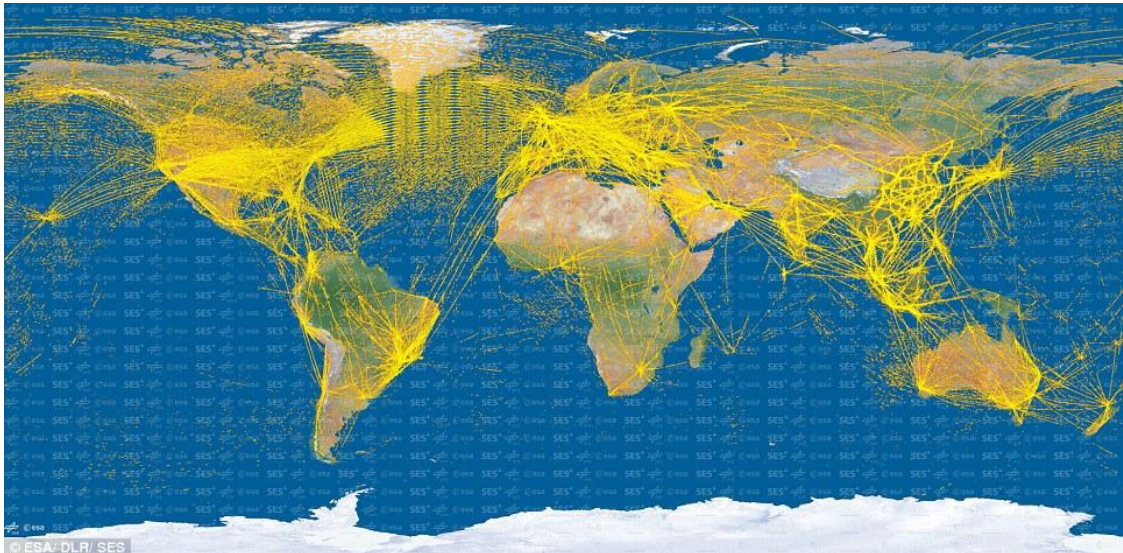


APRIL 2026



As this issue is being prepared as the Artemis II and the astronauts are returning from space, this map of air traffic seems appropriate

Welcome to the April 2026 issue of the Europe Air Sports Newsletter!

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**CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of Europe Air Sports took place this year in March in Madrid, where the Spanish Royal Aero Club (RACE) gave us a warm welcome and hosted the event in the splendid RACE building.

The conference started with an informative update of EASA work, presented by Vladimir Foltin, who outlined the GA Flightpath 2030, which aims to enhance the GA safety culture, enable its sustainable growth, and embrace a digital future so that we can maximise the benefits of technology and encourage wider participation and accessibility. The current key objectives being promoted are

- Declared by default;
- iConspicuity a Reality;

- Greener Faster; and
- Fly Direct

Safety is also a major aspect of the present work.

Andrea Anesini followed, speaking about Advance Passenger Information, a new and unexpected initiative from DG Home. EAS is concerned about this proposal and will be liaising with the relevant people.

Julian Scarfe next outlined the EAS Initiative on Pilot Medical Declarations (PMD), explaining the potential benefits including increased safety. PMD is already in use in the USA and in the UK, where there has been no obvious change in the level of health-related accidents.

Ralf Hubo described the USA introduction of 'MOSAIC' – the Modernization of Special Airworthiness Certification for Flight Sport Aircraft, which can be relevant to Aircraft, Sport pilots and Repairmen. It was considered that this approach could be of interest in Europe and a working group may be set up to clarify possible options.

Jürgen Lefevere explained the importance of a thriving model aircraft community, which is the first contact for many aviation professionals and enthusiasts and involves the largest number of participants of any air sport. He described the opportunities for model flyers to progress into developing and flying drones and also other forms of aviation. He also outlined the need for changes to regulations to enable model flyers to continue their activities legally and without regulatory complications.

It was confirmed that EAS would be present at the AERO Exhibition in Friedrichshafen.

The meeting was concluded with the formal Annual General Meeting of Europe Air Sports, when the members approved the accounts and future budget and also elected/re-elected Patrick Naegeli and Rodolfo Sacconi to the Board.

It was announced that the 2027 General Conference would take place in the Netherlands.

Some topics that were discussed are presented in more detail in this newsletter.

## **CELEBRATING ONE OF EAS'S LONGEST SERVING VOLUNTEERS**

### ***Patrick Pauwels***



After many years of contributions to Europe Air Sports work, Patrick Pauwels from Belgium retired from the Board at our Europe Air Sports Annual General Meeting in Madrid.

He was interested in aviation from a young age, which was not surprising, since he lived not far from Antwerp Airport. He started building scale models, became a member of "Youth & Aviation" and in the summer he went to gliding camps. His first solo flight was in 1975. Soon he was involved in the club organisation, passed the exam for Official Observer and represented the club at federation level.

