



Update on EASA prototype rules

At a meeting on 10th November, the Transport & Tourism Committee (TRAN) of the European Parliament backed plans for the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to be granted the competence to regulate unmanned aircraft below 150Kg, including model aircraft.

The TRAN Committee also backed plans requiring some form of mandatory registration and identification for all unmanned aircraft above 250 grams.

Further details of their plans can be found here: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161107IPR50386/aviation-safety-transport-meps-back-draft-eu-rules-on-drones-and-emerging-risks>

Europe Air Sports had proposed some amendments to the EASA Basic Regulation which would have removed model flying from EASA's remit, but these were not adopted. However, following strong representation from Europe Air Sports to key MEP's on the TRAN Committee, they agreed a compromise amendment which was adopted. Whilst this amendment would not remove model flying from the regulations, it does provide some reassurance for the model flying community:

Recital 20 b new

Model aircraft in particular those operated within an association or a club have enjoyed a good level of safety since decades. These associations and clubs are well structured and have put in place a very good safety culture. Whilst it is recognized that model aircraft are unmanned aircraft used primarily for leisure which fall under this Basic Regulation, provisions must be included in the implementing rules or delegated acts so that model aircraft should continue to operate as they do today where under the various national systems. The implementing or delegated acts adopted under this Regulation should allow for a seamless transition from the different national systems, and should take into account existing best practices in the Member States.

The European Parliament and Council will now engage in further negotiations and it seems certain that EASA will be formally granted the competence to regulate unmanned aircraft sometime during 2017.

The feedback period for the EASA prototype rules closed on the 15th October and at a Stakeholder Meeting held on 24th October, EASA reported that a 'significant' number of responses had been submitted by the model flying community and that 'not all of them were polite'. They also announced at the Stakeholder Meeting that they would be forming a small 'Expert Group' to work with them on reviewing, amending and developing the text of the Prototype Rules.

The constitution of the 'Expert Group' was confirmed on 16th November and includes representation from the model flying community, with Dave Phipps attending on behalf of Europe Air Sports and Bruno Delor attending on behalf of Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI).

The first of four proposed meetings of the 'Expert Group' took place at EASA's headquarters in Cologne on Monday 21st November, during which EASA tabled for discussion the amendment to Article 15 of the Prototype Rules which had been submitted by Europe Air Sports & FAI. Please see <http://www.fai.org/news/42436-eas-fai-response-easa-unmanned-aircraft> for further details.

The amendment to Article 15 proposed by Europe Air Sports & FAI would allow Competent Authorities greater flexibility in defining the conditions, limitations and deviations applied to model



flying at National level making it easier for them to minimise the effect of the rules on established model flying activities. The proposal appeared to be positively received.

EASA is now working towards preparing and releasing rules for formal consultation by the end of March 2017 (rather than by then end of 2016 as originally intended) with a target for the rules being implemented in 2018.

At the 'Expert Group' meeting there was also considerable discussion on the Open Category, in particular the merits of using mass versus A.I.S. (Abbreviated Injury Scale) and training versus technical limitations to control risk. There was also discussion on where the boundary should fall between the Open and Specific Categories.

European Model Flying Union

Representatives of model flying associations from 11 member states met in Friedrichshafen on 28th October and agreed to proceed with plans to establish the European Model Flying Union (EMFU), principally to co-ordinate efforts to defend model flyers throughout Europe from the threat of disproportionate regulation.

Dave Phipps
Technical Officer for Unmanned Aircraft - Europe Air Sports