAR fiasco with EASA. There is a more sensible way of doing this."

Italian 'luxury' tax misses its target

IAOPA Italy is awaiting news from the Italian government on the "luxury tax" which is hitting general aviation aircraft after managing finally to hold talks with a senior minister.

The tax is particularly ruinous for Italy because it applies to any private aircraft which spends more than 48 hours in the country, whatever its nationality. This is leading owners across Europe to avoid Italy for fear of being landed with a bill of thousands of euros. The tariff can reach €300,000 for larger business jets.

Massimo Levy of AOPA Italy reports that representatives met last week with the Minister of Economic Development, who was the first high-level official who was prepared to listen to what they had to say.

“He was surprised, not to say astonished, by the number of errors in the law,” Massimo says. “He was not aware that the real objects of the tax, the luxury business jets, are almost completely exempted. In Italy there are only six Citations owned by private organisations and thus liable for the tax. All the others are ‘public transport’ and therefore exempt. He has promised to speak to the Government to see if something can be done. Time is getting very short because payment for an aircraft which held a valid ARC on december 6th is due on March 5th.”

As the tax conditions remain largely unclear, AOPA Italy has submitted to the tax office a formal demand for clarification on many points. The tax office has 180 days to answer, but if they do not answer, Italian law states that answers suggested in the demand may be considered as 'accepted'.

An example of how, when and if the tax will have to be paid will soon be posted on the AOPA Italy website www.aopa.it, with an English translation.

Finding cheaper fuel has never been easier

Fuel has newer been more expensive so finding the cheapest place to fill up is more important than ever. IAOPA Europe has now made it easier than ever for you to report a fuelprice into our fuel price database at www.iaopa.eu.

You no longer have to create an account at our website. You can simply click on the "Report Fuel Price" at the top of this mail. This will give you direct access to find an airport and report a fuel price. We encourage all our subscribers to report so we can all benefit from cheaper fuel.



Birds and bees join Fürsti fight

The plight of Fürstenfeldbruck airfield in Germany has once again become international news as car company BMW's attempts to shut it down come up against new obstacles. A large number of protected species – birds, butterflies and plants that enjoy Europe's highest level of environmental protection – are resident on the airfield, and while aviation has never been a threat to them, the proposed activities of BMW, which wants to turn the airfield into a speed-driving track, would be.

Over the past two years, developments in the 'Fürsti' situation have been reported in this enews, and pilots have made it clear to BMW that they will consider boycotting its products if it succeeds in driving GA out. There are no alternative airports in the Munich area – the nearest is 60 nm away at Ingolstadt (home of Audi). BMW has consistently refused to share the airfield with GA, even though this would cause them no disruption. Now the situation has been highlighted in the 'ebrief' online news published by AOPA-US and circulated in dozens of countries around the world.

Now, wildlife has weighed in on the side of GA. BMW has failed in all its attempts to pass the statutory ecological assessments. Flora and fauna who co-existed happily with aviation, even when Fürsti was home to Cold War F-104s and other jets, would be threatened with extinction by BMW's plans. Dr Michael Erb, managing director of AOPA Germany, says: “Turn Fürsti into a nightmare of noise and high-speed traffic, and protected species will be killed off.”

Undeterred, BMW is asking the Bavarian government – where it has massive lobbying power – for an unprecedented 'ecological offset' under which it would move the threatened species to a

small, 61-acre reservation 15 miles away. AOPA-Germany and the Munich Flying Club are opposing the plan. AOPA members around the world are encouraged to tell BMW what they think. GA is not defenceless in this matter; pilots have serious car buying power, and some are responsible for entire car fleets. You can email BMW customer.service@bmw.com or kundenbetreuung@bmw.de. Please send a copy to info@aopa.de

Sign up for the AOPA- US 'ebrief' email. It's free, and while it's largely concerned with GA in America, it is of interest to all GA pilots. Click here. <https://www.smartbrief.com/aopa/index.jsp>



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IMC simulator training for AOPA Poland members

In view of an large number of GA accidents and incidents that involved Polish pilots flying into IMC conditions last year, AOPA Poland has taken the initiative to expand its flight safety training seminars to its members to focus on coping with IMC.

The new flight training programme, offered free of charge thanks to funding provided by the Polish insurance company PZU S.A., consists of a theoretical session complemented by training on a fully-licensed flight simulator, and is designed to demonstrate to pilots:

- *the importance of the decision-making process in the face of deteriorating flight conditions
- *how the malfunction of basic flight guidance and navigation equipment affects flight safety
- *the consequences of not complying with certain operating procedures in different weather conditions and flight regimes.

AOPA-Poland's President Blazej Krupa says: "This is an unprecedented opportunity for our members to rehearse deteriorating flight situations they may not yet have encountered. The training program and time spent on the simulator is part of our efforts to make pilots more aware of how poor planning and errors of judgment influence flight safety. We are confident that this programme will have a positive impact on the safety of our members."

Arctic Days Aviation Summit in Finland

AOPA Finland organised an Arctic Days Aviation Summit together with local aviation community in Oulu, Finland, early in February when the weather was at its coldest. Despite the winter freeze – METAR EFOU 040720Z AUTO 14007KT 4200 IC NSC M30/M33 Q1049 1239//81 – almost 100 aviation enthusiasts gathered to listen to lectures and discuss aviation topics during two days at the Hotel Lasaretti.

The newly-reconstituted AOPA Finland was introduced publicly for the first time, and the purpose, goals and activities of the organisation were explained. IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson spoke of IOAPA and AOPA UK activities, including co-operation with EASA and its work groups. This was followed a presentation by Lennart Persson, bringing greetings from AOPA Sweden – where Lennart is Chairman – to AOPA Finland as a reborn affiliate of IAOPA.

Presentations at Saturday's conference varied from the contribution of glider pilots' wives during the flying season to GA accident reports, Finnish Aeronautical Association Air Show 2012 report and update, Turku Air Show 2011 planning and backstage report and a presentation by Perttu Karivalo, whose photograph 'Night Rescue' won the defence section of *Aviation Week and Space Technology's* photo competition last year.

Sunday morning was as warm as Saturday but still the aviators arrived to hear the grand old man of air accident investigation, Esko Lähteenmäki, make a presentation on Piper fuel injection system and how to prevent its freezing. Other presentations covered forest fire surveillance flights, management of aviation clubs, helicopter training and the LAPL licence proposed by EASA. At the end of the day there was a [Sunny Nights Fly-In 2012](#) newsflash and finally there was drawing of the prizes.

You are all welcome to next year's Arctic Days Aviation Summit.

AOPA Greece co-operates with accident investigation agency to improve safety

AOPA Greece will officially work together with Accident Investigation Agency to improve safety in General Aviation and Aerial Work. The two parties decided to co-operate to identify weak points in air safety that should be improved.

Although Greek General Aviation is suffering a serious blow due to economic difficulties, overall flying activity in the country is steady and actually shows signs of improvement. This is because Greek FTO's manage to attract ever growing numbers of foreign students.

Both AOPA and the Accident Investigation Agency are keen to make sure that the anticipated explosion in flying hours will not result in more accidents.

Regional and World Assemblies

The 126th Regional Meeting of IAOPA-Europe is just two weeks away – it takes place in London on Saturday March 10th, and everyone is welcome. The biennial IAOPA World Assembly is being held in Cape Town, South Africa, between April 10th and 15th 2012. The World Assembly is an opportunity for the 70 AOPAs around the world (AOPA UAE has been accepted as a provisional affiliate and its candidacy is awaiting confirmation by the AOPA Board) 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