

24th IAOPA World Assembly

The World comes to Athens



Reports by **Pat Malone**

Just a few years ago, British plane spotters were thrown into jail in Greece for the crime of looking at some elderly F4s on a military airbase. This summer, pilots and enthusiasts walked among military and civil aircraft, touching and photographing them, with the full blessing of the Greek government and military. Members of AOPA Turkey walked around Tatoi Airfield outside Athens photographing whatever they pleased – and you don't have to be a student of Balkan history to understand how much things have changed in Athens.

Now, Greece has announced its intention to turn itself into 'the Florida of Europe', a congenial GA environment blessed by beautiful islands and near-constant VFR weather – see separate story on these pages. If its deeds can match its words, the British flight training

The success of the 24th World Assembly and Icarus 2008 were largely due to the energy and drive of Yiouli Kalafati, President of AOPA-Hellas, who attracted IAOPA to Athens as part of her relentless campaign to open up the country to GA. In summing up the week's events, Yiouli said: "The first ever GA expo in Greece was an extraordinary success, with many more participants – pilots, manufacturers and visitors – than we had expected. We welcomed 124 delegates from 26 countries, four international aviation organizations, 60 exhibitors representing 108 aviation-related companies, and 20 internationally prominent conference speakers. And for the first time in the country's aviation history, aerobatic pilots took part in the air show. We had 100 visiting aircraft, 60 of them with foreign registrations from elsewhere in

Europe and the Middle East. And best of all, we had 30,000 visitors. For a couple of days, Tatoi became the centre of GA in Europe, attracting mass media interest and hosting the biggest celebration of general aviation that has ever taken place in our country.

"We brought to Greece speakers from Europe and America, and all the international aviation organizations, who spoke about progress on the field of aviation to our own government, regulatory authorities and people. All the big aircraft companies and avionics manufacturers showed equipment here. For the first time, people were able to ask questions directly of these companies. For the first time, pilots from the factories flew aircraft, helicopters, ultra-lights and aerobats in a professional demonstration of general aviation in front of amazed visitors of every age. It was a spectacular event, assisted by the Hellenic Air Force and Army, who staged their own demonstrations.



"The Greek Transport Minister Mr Hatzidakis visited the expo for more than two hours and had meetings with the President of IAOPA, Phil Boyer and the Director General of Eurocontrol David McMillan. He had a chance to talk about general aviation in Europe and America and to focus on the basic problems in our country, such as hours of operation and lack of avgas.

"This is a new beginning for the general aviation and the country. Today GA is mature enough in our country to make a significant contribution to the Greek economy. Thank you to everyone who worked on our project. Above all we thank IAOPA for its assistance, especially Phil Boyer, John Sheehan and the European Board for its support."



Above: AOPA Hellas President Yiouli Kalafati with, from left, Eurocontrol Director General David McMillan, Greek Transport Minister Kostas Hatzidakis and IAOPA President Phil Boyer

The Icarus Aero Expo at Tatoi Airfield was the first chance some Greeks had ever had to get close to GA aircraft

industry has much to worry about. Greece has a long way to go, but it has taken the first and most important steps.

The idea of an air show is foreign to most Greeks – planes are either military, in which case you don't go near them, or civilian, in which case you get into them to go on holiday. The idea of flying yourself simply doesn't cross most Greek minds. The first Greek Aero Expo attracted 30,000 visitors, most of them taking their first really close look at general aviation planes and helicopters. Undoubtedly, some of those who had their first air experience flights at 'Icarus 2008' will become private and professional pilots in the future.

Icarus 2008 went hand-in-glove with the IAOPA World Assembly, the bi-annual gathering of members of the 66 AOPAs worldwide. In fact, representatives came from 26 countries – some AOPAs in countries where GA is undeveloped are very small. The daddy of them all is, of course, AOPA US, with some 400,000 members and huge political clout. Canada comes second with almost 30,000 members – more than there are in the whole of Europe. In four days of debates and addresses by some of the movers and shakers of international aviation, the Assembly identified common points of concern and formulated resolutions which will drive national policies in the years to come.



Greece: 'We'll take your GA industry'

Photo: Kyrianos Biris



Greece is planning to position itself as 'the Florida of Europe', attracting investment and industry from the north and west of the continent to take advantage of its climate, its geography and its desire to attract foreign currency.

