



# One World Alliance

The countries which make up IAOPA are increasingly becoming inter-dependent as regulation is homogenised across the world, and examples of cross-border assistance on a bilateral and a global basis peppered the day-long discussions of the 127th Regional Meeting of IAOPA Europe in Cyprus in October. Craig Spence, newly confirmed as General Secretary of IAOPA, came from the USA, and Frank Hoffman, IAOPA's man at ICAO in Montreal, flew in from Canada for the meeting, which brought together delegates from the UK, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Greece, Iceland and Italy; Austria, Switzerland and Poland sent their apologies.

During the day, Greece thanked the UK, Italy and others for support, Lebanon thanked Cyprus, Cyprus thanked the UK and the USA, and everybody thanked Frank Hoffman for help on specific national issues. The realisation that general aviation is one global industry needs to take root, because everywhere there is pressure to split us up into recreational fliers, business aviation, flight training and so on. But we hang together, or we are hanged separately, and we need to make maximum use of our international strength.

Chairing the meeting, IAOPA Senior Vice President Martin Robinson said: "No other GA organisation in the world meets like we meet, or has met 127 times to discuss the issues that are affecting GA. We should be proud as an organisation of what has been done through the years, and we continue to make progress, often against a very strong headwind."

Craig Spence's confirmation as Secretary General of IAOPA was characterised by Martin Robinsons as a positive move for the organisation, not only because of Craig's qualities but because he had constant and direct access to the President of IAOPA, Craig Fuller. "When I started working with IAOPA the Secretary General was Steve Brown, who was the head of the Technical and Government Affairs division in AOPA US. He was my mentor. When Peter Boyer took over AOPA US the arrangement was to have an external General Secretary, and John Sheehan came in. John did a great job for 17 years, but the philosophy of having a Secretary General back inside AOPA US is a good one."

## *Delegates listen carefully to Treasurer Peggy van Ootmarsum's financial presentation*

Martin reported that he had come to Cyprus from Slovenia, where he had been asked by the embryonic AOPA Slovenia for some guidance. "They are growing their membership and we will have more active participation from Slovenia in future," he said. "We are also in the process of establishing an AOPA in Belgium, and our new Brussels lobbyist Lutz Dommel has been instrumental in this."

Craig Spence spoke of IAOPA Europe as the most active and organised of the IAOPA regions, and gave an update on what AOPA US was doing with the FAA, the standards authorities and with the pilot community in the USA, particularly on reducing the cost of certification and improving the flying club structure. "We are starting to see a realisation that GA is over-regulated, and even ICAO and EASA are accepting this; we have a declining pilot population while costs increase, but attitudes are changing and I'm really optimistic for the future."

Frank Hoffman spoke of the differences in attitude between ICAO and EASA. "ICAO has said publicly that regulations should be performance-based rather than prescriptive. However, EASA does not seem to have said that." He outlined some of the new issues at ICAO's Air Navigation Commission that are receiving his attention, one being rules on fuel reserves. "They want GA to pay attention to what constitutes a fuel emergency and how it is declared," he said. "I've told them that this isn't going to work – fuel gauges in GA aircraft just don't tell you you've got 20 minutes left. You can't make a rule for airlines that will also fit GA."

IAOPA's own initiative at ICAO is to create a workable airworthiness structure for aircraft under 750kg so they can cross borders as easily as other aircraft and can be bought and sold internationally, and so that flying and engineering experience on them counts towards professional licences. "The only way to do that now is with a type certificate, which costs millions of dollars," Frank said. "This issue is very definitely on the agenda, and is supported by ICAO's own study of the pending shortage of manpower. We must have pilots and mechanics that filter up into the airline system."



# Getting EASA back in its box

Martin Robinson gave delegates an update on progress with the EASA Board of Management's request for a new approach following the submission of a set of guidelines and recommended practices by a working group on the regulation of GA headed by the French DGAC. The Agency has been given until July next year to publish internal guidance material against which it will have to check its rulemaking proposals. The basic philosophy should be that one size does not fit all, and GA should be handled separately from commercial air transport (CAT) and merits a different, proportional approach based on a risk hierarchy. "We can challenge things like the accelerate-stop problem against these guidelines," Martin said. "The European Commission has effectively agreed to this because it is part of the Board of Management.

