



THE VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

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Advocating for General Aviation Interests Throughout Europe

As I write this, we are wrapping up the European Aviation Safety Agency B-2 meeting in Cologne, Germany, and it gives me the opportunity to discuss the changes that have taken place during the past eight years.

EASA sanctioned the B-2/B-4 meeting to investigate the challenges and needs of the avionics industry for a reasonable approach to licensing of avionics maintenance engineers. The Aircraft Electronics Association was asked to chair the fact-finding meeting, which the European Council of General Aviation Support co-chairs.

The AEA's European membership has complained the B-2 standards set by EASA are problematic for general aviation. EASA has heard our plea and, through the Engineering & Maintenance Subcommittee of the Safety Standards Consultative Committee, has sanctioned a meeting to investigate alternative means of compliance toward a more efficient licensing scheme for general aviation avionics engineers while still building toward the EASA B-2 license. We will report on the progress of the meeting during the AEA Europe Meeting from May 18-19, in Cologne, Germany.

Changes for General Aviation in Europe

In 2002, the regulatory environment of Europe changed. EASA, an agency of the European Union, changed how aviation regulations are developed, proposed and implemented. As a community agency, EASA is a body governed by European public law; it is distinct from the community institutions (such as council, parliament and commission) and has its own legal personality.

The greatest change for AEA membership is not in the words of the regulations, but in the involvement in rulemaking. In the past, it might have been acceptable to allow the National Aviation Authority to implement rules without direct general aviation voices, but today, general aviation advocacy is essential. In the past, the NAA had greater discretion to offer local exemptions to general aviation shops, but today, EASA must centrally approve any deviation from the standards.

To ensure AEA members are represented, we actively work with EASA on rulemaking and other safety initiatives. In addition, we actively participate with other European advocacy groups, such as the European Council of General Avi-

ation Support, the British Business and General Aviation Association, the European Business Aviation Association, and the General Aviation Manufacturers Association.

The AEA's involvement with EASA has grown continuously since its inception in 2002. Today, we participate on the European General Aviation Safety Team and, through our partner GAMA, on the Engineering & Maintenance Subcommittee of the Safety Standards Consultative Committee.

The European General Aviation Safety Team is focused on reducing the general aviation accident rate throughout Europe through education, outreach and, in some cases, better use of technology. During the next few years, AEA members will be asked to participate by distributing information to their customers, the operators of general aviation aircraft. We will include briefings of EGAST's activities and goals during the AEA Europe Meeting in May.

Now that there is a Pan-European set of aviation rules, the NAA doesn't have the ability to allow deviations for general aviation. The NAA is bound to implement the European Union standards as

written without the ability to offer exemptions.

Advocacy is a new concept for many in Europe. A strong voice is needed to ensure the needs and interests of general aviation can be heard above the voices of the airlines. And advocacy is about numbers — the more voices heard in harmony, the louder the combined voice is and the better government hears us.

To ensure we have a loud voice, the AEA partners with other organizations, and we need you to partner with other avionics shops to have an even louder voice. I know the AEA offers a competitive advantage to those who are members over those who are not members. As an Association, I certainly hope we offer goods and services to help our members succeed.

But to succeed with EASA, the European Commission and the Council, we need to continue to grow our membership. Please share the advantages of AEA membership with other countrymen; our membership is our best recruitment tool.

Beyond our individual members, our partners include the European Council of General Aviation Support. Through our membership, this organization provides a united commercial and professional voice for the general aviation industry throughout Europe. ECOGAS provides a vital link between the European Commission, the European Parliament, national governments and the regulatory authorities to help represent general aviation issues.

EASA often asks ECOGAS members, including the AEA, for responses from our members on common problems affecting the GA industry. In addition, we often are offered the opportunity to participate in EASA rulemaking working groups tasked with drafting rules and guidance materials. It is through these activities that we attempt to develop

common and safe standards for engineer and flight-crew licensing and flight operations without excessive and costly non-productive legislation.

Partnering with Others in Europe

One of our advocacy partners in Europe is the General Aviation Manufacturers Association.

GAMA is an international trade association headquartered in Washington, D.C., representing more than 60 of the world's leading manufacturers of general aviation aircraft, engines, avionics and related equipment. GAMA's members also operate fleets of aircraft, fixed-based operations, pilot training and maintenance training facilities.

The general aviation voice in Europe is growing as the advocacy industry grows. The ability to lobby the European Commission, Eurocontrol and EASA has proven invaluable in representing the needs of general aviation businesses.

Another of our advocacy partners in Europe is the British Business and General Aviation Association.

The BBGA represents the interests of member companies and overseas affiliates at local, national, European and international levels, supporting and promoting the growth and well-being of business and general aviation in the United Kingdom.

Another of our partners is the European Business Aviation Association. Similar to our relationship with the National Business Aviation Association in the United States, the AEA supports many of EBAA's pro-business aircraft initiatives.

The EBAA is committed to promoting excellence and professionalism among its members to enable them to deliver the best in class safety and operational efficiency while also representing their interests at all levels in Europe.

In addition to the uniquely European

benefits of AEA membership, our Association also provides international commerce support for its European members. In the United States, AEA members routinely benefit from our knowledge of European regulations, as well as the knowledge and support of our European consultant, Franz Redak. Our members often ask about EASA regulations, acceptable installations and alterations to European-registered aircraft, as well as import or export issues.

In the past few years, the AEA's European membership has begun to leverage the Association's experience with FAA regulations as well as Transport Canada, Australia and New Zealand aviation regulations.

The AEA has a good relationship with the FAA, both domestically and internationally in Frankfurt, Germany, and London, England. This relationship works to our members' benefit when resolving conflicts. The FAA is unique in civil aviation authorities, and without a solid understanding of U.S. regulations, European avionics shops likely will over-regulate themselves.

To help shops better understand these regulations, we will continue our "U.S. Regulations for Foreign Repair Stations" session during the AEA Europe and AEA Canada meetings this year. The optional full-day session focuses on U.S. regulations for those foreign repair stations performing maintenance, alterations and repair to U. S. registered aircraft.

The AEA continues to grow its representation internationally. Our advocacy for general aviation has never been stronger and, with your help, we will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other general aviation advocacy leaders to protect your interests. □

If you have comments or questions about this article, send e-mails to avionicsnews@aea.net.