Greek speaker after Greek speaker at the IAOPA World Assembly reinforced the country's intention to open up to general aviation, saying the challenge has already been accepted. Government, CAA, airline and general aviation personnel painted a picture of a future in which Greek-based FTOs drew in students from all over the world, and where GA tourists flying their own or rented aircraft island-hopped around the Aegean the way they now hop to the Bahamas or the Keys.

If their actions match their words, British flight training organisations will find it ever more difficult to compete. They spoke of removing barriers to operation, reducing the regulatory burden, making avgas available and keeping costs to a minimum. They accept they have a long way to go, but they have made a start. How will Britain respond?

IAOPA president Phil Boyer contrasted the Greek attitude to that of the United States, saying: "The America we have charges growing, avgas availability declining, lack of government support, the number of pilots falling – is it all over for us?" And how much more difficult is an aviator's life in the UK?

The fact that the World Assembly was held in Athens at all is indicative of the new thinking, and was almost entirely due to the energy and determination of Yiouli Kalafati, president of AOPA-Hellas, who persuaded IAOPA to come to Greece, arranged the first Greek Aero Expo at Tatoi Airfield and talked a selection of hard-headed sponsors into backing the events. She also arranged for ICAO, Eurocontrol, EASA and the Greek authorities to send their top people. Her extraordinary achievements were praised by IAOPA president Phil Boyer, who said that with people like Yiouli behind the move to promote Greece to GA, it couldn't fail.

Yiouli, an air traffic controller at Athens, has held a PPL since 1991, and was a member of the Greek national air rally team and a founder member of AOPA Hellas. She has been president since 2005, during which time membership has surged from 20 to more than 200.

She told the World Assembly: "The centre of gravity of European general aviation is moving inexorably south. Most is now in western and central Europe – the UK, Germany, France. But the next generation of pilots will be trained in the south. We have enormous potential. It used to be virtually impossible to fly in Greece. A Greek licence simply wasn't accepted in Germany, for instance. But three years ago the first flying school moved to Greece and doubled the number of GA movements overnight.



Above: we have hundreds of islands – there are thousands of pleasure boats out there

"We are ideal for GA tourism. We have hundreds of islands – there are thousands of pleasure boats out there, but fewer than 300 GA aircraft in the whole country. GA has been ignored by the public, the government and the authorities. We are educating the government



Left: the governor of the Hellenic CAA, Ioannis Andrianopoulos, says Greece will be a magnet for GA Above: AOPA pilots of the world, from left, Lars Hjelmberg (Sweden) Hae Woon Lee (Korea), Martin Robinson (UK), Chris Abanes (Philippines) and Blazej Krupa (Poland)



Above: AOPA delegates from 26 countries flew to Athens for the 24th World Assembly and Icarus Aero Expo

Left: Greece sees a future in which GA tourists island-hop around the Aegean the way they now hop to the Bahamas or the Keys

and the officials, and then the pilots will come. Greece intends to emulate Florida and become the principle centre for GA. We want to be the Florida of Europe."

The Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Transport and Communication, Kostas Hatzidakis, added: "We express our strong support to make sure these are not empty words. We are developing 38 airports. We have eleven months suitable for GA in Greece, compared to perhaps six months in northern Europe. The cost of use of our infrastructure is low. We are building 15 new GA hangars. Flying hours were up by 50 percent last year, and the number of aircraft, which had stagnated at around 200, is already up by 74. We have a strategic plan for the development of GA."

The Governor of Hellenic CAA, Ioannis Andrianopoulos, continued the theme: "There were 100 new pilots last year. Most GA companies in Greece are new. We now have seven flight training organisations, and there has been a lot of investment. We have fine weather 11 months of the year, lower total cost, giving more hours per plane. It is easier and cheaper for UK pilots to get their licence in Greece. We know a mile of road leads nowhere, a mile of runway leads everywhere."

"Two years ago Phil Boyer came to Greece and stressed the need for GA airfields. Now, Megara airfield is bustling with activity. It is a full-day operation, PPR is down to 12 hours from 48, efforts are being made to have

100LL available at 19 international airports, and there are new regulations to replace 'packages' of handling charges with payment only for work done. We invite all aircraft owners and pilots to enjoy Hellenic hospitality."

George Zografakis is the founder of Egnatia Aviation, a JAA FTO and the biggest FTO in Greece, based at Alexander the Great Airport at Kavala, in the north of the country.

"I was flying in the UK and decided to rent a plane in Greece," he said. "I found it was impossible. Flying clubs had no aircraft, or you needed 15 hours training, you had to be



Above: the next step is to convince them that we don't need anybody in the tower

Below: a flight plan is a good idea for every flight because Greece is mostly mountains and sea

sponsored, and it would have cost a lot of money. There had to be a better way."

