



# EGU Newsletter 2/2023

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## Editors note

On the EGU website <http://www.glidingunion.eu> you find a lot of useful information. If you have forgotten the password to the internal section, please contact EGU.

## A report by the President

Arild Solbakken



### New members in EGU

This time we have the pleasure of informing you that we have received two new applications for membership in the European Gliding Union, namely from Ukraine for full membership, and Australia for associate membership. Final approval of the memberships will be by the EGU Congress, planned to take place in late February 2024 in Luxembourg.

As discussed at the latest EGU Congress, we believe that being part of the European gliding community and the network of contacts within the EGU, could provide some opportunities for inspiration and help for all countries with gliding activity in Europe. The EGU would benefit from being stronger by representing a larger portion of the glider pilots in Europe. The EGU aims to represent the interests of all glider pilots in Europe with respect to regulatory affairs, and we have a long history of successful pan-national working. We hope that by working collectively, our sport can address fundamental issues more successfully than if individual countries worked in isolation. Our aim is

therefore to increase the number of members by promoting the work done by EGU and the results achieved to qualified gliding associations. New members will have admission to meetings in the EGU until approved by the Congress.

- EGU is active
- EGU is well organized
- EGU is healthy
- EGU is relevant for the entire European Gliding Community
- EGU represents 21 nations, which means more than 10 countries are missing

We need the support of the gliding communities in all Europe. By increasing the number of member nations, we would build a stronger voice from the gliding community and be able to create further value for our members.

### EASA news

#### NPA 2023-10x on RMT.0728 Ground Handling Requirements

Commented on an unclear draft text to ensure exemptions for all NCO, including gliding (ground operations on commercial airports)

#### NPA 2023-04 Proposed amendment to Article SERA.3210 (Right-of-Way for sailplanes in thermal flights)

EASA proposed through this Notice Of Proposed Amendment (NPA) that Article SERA.3210 should be amended to include rules for right-of-way for sailplanes in thermal flight. In November 2022 it was concluded by the air sports represented in EAS that the best and safest way forward would be to leave the article as it currently stands so EASA was requested to drop the proposed amendments.

Now EASA has published their Opinion No 02/2023 to the EU Commission with the following decision:

NPA 2022-04 included a question to stakeholders on the need to address the right-of-way for sailplanes in thermal flights, together with the proposed introduction of amendments to SERA.3210 and of new GM.

Based on the stakeholders' feedback and on a review of the related occurrences involving sailplanes or gliders in a (near) mid-air collision, TCAS resolution advisories or loss of separation between 2012 and 2022 that happened in the European and in the North Atlantic region, EASA decided to withdraw the proposed amendments, as the subject does not need to be regulated on a European level.

### EGU Executive Board Technical Meeting

The members of the EGU Executive Board will meet in Frankfurt in mid-October to arrange a technical meeting. In order to make efficient use of the limited time for such a one-day weekend meeting, the intention is to concentrate on a limited number of topics. The list of topics has not formally been agreed yet, but among the topics on the list, we will cover the following areas (see also other description in the newsletter).

- Flight Safety
- Airspace and Interoperability with Drones and UTM/U-Space

### Airspace and Interoperability - Drones and UTM / U-space

The use of drones is increasing rapidly. Drones operate in the same airspace as general aviation together with air ambulances, police helicopters, and other drones.

There is already a large number of drones from different categories in operation spanning from leisure, industry, farming and forestry surveillance and reconnaissance, search and rescue support, cargo transportation, state / community services to military operations.

The general framework for operation of drones in open category (maximum 25 kg) may be summarized by the following:

- Minimum age for flying drones is 16 years, except for light drones sold and CE-marked as "toys".
- For drones under 250 g used for recreational purposes, no special training or licenses are required.
- For drones above 250 g or with a sensor (camera), you must register yourself and perform theoretical training and pass exam.
- Flying is based on "Visual Line-of-Sight" (VLOS), i.e. the drone pilot shall see the drone at all times and be able to avoid interference with other air traffic
- Maximum altitude is 400 ft above the ground.

For flying in Specific and Certified categories, formal training and "license" required.

If you rent or own a drone, you are regarded as an operator, and you need to register. It does not matter if the drone is used for hobby or commercial purposes.



For open category drone operations, which in principle also include all recreational related drone flights, operations take place in G-airspace. For Special and Certified categories operations, the aviation authorities may choose segregation from other air traffic, by means of restriction or danger areas, or integration which require a traffic management system to avoid collision with other air traffic.

A new airspace system has been implemented to facilitate this, the U-space Airspace. This comprises a set of 'new services' and 'specific procedures' designed to support safe, efficient and secure access to airspace for large numbers of drones without airspace segregation for the sole use of drones. In order to facilitate the U-space system, aircraft entering the U-space must have 'in-flight capability' to transmit position and/or to receive, process and display information (other aircraft, airspace, weather, support to navigation) in real time with the objective to enhance pilots' situational awareness.

U-space air space was implemented all over Europe through a set of new EU Regulations as of 26th January 2023.

The first set of acceptable means of compliance (AMC) and guidance material (GM) to the U-space regulatory framework were published 19th December 2022.

