

# General Aviation

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Spitfire  
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## Chairman's message

### EASA 10 year celebration!

Celebration? Do I really mean we should be celebrating 10 years of EASA's existence? No, I certainly do not, not if you fly a general aviation aircraft or are part of the GA industry. It is difficult to pinpoint an exact date when EASA properly came into being, but the conception was certainly evident in 2002. *General Aviation* for October 2002 mentioned the talks taking place in Europe between IAOPA delegates and Claude Probst of the European Commission DG (TREN) on the development of EASA and its possible impact on sectors within GA. In the December 2002 edition, the following observation was made. "...It is through IAOPA Europe that we can influence the decisions that are being made regarding EASA. Most GA pilots are aware to a greater or lesser extent of the fact that EASA has the potential ability to restrict our current freedom to fly and make it more expensive..." How prophetic were those words! I might add "...and less safe..." but more of that below.

So when did EASA properly get going? The European Commission Basic Regulation 1592/2002 that established a European Aviation Safety Agency was issued in July 2002, with the appointment of the Executive Director, Patrick Goudou in September 2003. Part M for Continuing Airworthiness Requirements (i.e. maintenance) hit the streets in November 2003, but to produce such a voluminous compendium of regulations must have taken months. So let us assume an effective start date of January 2003. Whether or not EASA choose to mark the occasion with a 'do' remains to be seen, perhaps a quiet drink in at the headquarters building in Cologne, or maybe something more special, with guests from the industry - but probably not from the GA sector as there has not been much over the past decade to feel happy about. It is probably fair to say that IAOPA, together with other GA associations, has failed to influence EASA to the extent it had initially hoped, or expected, to.

That is not to say there have been no successes - within the following pages is an account of some improvement to the status quo with regard to Part M ("EASA making amends"), but if EASA had designed a Part M Lite specially for GA as had been promised at one stage, the constant pressure on EASA to introduce alleviations to the current CAT-focussed Part M to suit GA would not have been necessary in the first place. Such hard work! But other decisions are afoot that are similar in that it will take a long time to put them right, three of which are mentioned below. But first, let me quote from the EASA website under International Cooperation: "...Working arrangements between the Agency and these organisations (i.e. those of countries outside Europe, such as the FAA) are aimed at harmonising standards and promoting *best practice* (my italics) in aviation safety worldwide..." Best practice is an excellent tool, but EASA seems to have missed the opportunity to seek it out from the European NAAs that fall under the aegis of EASA. The BGA and the gliding community in the UK might well make a pithy comment in this regard, having suffered major upheavals in almost all aspects of their operation with no recognition of the achievement of high safety standards in past years under a largely devolved regime.

The future of the IMC Rating or its equivalent is back in the melting pot following the FCL 008 review, and this has the potential to introduce risk and wipe out the positive and evident safety gains achieved as a result of introducing this local/national solution to a local/national problem decades ago. Accelerate-stop distances are making the news because turbo-prop twins such as the workaday Beechcraft King Air, being classified as 'complex', are destined to be excluded from about 900 aerodromes in Europe from where they had been operating perfectly safely, in fact more safely than for piston twins (not complex) due to the remarkable reliability of the Pratt and Whitney PT6 engines. Medical operations such as organ transplants rely on fast IMC capable aircraft flying into small aerodromes near to the hospital and the transplant team. Finally, EASA staff working on ATOs (Authorised Training Organisations) seem to find it difficult to appreciate that a large members-owned club offering flight training, as found for example in France, must adhere to business principles (financial viability and transparency) just as much as a major commercial flight training organisation has to - the same rules should apply to both. In the UK there are many Registered Facilities (RFs) that offer flight training but with few staff, maybe just the one instructor, and the overbearing requirements for such facilities to become ATOS are totally disproportionate.

A ten years celebration of EASA's existence may not be universally viewed favourably, but a review of its work and its impact on GA is timely. Would EASA be able to identify three, say, outstanding successes in its regulation of general aviation? I wonder!



George Done