Encouraged to get involved by Yiouli Kalafati, he said, he looked into the possibilities.

"I went into training in May 2006, and later added maintenance. We started with five Diamond DA40 singles and a Diamond DA42 twin. The vast majority of our students come from abroad – from 26 countries – and we did 5,000 hours in 2007.

"We've had all sorts of problems – Denmark didn't exist on the CAA computer system for instance – but nonetheless we have doubled GA activity in Greece and challenged the culture of the authorities, the airport managers, the CAA, and the government.

"Procedures and timescales are still a problem. ATC has little understanding of VFR. I used to fly in the UK from a non-tower grass strip. Here we have to have two people in the tower and can't handle more than three aircraft in the circuit. Now we've got that up to five, and the next step is to convince them that we don't need anybody in the tower. "Avgas availability is not good. A lot of accidents are down to fuel availability. We need safe avgas, not in barrels and drums lying around. But we



Above: George Zografakis has established the biggest FTO in Greece



Above: Antonis Simigdalas built Aegean Airlines out of a small GA operation
Above left: Megara airfield is bustling with activity. PPR is down to 12 hours from 48

have raised pilot training standards in Greece. Greeks no longer go abroad for flight training, and attitudes are changing – it can be done. You must submit a flight plan for every flight, but that’s a good idea anyway because Greece is mountains and sea. And Greece doesn’t have proper VFR charts – they must be created.

“We’ve invested two million euros so far, and will spend 2.5 million in the next two years. Students bring a further 2.5 million in hard currency in living expenses. Kavala airport used to close between commercial flights – “how can you fly if we’re not here?” was the question. But we are now the only airport in Greece at which night VFR is allowed. As a result, ATC is more experienced and better.

“The next steps are to get the AIP online, open airfields to GA – a lot of big airfields in Greece are underused – and make avgas available. We must introduce classifications of airspace, create VFR charts, remove the

requirement to follow airways, remove the requirement to give two or three days notice of flight, change the mentality of the HCAA and foster aviation tourism. We will do these things – I hope to hear you all one day on the radio.”

One of AOPA-Hellas’s strongest supporters is Antonis Simigdalas, Chief Operating Officer of Aegean Airlines. The airline grew out of a GA operation, and its boss said he couldn’t see what the great gulf between GA and CAT was.

“This year Aegean will carry six million passengers,” he said. “We employ 2,400 people to run 162 flights a day. Our success is due to resilience, tenacity, growth and continued improvement of service quality. Since we started scheduled services in 1999, we have won lots of awards, and now code-share with Lufthansa.

“We started in 1981 with a Piper Super Cub in 1981. It was a very opinionated aeroplane. We bought four from the Italian army at auction. We did everything that was allowed in Greece at that time – aerial advertising, towing banners. Next, we became Piper distributor for

Greece, and sold two or three aircraft a year. We had an FBO and Piper service centre at Marathon, an airfield that no longer exists.

“The knowledge and experience that we built up in GA before we founded the airline has helped us succeed. The theory and practice of operating aircraft safely, accident and incident free, is common to GA and airlines. Our people have evolved with us, and we have won recognition and respect from regulators.

“What was required was audacity and persistence in the face of any odds. The ability to dream is where it all starts. Don’t believe what your eyes are telling you, because they show only limitations. All airlines depend on a healthy GA sector – they are simply different expressions of the same genetic material.” ■



Blind man’s buff at altitude

You can stop worrying about UAVs and start worrying about UASs instead. The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle is now the Unmanned Aerial System in the regulatory world, reflecting the fact that it’s not just the aircraft that must be taken into account but the datalink that controls it, the operator on the ground, in whichever continent he resides, the hardware in his hands, the software in his computer and whatever else it takes to make the flight.

IAOPA general secretary John Sheehan warned that UASs are coming, in huge numbers, backed by billions of dollars, and they can only operate in airspace shared by your soft pink body. IAOPA’s representative at ICAO Frank Hofmann gave a run-down on the state of affairs regarding UASs, which boils down to the fact that ICAO is keen to dodge the issue if it can, but it can’t.

IAOPA’s position is that the onus is on the UAS industry to demonstrate that it can operate safely, and UASs should not be allowed into the airspace until that is done. There should be no requirement for existing aircraft to re-equip in order to accommodate UASs, nor should there be any further restrictions on airspace. ‘Sense and avoid’ must be a realistic safety factor, and it is not sufficient – as some in the UAS industry advocate – for UAS flights to be promulgated by Notam, and pilots be left to avoid them.