"The idea is to adopt the minimum number of rules, and to adopt a risk-based approach based on good quality accident

data, from which statistically significant trends can be identified and on which a realistic risk assessment can be based. Grandfather rights should be protected, bureaucracy must be minimised, best use



**Above: by a derogation a local gliding association can administer the sport**

must be made of existing expertise, and tasks should be delegated where possible to the level at which they can be performed most efficiently, including by GA organisations. Gliders, for example, may be looked after by a derogation to allow a

local gliding association to administer the sport.

"It is recognised by the Board of Management that GA does not aim to achieve an equivalent level of safety to CAT. ICAO states this categorically – the person responsible in ICAO annex 6 is the owner-operator, to whom ICAO says the national aviation authorities do not owe the same duty of care. The idea is that they should no longer start with rules from CAT, then water them down to fit GA, but to make a fresh start in all fields – licensing, operations, air traffic management... and they must also consider the 'do-nothing' option."

One of the first things IAOPA was looking to have changed, Martin said, was EASA's Approved Training Organisation requirement, which will force flying schools to follow a completely new bureaucratic path which will be expensive and time-consuming, and has zero safety benefit. EASA intends that ATOs should require new and continuing authorisations for everything they do and every course they offer. AOPA's suggestion is that the current Registered Facilities simply be named Approved Training Organisations without any further requirement.

## 'Specific rules' leave nations to decide

Jacob Pedersen of AOPA Denmark has been IAOPA's representative on the working group dealing with EASA Ops, specifically non-commercial operation of complex aircraft. "Most of the relevant regulation has now moved away from EASA and into the 'comitology' stage in Parliament," he said. "We are waiting for Acceptable Means of Compliance material from EASA, which will detail how we are allowed to meet their demands, and these will not be published until after the rule is adopted."

Jacob said EASA had published its Opinion on SPO – which we formerly called 'aerial work' – and an Opinion on 'A to A' commercial operations, which are effectively sightseeing flights that return to the point of departure. Under Part SPO, no approval is needed – you must merely send in a declaration that you're conducting special operations. These include helicopter rescue operations, external load work, avalanche flights, glider towing, display flying, competition flying, and skydiving.

"In the rule structure, we have 'Specific Rules' which are effectively the get-out clauses we have been asking for," he said. "For instance, we have been complaining that aerobatic flights should not be forced to carry a fire extinguisher because it would be dangerous. Now, if you file your SPO declaration, you can have an alleviation. We objected to forcing parachutists to be strapped into the aircraft at all times, and they too can now have an alleviation. And if you carry smoke canisters, you can get an alleviation that exempts you from the regulations on carrying dangerous goods."

Under EASA, 'Approved Training Organisations' (ATOs) will be able to offer promotional sightseeing flights, but only on four days a year. While some delegates thought ATOs would simply designate these as trial lessons on the other days, it was pointed out that in some countries a medical and a background security check is required by anyone wanting to touch the controls of an aircraft, even for a trial lesson. Craig Spence said that in the USA, special security regulations

came into play when you start calling something flight training, and the process became much more difficult. In Italy, Massimo Levy pointed out, to do a trial lesson you needed the permission of the Interior Ministry, which took four to five months.

One of the most intractable problems of EASA Ops concerns the imposition of accelerate-stop distance requirements on private flights in twin turboprops like the King Air and the Piaggio Avanti. "As a result, aircraft that have been operating safely for decades from certain airfields will be unable to do so, and some pilots will be forced to downgrade to single-engined aircraft, which will make them less safe for 99 percent of a flight in order to make them more safe for five seconds during the take-off roll," Jacob said.

Dr Michael Erb said AOPA Germany had calculated that some 900 airfields in Europe would lose their premium traffic as a result of this rule, for which no safety imperative had been claimed. A King Air which required an 800m take-off roll would be prevented from flying off a runway of less than 1,341 metres. Many small airfields have said that the loss of their top-end traffic would tip them out of business. When this was pointed out to EASA, the Agency said: "Financial issues of airports are not relevant for our decisions."

"We had a meeting last week with representatives of the German regional airports, with whom we're working closely," Dr Erb said. "It's either physically or financially impossible for them to lengthen the runway. EASA's torpedo is running, and if we don't stop it many airports which can only justify their existence because of use of light jets and turboprops will disappear for ever."

