



# EUROPEAN GLIDING UNION

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Representative Organisation of European Glider Pilots

## **EUROPEAN GLIDING UNION** the structure and use of airspace in Europe **Position Paper**

The developments in the airspace structure in Europe clearly indicate a reduction of airspace that is available to gliding, a particularly environment-friendly air sport, and an increase in the requirements for equipment like transponders and radio, typically caused by the constant increase of commercial air traffic. An unreasonable priority seems to be given to the commercial operations, even at the detriment of military requirements.

With its 90.000 pilot members, the EGU is best suited to represent the interests of the gliding community in Europe. European gliding, with its 22.000 gliders and 550.000 km flown cross-country on a good day, definitely is an important user of the European airspace. The EGU co-operates closely with Europe Air Sports in the context of the use of the European airspace by all air sports.

An important goal of the EGU is the maintenance of a continuum in the European airspace that allows cross-country flight. Isolated blocks of airspace in which gliding is allowed will mean the end of the of gliding as a sport, because cross-country flying is an essential part of gliding. All gliding competitions, except those in aerobatics, consist of cross-country flights.

The EGU fully recognises the possibilities of new technologies like ACAS, Mode S and 8.33 kHz radio. New technology must, however, be applied to gliding only where that demonstrably increases safety, and where that is acceptable both technically and in the sense of performance-over-price. A good example here is ACAS, a useful tool for safety in addition to surveillance. ACAS supposes the use of transponders in non-ACAS equipped aircraft. However replies to ACAS interrogations, in addition to surveillance replies, constitute a heavy burden to the small batteries in gliders. Transponders shall therefore only be applied to gliders in areas where the density of IFR traffic amongst VFR traffic makes this necessary.

The EGU supports the Single European Sky programme, but only as long as it does not bring unreasonable restrictions for VFR flight, in particular gliding. Flight Level Z, separating K and U airspace, shall therefore be chosen as high as possible.

Because few military jets are equipped with ACAS and because the ICAO speed limit for VFR flight is 250 kt, the EGU strongly advocates to keep the number of low level, high speed military operations to an absolute minimum.

The gliding community in Europe is not willing to pay for unnecessary and unwanted services.

The EGU is convinced that the see-and-avoid principle is as valid as ever. The Visual Flight Rules have, for over fifty years, worked remarkably well.

As a conclusion the EGU wishes to state that a sensible application of procedures and technology allows gliding to take place in almost all airspace, including controlled airspace.

*The sky definitely is big enough for all.*

Paris, 2004-11-23