

Report from the IGC Airspace, Licencing and Medical Specialist

To the IGC meeting in Lausanne March 2006

By Peter Eriksen

Airspace

No information has been received from non-European parties. In Europe the plans the mandate from the European Commission to EUROCONTROL to harmonise the European airspace have resulted in a satisfactory outcome for air sports. The access to upper and medium level airspace was secured. The lower airspace remains a national issue. The main problem for the future is still the development of new segments of the commercial market based on airports not previously used by scheduled operators.

On the equipment side it has been confirmed that the introduction of 8.33 KHz radios will be limited to IFR-only airspace. The transponder issue is still pending. Most Civil Aviation Administrations seem to have a pragmatic view on this, but at least one country (The Netherlands) seems to be faced with a firm requirement to equip gliders with mode-S transponders.

Licensing

The ICAO licensing working group recommends that gliding and ballooning licenses are kept outside the new licensing structure (the new structure basically sees a PPL as a first step for the future airline pilot. This is a positive outcome for us, and will hopefully allow for further steps towards an ICAO Sports License, where the requirements are tailored to our needs at an appropriate level. The new items for the PPLs related to the international tension are for example not applicable for glider pilots.

There is hope that EASA will take a viewpoint similar to ours, agreeing that we need Sports Licenses, but this has still to be confirmed.

Medical

A State Letter (that is ICAO's official way to inform about changes to the ICAO Annexes) was sent out from ICAO in 2006 recommending changes to the ICAO medical standards. These changes will be implemented by the states in 2006. The positive effect for those of you having ICAO licenses is an increase to time interval between examinations for certain age categories. The negative side is the recommendation to use an aero medical expert for the examination. This has been the requirement in many countries for some years, but may now be reinforced.

EGU is working on a proposal for reduced medical standards. When this was aired in ICAO, the initial informal reaction from some of the ICAO experts was not too negative, and we were encouraged to table the work when it was completed.

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