Jacob concluded by saying EASA's Notice of Proposed Amendment was now out for Master Equipment Lists for GA aircraft. IAOPA's focus was on allowing the use of generic master equipment lists for GA, so that each aircraft did not have to have its own specific MEL, as was originally proposed.



**Above: special operations include external load work**

# €10 an hour in your pocket

The subject of VFR fees is never very far away, but IAOPA has been successful in fending it off on several occasions in recent years. "IAOPA has saved every GA pilot €10 a flying hour," Martin Robinson said. "That was the proposed fee in the original EC framework regulation on charges. IAOPA put up a strong case against it, and I was in Ben Van Houtte's office in Brussels in 2003 when he crossed it out, to his eternal credit. He accepted that we had no way of passing the charges on to passengers, that it would cost more to collect than it brought in, and that if we were charged for services, they would have to be provided – every VFR flight would be entitled to a deconfliction service, putting great strain on the system.

"But it's a subject that doesn't go away. Air Navigation Service Providers are unhappy that GA doesn't pay, especially as all their traffic forecasts have proven to be wildly out and they're desperate for money. But Eurocontrol rakes in €7 billion a year from route charges to commercial aircraft and it beggars belief that they can't organise efficient airspace use without charging GA."

EC regulation 1191 of December 2010 says the level of charges on light aircraft should not discourage the use of facilities for safety or new techniques, and that charges should be established in a fair and transparent manner after consultation with users. So VFR fees could not be introduced

**Right: Jacob Pedersen of AOPA Denmark, Martin Robinson of AOPA UK and Dr Michael Erb of AOPA Germany**



without consultation with industry.

Given that handling VFR traffic is of safety benefit to commercial IFR traffic, Air Navigation Service Providers are allowed to pass the cost of handling VFR traffic to member states. Some states pay what they think is reasonable – in Germany, the ANSPs got €6.5 million last year. Other states decline to pay, despite their obligations.

GA also faced calls for new and increased charges from EASA, but through the EASA Advisory Body, on which IAOPA sits, it had managed to influence the situation enough to hold charges steady. "They accept that they get engineers and pilots through having a good relationship with GA," Martin said. "EASA's budget is being reduced by one percent per annum for the next five years. Patrick Goudou says he needs more money, but I suggested that their budget should be cut by 30 percent to make them focus on the things they need to focus on, rather than bragging they have more tasks than the FAA."

## SES and instrument flying

In his report on progress (or lack of it) towards the Single European Sky, Dr Michael Erb, Managing Director of AOPA Germany, said the authorities wanted to reduce the priority of what working group FCL-008 had been proposing, including the En Route Instrument Rating (EIR) which would supposedly improve access to the IFR system for GA.

Some national aviation authorities considered the EIR to be dangerous, but he had countered by saying that very few people would get one, so it wasn't a problem. "We finally had a meeting with some national CAAs who raised concerns about this project," Dr Erb said. "The strongest language came from Ireland, who said the EIR should be renamed the 'Suicide Rating' and believed it would endanger their IFR system.

"I asked how many private pilots they had – they said about 1,500. How many would want this rating? Perhaps ten percent. And maybe they'd each fly ten hours a year. So in a year, only a tiny number of hours would be flown with an EIR.

"The Swedish also said they didn't see

the need to change anything, while the French were more worried about the English language proficiency requirement. The French are speaking French in French airspace anyway, so is it really so difficult?"

One of the main bones of contention is EASA's attitude to GPS approaches with vertical guidance – LPV approaches. "Our argument is that these are just a replacement for ILS," Dr Erb said. "They outnumber ILS now in the USA. It's flying down the same needles, yet EASA believes a whole new training system needs to be imposed. It is foolish to force pilots to fly VOR/DME or NDB approaches instead. We'd have more CFIT accidents. They have promised to introduce a new working group to consider it, but so far nothing has happened.

"As part of the same issue, they want every aircraft to be specially certified for LPV approaches, which would make it hugely expensive. It will be a requirement to have an individual operational approval – if you have a 172 with a Garmin 430, you have a 20-page paper that details how you want to operate, how you train your people, how you report incidents, and

details of each and every pilot who wants to fly this, and you send it to EASA and they stamp it. But people will just fly these approaches, because there is nobody from EASA sitting next to them.

"In Germany we hope to have four or five LPV approaches available this year, but they will be at airports with existing ILS approaches. We say it will improve safety at smaller airports where there are no approaches, but the licence specialists say this is too difficult.