Operators should be on the same comms frequencies as GA traffic, and there must be contingency plans for when control systems break down, as will happen.



“ICAO has decided not to take a leadership role and to leave it to industry to sort all this out,” Frank said. “IAOPA is the team leader on licensing and is writing guidelines for submission to states. We contend that the pilots of UASs must have instrument ratings, not for control purposes but in order to ensure that they have the same level of knowledge of the system and the rules that airborne pilots have. The UAS industry wants to employ operators who have never flown – essentially video game players – and they want them to control many of these aircraft at the same time. We also say that regulation of UASs must remain with civil aviation authorities.”

First attempts by government agencies to lay down rules for UAS use have not been promising. The British have produced a risk assessment based on mass, with 50kg as the lower limit. “Anyone who has ever hit a 2kg bird knows this is nonsense,” Frank said. “Kinetic energy is another parameter, a meaningless measure favoured in Europe. A telegraph pole has no kinetic energy, but you wouldn’t put one in the middle lane of the freeway.”

More than 300 designs of UAS are already flying, ranging from full-sized helicopters to football-sized tree-dodgers. “There are a lot of technical issues to resolve, but the only way they can operate is in ‘our’ airspace” Frank said. “Rules need to be laid down for training, maintenance, operations, communications. The industry is sensitive to the fact that the first accident could be the end of the business for the foreseeable future. Users, government and ICAO all need to be involved.”

Eurocontrol Director General David McMillan indicated to the World Assembly that UASs would be required to be as safe in the air as current traffic.

'Sorry, the sky is closed today...'

For the first time in recent memory a note of realism crept into the discussion of CAT forecasts, which have hitherto predicted that air traffic would continue to grow until there was no aluminium left and everyone was a pilot. "Growth is projected at 4.6 percent a year up to 2025," said ICAO's European Region Director, adding quickly: "but we don't really know what's going to happen."

Eurocontrol's Director General David McMillan added: "We are watching the oil price to see what impact that will have." But whatever the rate of traffic increase, if any, Europe's air traffic management system is operating at the limit of its capabilities and needs a fundamental restructuring if it is to deliver the required increase in efficiency and reduction in cost. Mr McMillan said the three main challenges were airspace, air traffic management, and aerodrome capacity.

We have, he said, proved almost incapable of bringing more runway capacity online. "Access to the air traffic management system has been an issue for years," he said. "The intensity of the debate is changing – we're in

for a real shift. The old methods no longer apply. In the past we made centres smaller and put in more people. We can't keep throwing in more manpower. Technology is changing. We are moving from controllers controlling aircraft to controllers managing flows of aircraft."

Mr McMillan, a former director of civil aviation in the UK, said Eurocontrol's task was to create a uniform ATM system for all traffic and to facilitate a safe, orderly, efficient and economic traffic flow. "Fine words," he added, "but we are very aware of the needs of general aviation – access to airspace, and relative freedom. We are also aware that when technology has to be introduced, the final bills will be yours to pay. We know there are one million pilots and 400,000 aircraft in Europe, and of these only 40,000 aircraft and 600,000 pilots are commercial. GA accounts for well over half of all movements, and we understand the needs of your sector. AOPA is always at the table when matters of importance to the GA sector are under discussion. You need to participate in these

discussions – if you are not involved, you will lose out."

IAOPA has played a leading role in the definition phase of SESAR, the Single European Sky project, having paid some 400,000 euros to be part of the 'Joint Undertaking' setting out a vision of air traffic management beyond the year 2020. As a result of IAOPA's work, GA's place in the skies is assured – but SESAR now moves into the development phase, in which



Above: Eurocontrol Director General David McMillan (left) with IAOPA Secretary General John Sheehan

Pay-as-you-talk?

The possibility of having to pay to use the radio was raised by Martin Robinson, who said the UK government was looking at charging for the use of radio spectrum. Private companies were willing to pay billions of euros for spectrum for mobile phones, TV and radio transmissions, and there was constant pressure on the aviation bands. The International Telecommunications Union, the body who co-ordinates global use of the spectrum, was under great pressure to sell off parts of the spectrum to private companies.

