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Front cover:
Pioneer 300 Hawk
 Photo: Keith Wilson

Chairman's message

EASA: 'Press to Transmit'

Is EASA beginning to listen to those whom it affects? Within this issue of *General Aviation* is an article entitled "What is wrong with Part M?" that refers to a request for feedback on how the EASA regulatory regime embodied in Part M is working in the general aviation sector. The request came in the form of a letter from Eric Sivel, EASA Head of Product Safety, Rulemaking Directorate, addressed to Martin Robinson as Senior Vice President IAOPA Europe in response to a White Paper submitted by IAOPA Europe that raised a number of important issues and inconsistencies within Part M. The White Paper was largely drafted by a Swedish AOPA member who is also the owner of an aircraft maintenance company who had been particularly hit by not just Part M itself, but more so by the nonsensical interpretation of its contents by the Swedish CAA. This was reported in the IAOPA Europe enews for March and May 2011. In addition to the White Paper, the Swiss Aircraft Maintenance Association had sent a stinging letter along similar lines to the boss of EASA, Patrick Goudou. The letter from Eric Sivel welcomed feedback and views as a valuable input to a recently established working group MDM.056 that aims to clarify the issues surrounding ICAs (Instructions for Continuing Airworthiness).



These ICAs are produced by the design approval holders, i.e. the designers and manufacturers, as part of the product or part certification that, if properly implemented, should ensure that the product or part remains airworthy during its intended life. They cover Airworthiness Directives, Service Bulletins, Supplemental Type Certificates and simple recommendations. EASA has recognised, and not a minute too soon, that there is too much scope for interpretation not only amongst the type certificate holders, but also amongst the NAAs themselves. Part of the problem, as pointed out by the IAOPA White Paper, is the inconsistent manner in which these ICAs are referred to in different parts of Part M. The invitation to submit views and contribute to otherwise to the working group is greatly to be welcomed. In fact, it was only as recently as April that I remarked in this column that one of our tasks was to find the appropriate chinks in EASA's armour if we are to succeed in improving the system, and we seem to have opened up the first chink. It has been difficult to get EASA to listen up until now. Communication has tended to be all one way, but when the European Commission receives lots of complaints about its own Aviation Safety Agency, it begins to ask questions as to why this is, and EASA is duty bound to respond.

It might well be that a constructive two-way relationship with EASA is at last beginning to emerge. It is interesting to compare this with the relationship we, and all other general aviation associations, have with our own CAA. There has long been a culture of consulting on issues affecting GA, with downstream business and regulatory impact assessment, but sometimes it has become a rather long-winded and turgid process. Back in 2008, Sir Joseph Pilling conducted an independent strategic review of the CAA and one of the recommendations was to appoint a Chief Executive and a non-executive Chair; up until then, the CE role had been effectively shouldered by the Chairman, who was in any case contracted on a part-time basis. The establishment of this position has, in a relatively short time, made a significant improvement in the relationship, especially in terms of accessibility and speed of response, between the CAA and bodies involved with general aviation. But it must be acknowledged that much of this may be down to the management style of the person appointed, Andrew Haines. Who would have thought only a couple of years ago that the CAA Board would visit a general aviation aerodrome (Denham) to learn for itself about the wide range of activities conducted by GA organisations based there – see the article "CAA meets GA on its home turf" in the June issue of *General Aviation*. There is no question that the CAA is in full listening mode, which, whilst it is recognised that aviation is such that regulation is necessary for maintenance of safety standards, will provide a valuable pathway to achieving a constructive and purposeful dialogue between the regulators and the regulated. Our objective is now to achieve the same relationship with EASA, and members can expect that we will continue to pursue this with vigour and persistence.

George Done