"We have as our allies the European Space Agency, who say that hundreds of millions of euros have been spent putting up the EGNOS satellite system into space, and they want it to be a success – they don't think it needs to be made more complicated and expensive for people to use it. It's good to have them on our side.

"We have the arguments, we have the common sense, we have European Space Agency, and our airline colleagues also say it's stupid, so I think we have a chance of success. But it's time-consuming, going to meetings, spending money. We hope sense will prevail before the requirement kicks in."

Progress on the Single European Sky has stalled, with budgets under pressure and the recession affecting traffic to the point where yesterday's forecasts of ever-

increasing CAT flights look silly. “The stated aim is to double capacity, reduce costs by half and increase safety by a factor of ten,” Dr Erb said. “Unfortunately the Single European Sky is in a crisis and they want to reduce all working packages by 50 percent. Threats were once perceived when traffic was forecast to double, but now, with recession and the high cost of fuel, who knows where we’re going.

“The airlines aren’t happy because they stand to profit from SES, but these profits will only come after they have made significant investments. For GA it’s a bad situation. The whole project is airline-

centric; the business case shows GA must pay and get nothing in return. We are working on achieving the benefits we were promised in the past, including LPV approaches, met uplinks, collision avoidance data, uplinks of airspace restrictions, tools to reduce runway incursions and more. We do not want to be denied access to airspace because we’re not equipped like an A380.”

Martin Robinson pointed out that environmental considerations were driving the Single European Sky, and they had a lot of political backing. “The supposed gains from reduced CO2 emissions got a lot of political traction,” he said. “They said

to airlines, we’re going to cap your growth based on emissions in the year 2000 – you’ll be able to grow, but your emissions won’t. The performance of the airspace became key to cutting emissions.

“But they’ve realised with SESAR that it’s a lot more difficult to achieve, especially at a time when the industry has belly-flopped. The original timetable has slipped to 2035, and the foot has come off the accelerator. Member states that had signed up to deliver Functional Airspace Blocks by December 4th, 2012, are not in a position to deliver. The EC is very unhappy about that, but countries like Italy and Greece have bigger problems to deal with than airspace.”

## GA gets a gold medal at the Olympics

Delegates were interested to know how general aviation had coped with the Olympic Games; across Europe, AOPAs were instrumental in informing GA pilots of the requirements London had imposed for flying during the Games. Martin Robinson said it had gone very well, although capacity limits had never been tested.

“There were no serious incidents or alerts,” he said. “The Typhoon at Northolt was scrambled twice, largely I think to give the pilot something to do. We had a few navigational infringements and a couple of people had their licences suspended for a period, as the CAA has said it would do. But none were AOPA members.

“Nor did the authorities over-react. We had one German pilot who infringed, and because it was clear he was misguided rather than venal they deemed it best to let him continue, then spoke to him

when he landed in Wales. We also had a French helicopter pilot who didn’t know the rules, but other than that there was no cause for concern.

“Our Prime Minister had a £5 bet with the Chief of Air Staff that there would be an aviation-related event, but the Chief won his £5. The negative side was that flying clubs and aviation companies in the London area were hard-hit by the restrictions. It’s probable that business was down by around 60 percent in some areas, and this at what should have been the busiest time of year. Many people decided not to fly during that period. The number of business jets expected for the Olympics was down 45 percent on expectations.

“The positive outcome is that general aviation proved to the doubters that it was

professional, responsible and co-operative, and that will stand us in good stead in future. Even the airspace policy people now see that GA is not the enemy – they recognise the value to communicating and working with GA.”

Lars Hjelmberg of AOPA Sweden said a lot of business jets did not fly in because they were grounded in Europe by new security checks. “Passengers usually need to be checked, but at this time they decided that the aircraft themselves should also be checked

before they were allowed to depart. Some people waited for hours on the ground for security people to come and make detailed checks of their actual aircraft, and eventually gave up. The security people have found something new to justify their existence, and we sincerely hope that this attitude does not survive the Olympics.”

**general aviation proved to the doubters that it was professional, responsible and co-operative**

## Que SERA, sera

The Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA) were published in the official EU journal on October 13th, Martin Robinson said. States can apply to delay their implementation for a maximum of two years from December 4th, 2012, and the UK CAA had decided to put off implementation to December 2014. It was important for delegates, he added, to find out the date of implementation in their own country.