ICAO's European Regional Representative Karsten Thiel said the Organisation did not support the selling of spectrum. "ICAO does not like this idea," he said. "Commercial TV and radio stations pay a fee for use of bandwidth, and the idea is to extend that to safety-critical parts of the spectrum. So far the UK seemed to be the only country that has warmed to this idea, but ICAO does not support it."

The European Commission is also opposed. Air Traffic Management administrator Jyrki Paajanen said: "DGTREN (the EC's transport department) does not support the idea of fees for the use of the aviation spectrum."



John Sheehan, secretary general of IAOPA, said the International Telecommunications Union was having a meeting in 2011 to debate the issue. "A lot of billion-dollar companies want spectrum," he said. "A small part of the spectrum has been sold in the United States for \$5 billion, and these commercial concerns are licking their chops at the prospect of more. It's gratifying to hear that ICAO and the EC are opposed to the idea, but ICAO and the EC don't have a vote at the ITU. Your countries do have a vote, however, and it is up to you to alert your state to the dangers of what is proposed. This is an action item for people to take on."

Speakers on air traffic management were Martin Robinson, the EC's Jyrki Paajanen and Eurocontrol's David McMillan

the details are thrashed out. Joining this process would cost a minimum of 250,000 euros a year, and IAOPA just doesn't have enough members to pay for a ticket. IAOPA has been asked to convene a 'workshop' to put GA's position to the Joint Undertaking (see separate story in this issue) but the fact is that GA's claim to be a £1.5 billion a year industry in the UK alone is undermined by its inability to muster the scratch to participate at the most important level.

Jyrki Paajanen, Administrator of the EC's Single Sky Modernisation Unit, gave a run-down on the practical aspects of lobbying and representation at the Commission, and added: "What should GA do? Be proactive. General aviation is still not widely known about. Look for win-win situations with other airspace groups. Participate in drafting – meetings can fine-tune, but decisions are pretty firm by that stage."

Easier said than done. But on the positive side, Mr Paajanen added: "The European Union has traditionally had a focus on CAT, with GA caught up in the collateral damage. The Commission accepts that GA is hugely diverse, that one size does not fit all, it recognises the need for data on the industry, the need to settle the definitions and accept proportionality. European GA manufacturing is doing quite well, and we have to be careful not to hamper it unnecessarily."

AOPA UK's Martin Robinson warned that the authorities had not yet begun to address the issue of 'relative value' under which an aircraft full of holidaymakers taking currency out of the country or the continent was given precedence over an aircraft carrying people who were bringing in investment. Models which gave CAT an overwhelming advantage over GA needed to be more sophisticated, he said. "GA cannot be told, 'I'm sorry, but the sky is closed to you today,'" he said. He warned further that SESAR would not show any positive benefit to GA – indeed, the winners will all be in the CAT sector. ■

'We all love GA'

Everybody's on our side, it seems. Nancy Graham, Director of the Air Navigation Bureau at ICAO, Patrick Goudou, Executive Director of EASA, and Daniel Calleja, the EC's air transport commissioner, all send supportive DVDs to the Assembly stressing the importance of GA and giving their backing to AOPA.

Daniel Calleja has backed up his words with action, instigating a Europe-wide review of GA at AOPA's urging in order to establish its value and identify its problems. He told the Assembly that for the first time, Europe had adopted an agenda for a sustainable future for GA which had been endorsed by states' transport ministers. "General aviation plays a vital role, providing high value services,

developing skills, contributing to research and development, and increasing the mobility of people," he said. "I do not believe we need more regulation, but better regulation. Regulation should be proportionate and should encourage development."

Nancy Graham also expressed support for GA, saying ICAO was concerned at the potential shortage of pilots and key aviation personnel, and suggesting GA's primary value was as a breeding ground for professionals. "ICAO's primary objective is to reduce the number and rates of accident," she said. "As a major direct source of line pilots, GA is one of the front lines in safety management."

She held out little hope that ICAO's language proficiency requirements would be watered

down for VFR traffic. Under the new rules, a pilot must either speak the local language or near-fluent English. This is a damaging piece of legislation in countries where English is not widely spoken; a Greek pilot flying in Croatia,

for instance, would have to speak either fluent Serbo-Croat or fluent English. IAOPA believes it is unnecessary for private pilots flying VFR, but has not been able to move ICAO.

In his contribution, Patrick Goudou said IAOPA was an "important and reliable partner" with EASA, actively involved as a member of advisory bodies and working groups. "Our proposals go to public consultation before they become final," he said. "Transparency and consultation are vital. Revitalising GA is the task we have set ourselves. We aim to achieve simplified, streamlined processes; the level of regulation should be appropriate, and proportionate to the risk; it should be targeted at safety and should not overburden GA."

