



EUROPEAN GLIDING UNION

Representative Organisation of European Glider Pilots

President's Report to the Congress 2008

2007 has again been a very busy year for the Board of the European Gliding Union. The work for harmonising the aviation law in Europe progressed significantly. This is a short overview of our activity during the 12 past months.

MDM 032

The work of the MDM 032 has continued and the group met 9 times. The Comment Response Document of the A-NPA 14-2006 has finally been published in November 2007. The stakeholders are in general content with the concept proposed by the working group. In the mean time several sub groups have prepared detailed NPA's on initial airworthiness, continuing airworthiness, licensing and operations which will be published soon (one has already been issued). The mission of the MDM 032 which was planned to be completed in September 2007 will be extended until April 2008.

Initial airworthiness (Certification)

An MDM 032 sub-group is preparing the NPA on initial airworthiness which should be published before end of 2007. This NPA will propose introducing a lighter regulatory regime for the European Light Aircraft (ELA). ELA is not a new category of aircraft defined by a design code but a substantially simpler new process for the regulation of aircraft and related products, parts and appliances. Sailplanes and powered sailplanes will belong to the ELA 1 class (non-complex aircraft with a maximum take off mass MTOM below 1000kg).

Manufacturers of such aircraft will no longer need to set up approved design and production organisations (DOA and POA). Their products will be certified according to a certification program approved by EASA. The type certificate will be issued by the EASA but the work for the certification will be outsourced to a NAA or to a qualified entity which can be a private organisation. Interestingly industry standards may also be used for design and production.

This new regulation is expected to decrease the certification costs of ELA 1 aircraft, including gliders and motorgliders.

Continuing Airworthiness (Maintenance)

The work of M017 and M005 resulted in the issuance of NPA 2007-8 on Part M. This NPA proposes several relaxations of Part M and enlarged the list of tasks which can be performed as Pilot Owner Maintenance. A specific list has been worked out for gliders and motor-gliders.

In order to prepare our answer to this NPA, our TO Maintenance, J. Neumann, organised a meeting of the EGU working group on Maintenance in Cologne on 3 October. Unfortunately only a few members of the working group were present. The meeting decided to welcome the changes proposed but also to try to open the way to a simplified Part M for ELA aircraft. The comments were finalised and circulated to the delegates but we received only a few reactions, though all positive. The comments were sent to EASA in due time. EASA had 600 answers and we are represented in the working group in charge of analysing these comments by H. Hald (Denmark), H. Torode (UK) and J. Neumann (Germany).

Interestingly, in a recent MDM 032 meeting an EASA representative stated that Part M may be too complicated for the maintenance of ELA. We therefore still hope that we will obtain the Part M “light” for this class of aircraft that we have been asking for since the beginning.

Another major problem is the deadline for application of Part M to gliding which is still fixed as 28 September 2008. Taking into account the delay needed to publish the Comment Response Document of NPA 2007-8, we do not expect the final regulation about maintenance to be published before May or June 2008. Since it is not reasonable to ask us to apply a regulation which will only have been finalised a few months earlier, the EGU and EAS met M. Probst in May in order to ask him to postpone the application of part M. He refused but recent information indicate that we may nevertheless obtain a delay to 28 September 2009.

Pilot Licensing and medical

At the time of writing this report, the political process leading to the extension of the competence of EASA to Licensing and Ops is still not complete. However we expect COM 579 to be adopted very soon because the Parliament and the Council of Ministers have finally agreed on a compromise. For us, there is no major change; it is still proposed to create a recreational pilot licence which can be issued by a Federation or a National Aero Club but General Practitioners will be allowed to assess a pilot’s medical fitness only if a Member State’s national law allows it.

Two MDM032 Sub-groups are preparing the implementing rules for the Recreational licence which is now called Light Aircraft Pilot Licence (LAPL) and for the Non JAR (ICAO compliant) Licence. EGU is represented in the first group by myself and in the second by P. Pauwels (Belgium). It is to be noted that for gliding the IRs for the ICAO compliant will be identical to the IRs for the LAPL (except for the medical part). A first draft of these subparts has been presented to the EGU Working Group Licensing at a meeting organised by M. Mueller in Hanover (June 15, 2007). The working group asked for some changes and the EGU proposal was sent out to the delegates who approved the proposal (at least the few who answered in due time..).The proposal has subsequently been submitted to the MDM 032 licensing subgroups which accepted them. However, at the time when this report is written, the latest versions of the Implementing Rules for both types of licences have still not been approved by the MDM 032 Core group.

The subgroups are also in charge of drafting the AMC (Acceptable Means of Compliance) on the theoretical and practical syllabi for the licences. The EGU sub group licensing is preparing a proposal

for gliding. Our objective is to keep these AMCs as light as possible in order to allow our members to keep some degree of liberty in organising the training for the gliding license.

If the Parliament approves the extension of the EASA competence to Licensing and Ops within a few months the new licensing system should become valid by beginning of 2010.

Operations

The EASA has started to draft Implementing Rules for Ops. Our delegate in the working group, D.Roberts, has been tasked with making sure that these rules remain light enough.

There are still problems with some activities (Trial lessons, sight-seeing tours, Charity Flights), which, according to the new definition of commercial activities included in COM 579, are around the borderline between Commercial and Non Commercial. In most countries, they are not considered commercial activities and have shown to be properly regulated by using various codes of practices or conduct. There is a need to find a solution to this issue. The proposal is to use a simple certificate and very simplified rules.

Airspace

Our TO Airspace, Günter Bertram organised the annual meeting for the EGU airspace working group in Frankfurt on 17 November. All aspects of airspace have been discussed at this meeting.

One worrying issue is the introduction of 8.33 kHz radios below FL 195 despite the timetable being still under discussion.

Günter is working on a new EGU airspace position paper to be submitted to this Congress.

Finances

Despite the accounts not being closed yet, our Treasurer has announced that we will make a slight loss in 2007. As you know our expenses have significantly increased mainly because of our financial support to Europe Air Sports, which is bearing the brunt of financing participation in all working groups. For 2008 we will therefore have to increase your contribution slightly again. The EGU members have accepted, by email, a proposal for a new membership fees system in which the larger members agree to pay more. Although this vote still has to be formally confirmed by the Congress, I would like to thank them here for their solidarity. I also hope, that once the new regulation is in force we will have fewer meetings and thus be able to decrease the membership fees again.

Membership

We had the pleasure of welcoming two new members this year: Spain and Serbia. The total number of full members is now 23.

Conclusion

As you can see, the harmonisation of European aviation law has progressed significantly in 2007. Since all the final NPAs should be published before the middle of next year, we may expect the largest part of the harmonisation process to be completed by the end of 2008.

I recently revisited the minutes of our previous Congresses. Without daring to be overly optimistic I have the feeling that, on most issues, except perhaps on maintenance (in my opinion Part M is still a major threat), we are on the right road to achieving the goals you set us.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work over the last year, in particular, the members of the Board and all those who represented us in the meetings in some cases at considerable personal sacrifice. EGU is lucky to have such capable and dedicated individuals in its service.

Roland Stuck
Strasbourg
4 December 2007