The latest development, in August 2023, is by introduction (Opinion No 03/2023) of a regulatory framework for the operation of drones enabling innovative air mobility with Manned VCA (VTOL-capable aircraft).

The EASA framework regulations provide a good basis for integrating drones and other air traffic, but there are challenges that need to be solved before this can be reality.

- Details in the December 20, 2023 AMC/GM package are still unclear.
- How to ensure that each USSP deploys an infrastructure with sufficient coverage to manage all manned aircraft in that airspace
- How to achieve safe flying in U-space, given the lack of a bi-directional radio channel?
- Expectations from the drone industry on “maximum access to air space at lowest possible cost” and priority on public service and commercial activities
- The regulations do not describe how the USSP’s shall cover their costs
- Military and state aviation activities are exempted (customs, police and search and rescue activities, as well as firefighting, border control, coast guard activities

In this “new landscape” it is important to get involved on local level to secure the interests of gliding. The drone industry is driven by strong commercial interest and access to necessary airspace for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones will be managed by national aviation authorities. This novel industry also attracts large public interest because of its opportunities for new services to defence, police, fire fighting, search & rescue, ambulance, civil protection in addition to commercial services.



The recommendation to the gliding community in Europe is to make sure air sports are invited through the respective National Associations, as stakeholders to the national airspace management services and to make their voice heard in upcoming planning discussions with the U-space Coordinator about proposed U-space airspace in areas where members will be affected.

The European Gliding Union (EGU) and Europe Air Sports (ESA) will follow this development closely to

influence on EU level and to provide support on local level.

## Airspace & Interoperability

TO A&I Claus Cordes



### Airspace dimensioning around major airports

It is understandable that commercial, especially airline traffic prefers separate airspaces for IFR traffic with big transport aeroplanes and VFR traffic with highly manoeuvrable light aeroplanes. However, this does not justify large amounts of airspace to be blocked for just a few commercial movements and requires highest efforts for airspace designers and commercial pilots to minimize their requirements for reserved airspaces. In addition, flight management computers onboard all airliners are meant and capable to follow vertical profiles, that exclude level flight segments. In fact analysis of a number of approach profiles into one particular “low to medium amount of traffic aerodrome” in Germany has shown, that the size of reserved airspaces can be decreased.

Investigation is going on to achieve a sound data basis and will be extended to other airports in the near future. This should also be of special interest for glider pilots in Scandinavia where some international airports are surrounded by unreasonable large class C - airspaces.

Flying glider like approach profiles without any thrust application or intermediate level flight is of interest of airlines as well, as it shortens flight time, reduces fuel consumption, minimizes emitted noise, avoids birdstrike and helps to pay off for the investment in modern flight guidance systems.



## Flight Safety

TO Ted Richards



The recently published EASA annual safety report <https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/document-library/general-publications/annual-safety-review-2023> makes for depressing reading, showing as it does that 32 of our colleagues and friends died in a total of 27 fatal gliding accidents in the last year. Any number above zero is too high but, perhaps most worryingly, the report also notes that this represents an increase over the previous highest annual figure in the last 10 years. In addition to that sad statistic, the report also provides summary details of all accidents going back over the last few years. A review of these demonstrates, yet again, that there are few if any new types of accident.

The EGU is increasingly focused on this issue of safety and, as noted in the EASA report, we published earlier this year a special newsletter on the topic of rigging. That issue continues to cause concern within EASA and the wider community, with suggestions that more demanding requirements for independent inspections may be put in place by the regulators. Another area on which we are focusing is the issue of accidents at the beginning of the season. In the EASA report, much was made of the distribution of accidents throughout the year. Not surprisingly in the northern hemisphere, there is a marked increase at the beginning of the soaring season. While it is too early to be certain what actions we can take, a clear focus over the next 6 months will be on providing some best practice for “pre-season” activities. We are also looking to work closely with EASA to ensure that the unique environment of gliding, as acknowledged in the EASA report, can perhaps be reflected in more targeted language and taxonomy of accidents in the hope that root causes can be better identified. In addition, we are looking to implement a mechanism that allows simple and reliable sharing of safety information.

Within the EGU members, we have a small working group which is actively collaborating on these and other initiatives. In addition to our European

perspective, we are also benefitting very much from inputs from other gliding colleagues in New Zealand, Australia and Canada. While that makes for interesting timings in respect of on-line meeting, it demonstrates that we are part of a wider community, all of which is facing similarly issues. The ability to pool information and initiatives will be hugely positive and we believe we would be stronger still with wider representation from within our full members, only half of whom are currently represented in our group. Please sign up!

In summary, safety affects everyone in gliding. It is incumbent on us all to do everything we can to reduce the sad statistics in the EASA report that translate into personal, family and community tragedies.

## EGU website

Have you visited our website?

<https://glidingunion.eu/>

A lot of information.

*The EGU is the association of European Gliding Federations or Gliding Sections of National Aero Clubs.*

*Its aim is to represent the interests of all glider pilots in Europe with respect to regulatory affairs.*

*EGU monitors the developments in European aviation regulation and when necessary, takes action to prevent unfavourable or even dangerous rules affecting our sport from being set up.*

*The EGU currently counts 21 full members and represents more than 80,000 glider pilots*