The cheering in the aisles was muted. Eric Sivel, EASA's Deputy Head of Rulemaking, had been due to speak at the Assembly on the Friday but called to say he'd missed his flight. That was on Wednesday – but we must give him the benefit of any doubt. What is certain is that he would have faced some hard questions. Despite unanimous opposition from the industry at the consultation stage, EASA has abandoned the 'Light Aircraft Pilots Licence' and gone back to the 'Leisure Pilots Licence'. Apart from being materially misleading, the term will make 'leisure' pilots and 'recreational' airfields into sitting ducks for the anti-aviation lobby. Why was it done? Perhaps we'll never know.

There have also been other changes to the licence requirements – including an abandonment of the proposal that pilots' health can be certified by his or her GP. The new requirement may be that a GP can only certify a pilot as being medically fit if the GP himself holds a pilot's licence 'or has aeromedical knowledge'. So we're effectively back to buying your medical from an AME. Terms like 'transparency' and 'consultation' ring hollow when the reality of EASA rulemaking is examined. ■

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Above: on a free day delegates visited Santorini as guests of Aegean Airlines
Below: With 11 months of VFR and hundreds of islands like Santorini, Greece could be a GA paradise



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'The new tobacco industry'

Aviation is the new cigarette industry, and the chances of having a rational and informed debate on the environment are virtually nil.

IAOPA's representative to ICAO, Frank Hofmann, reported that ICAO had decided to take an "aggressive" stance on aircraft emissions despite acknowledging the lack of evidence that human activity has an effect on climate change. Hofmann, a meteorologist who worked for the Canadian government in the Arctic, said that ICAO's budget was being cut in every area except the environment, where it was benefiting from more staff and more money. "The ICAO Council says the lack of data should not be a reason for not acting," he said.

The 'green' industry has become a massive money-spinner. "Carbon trading schemes are a shell game which don't reduce CO2 emissions but make people a lot of money," he said.

Eurocontrol Director General David McMillan identified the environment as a major concern and added: "The debate should be well-informed and rational. Aviation has a huge amount to contribute to international relations, and GA is a dynamic and essential sector of aviation."

But the chances of rational debate seem slim. A United Nations report in May indicated it would cost \$45 trillion to reduce man-made carbon emissions by half, and the people who stand to make that money are firmly in the driving seat. The public is so thoroughly alarmed by the promised apocalypse that anyone who questions the orthodoxy is vilified as a heretic.

The environmental debate is largely driven by scaremongering journalism, tax-raising politics and vested interests, with rigorous

scientific enquiry overridden. In terms of heating effect, water vapour comprises 95 percent of 'greenhouse' gas; carbon dioxide comprises 3.62 percent. Of the estimated 186 billion tonnes of CO2 entering the atmosphere annually, some 3.3 percent is man-made. Of that, a tiny fraction – two percent – is said to come from aviation, and of that, an infinitesimal part comes from general aviation. But we are an easy target – 'low-hanging fruit' in the words of Melissa Rudiger, AOPA US's Vice President of

The environmental debate is largely driven by scaremongering journalism, tax-raising politics and vested interests

Regulatory Affairs. Defending aviation is a priority.

Even if aviation accounts for two percent of man-made CO2 emissions, it accounts for eight percent of global GDP, Frank Hofmann pointed out. "Per gram of CO2 produced, it is much more efficient than the rest of industry. How

do we fight back? We must demonstrate greater efficiency, while challenging the data people throw up on the industry with our own accurate data, and developing consistent responses."

Lead in avgas is a prime issue, particularly in the United States. Lead emissions are infinitesimal compared to what they were when virtually every car ran on leaded fuel, but the US Environmental



Above: AOPA US's vice president of regulatory affairs Melissa Rudiger, IAOPA's ICAO representative Frank Hofmann and ICAO's Karsten Thiel

Below: Avgas is only sporadically available in Greece, so this Cessna flies on avtur

Protection Agency is planning to move against avgas. Melissa Rudiger said a major threat came from the fact that avgas was now such a niche product that oil companies were decreasingly willing to devote resources to it. "We are losing refineries," she said. "AOPA is defining a future avgas strategy and transition plan, together with the General Aviation Manufacturers Association and the oil companies. We need a technically feasible and economically viable alternative, which has to be useable in current engines with no modification. Various industries are coming together to solve this problem." ■



New IAOPA President

Craig Fuller is to replace Phil Boyer as President of AOPA US at the end of the year, and will automatically become President of IAOPA at the same time.