As an example of the changes he quoted the 500-foot rule, which in the UK means a pilot may not fly within 500 feet of any person, vessel, vehicle or structure. “So it’s legal to fly two feet off the ground as long as there’s nobody and nothing nearby. Under SERA, however, this becomes a height – you may not fly below 500 feet unless taking off or landing.

“We were unable to make any headway with maintaining the status quo in the UK, but we queried the rule on the grounds of safety, and as a result changes were made to allow instructors and examiners to disregard the rule when teaching or checking such things as engine failure on take-off.”



Above: Martin Robinson (left) with Craig Spence, newly confirmed as Secretary General of IAOPA

# AOPA sans frontieres

At the conclusion of the meeting delegates from around Europe were asked to give a potted progress report on the issues that were of particular concern to them. For AOPA **Lebanon**, Haytham Azhari said that after years of trying, Lebanese pilots were now allowed to fly to Cyprus, which gave them a route out of their country – no other possibility had existed. “With International AOPA and AOPA Cyprus we have been able to talk to the Cypriot authorities, and we’ve finally achieved something,” Haytham said. “It really shows what an organisation like ours can do. We had the regional and global backing, and Martin Robinson and Ioannis Papaiaouvou did a great job for us.”

Jacob Pedersen of AOPA **Denmark** had some positive news. “We have managed to get the level of fees reduced overall by 15 percent. A significant decrease has been in test fees, because we have persuaded the authorities to get the tests away from big, expensive conference centres. But more importantly, from now on there will be no annual fees for anything to do with aviation in Denmark – no annual fee for the pilot to hold a licence, no longer for an

aircraft owner to own an aircraft, for a flight training organisation to exist. We have been pushing for this for years. Instead, they have introduced a safety fee for all passengers leaving on commercial flights. The Danish airlines are convinced that this is a really good deal. They will lose their annual fee, the airports will lose their annual fees – but foreign airlines will be the losers. This is a really welcome change which has had the backing of everyone in Denmark.

“We’re also trying to push Danish authorities to get GPS approaches into regional airports. We’ve got a few where we already have an instrument approach, and we’re not seeing the breakthrough... what is the hold-up? We’re trying to convince the CAA that we don’t need a

**Right: our host for the 127th Regional Meeting of IAOPA Europe, Ioannis Papaiaouvou of AOPA Cyprus**  
**Below: AOPA delegates from Cyprus, UK, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Malta, Luxembourg and Canada**  
**Bottom: representatives from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland and Italy**



controller where there is a GPS approach; the weather can be read from remote tower. Local communities are struggling to find money to support airfields, and some are at risk of being closed. You could save a small airfield a lot of money like this.”

In **Germany**, AOPA is having serious problems with regional government dominated by the Green Party, which aims to end all general aviation. “We have a Red and Green government in Nord Rhein Westfalia, and GA doesn’t fit in with their political philosophy,” Michael Erb said. “Bonn Hangelar airfield is under their jurisdiction, and they have decreed that anyone who deviates more than 150 metres from the circuit pattern will be fined €520, and €5,000 for a second offence. The Greens say they can’t stop us flying, but they can make it very hard.”

For AOPA **Luxembourg**, Gottfried Zankl said security around their only airport had become a joke. “What they want from GA is ridiculous,” he said. “All the hangars and the clubhouse are within the barbed-wire district, and the administration has put up so many ridiculous procedures we have to pass thought. We have finally arranged to have a discussion with the Minister of Transport with a view to making changes, so there is hope for the future.”

Mark Demarco of AOPA **Malta** said the Association was working towards a much more friendly relationship with the authorities and hoping to make more headway than in the past. Malta too has only one airport, and in order to leave, even though they are in Schengen, they have to make a €35 taxi ride to the main terminal and another €35 ride back to the GA terminal in order to get permission to leave. “In our boats, we can leave from any bay on the island without hindrance,” he said. “We are working towards being allowed to leave from the GA terminal.”

In the **Netherlands**, Ary Stigter said AOPA’s main concerns were the timing of EASA FCL, and airspace redesign for the country. “Our government has consulted us,” he said, “and we will get another opportunity in the second stage – they are really listening.”

