



Dear Sir / Madam

Regarding the EASA opinion on FCL

We the undersigned are very concerned with EASA's opinion regarding third country licenses.

EASA's proposal for pilot licensing would mean that by 2013 anyone who is operating an aircraft with a third country license will not be able to fly in Europe unless they have an EASA license. For holders of such licenses this will mean having to undergo training and testing in order to qualify for a European license. Therefore, for holders of instrument rating this means they will have to undergo the entire theoretical and flying skills testing which will incur costs greater than €10,000 per person.

Many older pilots have informed us that such a proposal is not economically viable given their age and number of flying years left i.e. between five and 10 years. Whilst EASA proposes a validation of a third country license it will only be valid for one year which is not sufficient to facilitate a smooth transition to a European framework for pilot licensing. We think that a validation process which "grandfathers" existing license holders actually delivers what the EASA Basic Regulation requires in respect of oversight, and we would support such an initiative.

We also agree with EASA and the Commission that bilateral aviation safety agreements (BASAs) will provide an appropriate mechanism with which to tackle validation and acceptance of third country licenses in the future. This is also the case for resolving issues with EU trainers and examiners operating with third country licenses. We fully support the rapid implementation of both the EU-US BASA and the EU-Canada BASA, in order for negotiations to begin on additional annexes to address pilot licensing, simulator validations, and similar expanded areas of these BASAs.

However, these future amendments to bilateral agreements currently not in force will take time, and the law in Europe is set to change in 2012. As such we are greatly concerned that any solutions based on these agreements simply cannot be achieved by 2012/13, or provide the necessary legal certainty for the general aviation industry. Therefore it would be best to merge the implementation of the pilot licensing rules with the implementation and expansion of the above BASAs, to guarantee a smooth transition, minimise the impact on pilots and ensure continued safe operations in Europe.

We remain convinced that appropriate, multi-year transition measures provide the means by which to keep business and general aviation flying, whilst allowing the institutions to meet their commitments. Indeed, as stated in the Commission's own Communication on General and Business Aviation*, the *"high proportion of SMEs and not-for-profit organisations in this sector calls for special vigilance in proper application of proportionality"*.* If this proposal is adopted without the measures outlined above, it will adversely affect safety and negatively impact jobs in Europe and beyond – at a time when our industry is still in recession – in addition to the thousands of European pilots who stand to be adversely affected.

These are vital issues for our sector and there is a great deal riding on the decision of the EASA Committee. We, therefore, respectfully urge that the above proposals be given serious consideration at the next meeting.

* Commission Communication: An Agenda for Sustainable Future in General and Business Aviation COM (2007) 869 final

Yours faithfully,



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