Mr Fuller is a Washington heavyweight who is currently executive vice president at the Washington PR firm of APCO Worldwide. He moved from California to Washington as President Ronald Reagan's assistant for cabinet affairs and served as Vice President George Bush senior's chief of staff. He has been a pilot and AOPA member for 40 years.

AOPA US hired the headhunters Heidrick and Struggles a year ago to find Phil Boyer's successor. After hundreds of interviews a 'shortlist' of 100 candidates was produced, and it was announced at the end of June that Mr Fuller had been chosen.

At the end of the first Bush Presidency Mr Fuller worked with international public affairs organisations in Washington and Philip Morris in New York before becoming president and CEO of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores. He learned to fly while still in high school and flew with the UCLA flying club at Van Nuys while earning a BA in political science. He has a Master's degree in urban studies from Occidental College in Los Angeles. He now flies more than 200 hours a year in his Beech Bonanza A36.

"Being selected by the Trustees as only the fourth president of AOPA in 70 years is a tremendous honour and a serious responsibility," Mr Fuller said. "I am dedicated to ensuring that the best days of general aviation are ahead of us."

AOPA chairman Bill Trimble paid tribute to Phil Boyer's work as IAOPA President, saying he had transformed AOPA into a 'forward-thinking and tech-savvy' leader for vastly changed times in general aviation.

Mr Fuller may well become IAOPA President as the election for the post is based on one vote for every 3,500 members, and the US dwarfs the rest of the world's AOPAs combined.

'How can you compete'

US AOPA delegates John and Martha King, whose King Schools provide theory training to more than half the pilots in the United States, were shocked to hear of some of the charges levied by the UK CAA for 'services' that aren't even considered necessary elsewhere. They were aghast to hear that an FTO buying a high-quality simulator of the type that an American school can simply plug in and 'fly away' will have to pay the UK CAA £10,000 for a licence to run it for the first year. The cost of licences and ratings, licensing of airfields, maintenance operations and other

CAA 'services' left them open-mouthed. "How can you compete?" asked John.

The simple fact is that we can't. Pilot training in the UK is moving relentlessly offshore, driven out in the main by the need to finance a regulatory authority over which no-one can exercise any realistic control.

John and Martha are increasingly looking outside America to expand their business, where it has just about reached saturation point; their DVDs and CDs are available through Transair and Pooleys. They cover the FAA syllabus, but John says: "EASA hasn't

changed the laws of nature or the way aerodynamics work, so most of the syllabus is just as relevant in Europe."

The subject of charges exercised many at the conference, particularly the British, who must pay the entire cost of the CAA, plus six percent profit, while having no control over the size, shape and budget of the Authority, how many people it employs or what work it does. Karsten Thiel, the International Civil Aviation Organisation's European Regional Director, said that ICAO recognised that excessive charges lead to the use of flags of convenience, which did not necessarily improve safety. "We are doing a lot of work on flags of convenience," he said. "We do not believe it is prudent to charge for safety-related information."

Jyrki Paajanen, administrator of the Single Sky Modernisation unit at DG-TREN, the European Commission's transport department, said that part of the answer was to go where the goods and services are cheaper. "Free movement of goods and people is enshrined in the European concept, and the individual is entitled to go where the services are least expensive," he said. Paajanen, a general aviation pilot, has a UK licence despite never having spent a penny on flying in Britain – it was obtained in Florida – as well as gliding qualifications from his home country of Finland, but he obtains his medical in Belgium, where it costs 54 euros.

So there you have it – leave the country. You won't be the first. ■



Left: US delegates Martha and John King - shocked at the regulatory charges some countries pay
Above: the requirement and level of CAA charges for simulators is baffling to FTOs who don't have to pay them

Rough handling

The spreading curse of 'compulsory handling' was roundly denounced at the IAOPA World Assembly as a rip-off, a licence to steal and a danger to pilots and aircraft.

Charles Strasser, chairman of AOPA UK's Channel Islands region, decried the growth of the practice of forcing GA operators to pay for services they neither wanted or needed, which he pointed out worked against the safety provisions of the UK's 'Strasser Scheme', a CAA-backed programme under which landing fees are waived in case of emergency or precautionary diversion. The aim is to assure pilots that they can land anywhere in an emergency without regard to cost.