For AOPA **Norway**, Torgrim Fredagsvik said that no engineering company in the whole country wanted to set up a CAMO to conform with EASA’s Part M requirements, so Norwegian pilots had been forced to fly to Sweden for their maintenance. “This is one and a half hour ferry flight, and should never have become necessary. Pressure should be put on the different NAAs to apply the rules the same way everywhere.”

Lennart Persson of AOPA **Sweden** said that ironically, Swedish pilots sometimes fly to Estonia for maintenance because CAMO fees in Sweden were so high. Access to





**Left: Haytham and Hadi Azhari of AOPA Lebanon – now welcome in Cyprus any time**

airports was AOPA's chief concern. "We are losing the last GA airport in the Stockholm area," he said. "The nearest GA airport is now 100km away."

Ioannis Papaiaicovou of AOPA **Cyprus** said GA pilots on the island were operating out of two privately-owned international airports. "Fees are too high, and to fly for ten minutes we have to spend several hours filing documents and getting permissions. We are working to make Cyprus more welcoming of GA from abroad, and finally we have opened up the country to the Lebanese – a push from the outside made that feasible. We are now trying to decrease landing and handling charges. They don't care about aviation, they just care about money. At Larnaca is costs €350 to land, and we're trying to get it down to under €100."

For AOPA **Finland**, Esa Harju said the Finnish CAA had been processing and accepting Part M maintenance plans since early 2009 and had got 500 maintenance programmes on a limited template. While they were considering them, aircraft whose owners had submitted a programme were allowed to continue flying pending approval. However, EASA then audited the CAA and found there were still 300 aircraft flying for which no maintenance programme had been approved. They gave an instant order that if they didn't have an approved maintenance programme when their ARCs expired, they would be grounded. "Now the CAA still has some 200 maintenance programmes in the bureaucratic logjam, he said. "We have protested that they have simply changed the rules to ground aircraft on a whim because they haven't got the right piece of paper."

Anton Koutsoudakis of AOPA **Greece** said the country had more than 2,000 islands, most of them too small for an airport. "You might think the seaplane was invented for Greece," he said, "but in fact legislation does not allow the use of seaplanes in Greece. We managed to get a promise from the current Minister to change the regulation, but he appointed three lawyers with no aviation experience at all and they said to us, 'prove it can be done.' This is where the power of IAOPA

comes in. Through IAOPA I sent messages around the world and I get exemplary support from the USA, Canada and some countries in Europe. We were able to make a good presentation, and we hope by Christmas to have a good regulation. It could make a big difference; there are 6,000 yachts in Greece that are more expensive than a seaplane."

In **Iceland**, general aviation seemed to be fading away a few years ago, but Valur Stefansson of AOPA Iceland said the industry was enjoying a resurgence due to the efforts that were being put in by a number of pilots. "AOPA membership has almost doubled, and we are feeling very positive about the future," Valur said.

The situation in **Italy** is as always causing concern. Massimo Levy of AOPA Italy said small commercial airports are slowly closing; the government has no money to spare and has reduced the funding of airfield operating companies, which are going

bankrupt. One of the reasons is the requirement to have six to eight firefighters permanently stationed at each airfield. "We have discussed this with Frank Hoffman, and he will raise it at his next ICAO meeting. Reducing this obligation on small airports would help many to survive."

Because GA was being squeezed out of major airports by handling fees, lack of avgas and so on, in recent years some 200 private airstrips had been created – small, unofficial, private, but friendly to GA and ultralights. "Not many of these airfields are known to the rest of Europe," Massimo said. "Some of them are very well located, and there are no landing fees. It would be useful if their existence was made more widely known."



**Greece has more than 2,000 islands but legislation does not allow the use of seaplanes in Greece**

## Greece: an unlikely aviation success story

In Greece, private flying is almost non-existent because of the impact of recession on a country that until recently had an unfriendly attitude to pilot training. But this year, the number of flying hours has exploded, in the words of Anton Koutsoudakis of AOPA Greece. "Foreign students are doing all the flying, taking advantage of the good weather," he said. "One school is projecting 2,000 flying hours per month. They have signed a contract to buy aircraft and are finding instructors from abroad, especially Italy. While training schools in places like England are closing down, foreign investors want to build a new school in Greece with 200 new students per year, and AOPA Greece is assisting all. As we have said in all our dealings with government over the last ten years, Greece could be the Florida of Europe if only they remove some of the obstacles to GA. This they are slowly doing, and already we see the result."