In the UK almost 200 airfields have signed up to the Strasser Scheme, but while they all waive their landing fees in emergencies, some have appointed 'handling agents' who can levy extraordinary fees – in excess of £600 in some cases – for 'services' that GA aircraft don't require, and often don't even get.

At the World Assembly in Athens, the Greek authorities said they

were putting an end to the practice of 'package handling' where aircraft were charged a set fee whether they took any services or not. At Charles Strasser's instigation the Assembly resolved as follows:

Whereas general aviation aircraft operators are often unnecessarily subjected to the same level of security as commercial air transport; full terminal facilities are not required by general aviation operators; and mandatory handling facilities designed to facilitate security processes are not required for general aviation operators; therefore IAOPA resolves that national security and aerodrome authorities are urged to:

- ensure general aviation aircraft are parked in non-security restricted areas on aerodromes.
- provide access to general aviation aircraft through non-security sensitive perimeter access points.
- abolish mandatory handling requirements for general aviation aircraft.
- if mandatory handling is required, the cost of such handling should not be passed onto the general aviation operator.
- absorb or otherwise fund the cost of handling charges if mandatory handling cannot be eliminated

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It is resolved...

The World Assembly passed a number of resolutions designed to improve the global conditions in which general aviation operates, but its first resolution thanked the leaders of AOPA Hellas, primarily Yiouli Kalafati, Marina Zompanaki and Billy Costas for their excellent hospitality and services. The resolution also thanked the Greek Transport Ministry, the Ministry of Tourism, the Greek Civil Aviation Authority, the Hellenic Air Force, for helping to facilitate the event, and singled out the sponsors for special appreciation, including Air BP, Aegean Airlines, Olympic Airways Services and Athens International Airport.

Mentioned by name in the appreciation were Greek CAA governor Ioannis Andrianopoulos, the EC's Director of Air Transport Daniel Calleja, Eurocontrol Director General David McMillan, Patrick Goudou of EASA, Nancy Graham of ICAO, Greek Transport Minister Kostas Hatzidakis, the CAA's Director of Flight Standards, Anton Koutsoudakis, the EC's ATM administrator Jyrki Paajanen, Antonis Simigdalas, Chief Operating Officer of Aegean Airlines, ICAO European Region President Karsten Theil, and George Zografakis of Egnatia Aviation.

Responding to random, uncoordinated and non-standard placement of controlled airspace, resolution 3 urges ICAO, state and military regulatory authorities responsible for airspace to classify airspace at the lowest possible level commensurate with the type of operations conducted; involve stakeholders and use their input when developing airspace classification policies, standards and locations; coordinate airspace classification policy with nearby states and regional groups; and design airspace using risk assessment and cost benefit analysis techniques.

Resolution 4 addresses fees charged by ANSPs, aerodromes and others, urging the appropriate authorities to require air navigation service providers and airport operators to disclose what they're spending money on, provide cost-benefit analyses of projects, charge users only for services required and received, and consult user groups on all charges.

Resolution 6 calls on authorities to allow for practical and affordable alternatives to installed ELTs, while resolution 7 seeks to encourage the collecting of accurate data on general aviation in order to introduce proportionality into rule-making. Resolutions were also passed encouraging the Russian government to continue its positive moves towards promoting GA, and requesting the Philippines CAA to take notice of previous IAOPA resolutions. ■



Above: AOPA Hellas President Yiouli Kalafati with display pilots at the Icarus Aero Expo

GA in Pakistan

Looking for somewhere new and adventurous to fly? How about Pakistan?

Lahore-based Mohsin Syed, President of AOPA Pakistan, says it's relatively easy to hire a Cessna 172 in Lahore with an instructor for an all-in price of \$200 an hour. Mohsin runs Hybrid Aviation from Walton Airport in Lahore, and also has the 152 and the 310 available.

"The Lahore area is green and beautiful, well worth flying over," he says. "Some parts of Pakistan are windy, rocky and uninviting, but Lahore is a good place for the VFR private pilot. Visibility can be hazy at certain times of year, but it's VFR most of the time.

"It can be very hot in summer, but October is a perfect time of year for flying. We welcome any British pilot who wants to come and fly in Pakistan. I don't think our bureaucracy is any different from most other countries – bureaucracy is the same the world over."

The company's website www.hybridaviation.com is still under construction, but you can contact the chief pilot Captain Yasir Rizvi on hybridavi@wol.net.pk. Mohsin Syed's phone number is (+92) 485 7709.



AOPA Pakistan's Mohsin Syed (left) and Yasir Rizvi

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