Belgium was one of the founding members of the European Gliding Union (EGU) in 1993, and Patrick was elected as a board member/treasurer.

After the launching of EASA in 2002 the workload became more than serious. Uncountable numbers of days were then spent in Cologne, headquarters of EASA, with meetings and workshops in order to get "the country licensing system" for gliders towards the new EU Part FCL.

In the meantime he was an enthusiastic glider pilot and became involved in the FAI-IGC (International Gliding Commission).

For nearly 20 years he was also taking care of the administration of the Royal Belgian Aero Club. He was also a delegate for the EGU in Europe Air Sports and was chosen to join the Board of EAS in 2009 till 2012 and from 2019 till 2026.

In 2017, to his great surprise, he was honoured with the famous FAI IGC "Lilienthal Medal" for his lifetime contribution and dedication to the sport of gliding.

His goodbye words at his last EAS meeting were:

"The battle of volunteers against the professional/legal world was started in 2002 and, as we know in the meantime, will never end... But I hope and count on the next younger generation to take over"

Patrick, thank you for everything and we wish you and your family much enjoyment with your retirement.

## **EUROPEAN REGULATOR FOCUSES INCREASINGLY ON AVIATION SECURITY** *Explained by Timo Schubert (EAS Political adviser)*

Faced with the challenging geopolitical realities, Europe Air Sports has learned that the European Commission and EASA are under political pressure to step up aviation security measures. In the past, the focus has clearly been on aviation safety and the sector's environmental performance. Now, increasingly, sports and recreational aviation may be facing additional aviation security requirements. Europe Air Sports is making sure the needs of sports and recreational aviation are fully taken into account.

One of these measures is a new initiative by the European Commission's DG HOME (Migration and Home Affairs). Experts are studying to what extent light aircraft are being used for illegal and terrorist activities, such as drug trafficking, illegal immigration and terrorist attacks. In this context Europe Air Sports is participating in a study commissioned by DG HOME, which is investigating such alleged risks, educating the regulator on how aircraft are used in Aero Clubs and making the point that these are clearly low-risk activities, which must not be over-regulated.

Once the study has been completed, DG HOME will consider the introduction of new aviation security measures, which could touch upon aspects such as electronic conspicuity, providing advance passenger information and filing flight plans. While Europe Air Sports is making it crystal clear that the regulator should not focus on recreational flying, it is important to provide the political decision-makers with accurate information about our segment of aviation. Thus, Europe Air Sports has chosen to collaborate in this study as a reliable and expert stakeholder.

We expect the results of the study to become available approximately by summer.

## **ELECTRONIC CONSPICUITY** *Presented by Rodolfo Sacconi, EAS Board Member*

For decades, free flight has relied on one rule: "see and avoid." We've told ourselves, "It works. There's no alternative." And it has worked - until it hasn't.

How many times have we found another aircraft - hang glider, a paraglider, a sailplane - closer than we'd like, only realising it at the last moment? How many times have we wondered, did they see me? And how many near-misses have gone unreported, lost in the moment, our attention focused elsewhere?

In twenty years of working on flight safety, I've seen collisions and near-collisions. But I'm certain that for every incident we know about, there are hundreds we don't - because they're never reported. This isn't about luck. It's about awareness.

We often assume electronic visibility is just for others to see us - so they can avoid us, since some of us have limited options to manoeuvre. But what if, during a transition, you knew there was a sailplane one kilometre away at 330 degrees, closing in? "See and avoid" isn't obsolete; it's enhanced. Knowing where to look makes all the difference.

Electronic visibility isn't about collision avoidance. It's about situational awareness: knowing in advance where other traffic is. It doesn't replace "see and avoid"; it makes it stronger. It doesn't limit our freedom; it gives us critical information to fly more safely. It's not a constraint - it's an advantage.

In a sky growing ever more crowded - with remotely piloted drones sharing the airspace - "see and avoid" can't just mean drones spotting manned traffic. It must work both ways. Whether you're flying free, soaring in a glider, conducting search and rescue, or fighting

fires, you need to see where drones are operating. Limited-range visibility systems aren't enough. Awareness must be mutual.



We are currently transitioning from a variety of electronic conspicuity technologies toward a common standard for uncontrolled airspace, with ADS-L emerging as the most likely candidate. The free flight community, despite its deep-rooted cultural resistance to "transponder" technology, has been a pioneer in adopting non-certified electronic conspicuity solutions - a fascinating paradox of our time. As we await the consolidation of a

single electronic conspicuity (EC) technology, managing this transition is crucial. The most effective tool at our disposal is ground stations that collect and aggregate positioning data from multiple technologies. At the Europe Air Sports general meeting in Spain, Ángel Casado presented the Spanish approach, which involves a network of over 80 ground stations and continues to expand. (See map above, which plots all the ground stations.) For comparison, Belgium has installed 21 stations, while Norway has 50. Topography plays a key role: Belgium's 21 stations cover nearly its entire airspace, whereas countries with more complex terrain require a denser network.

The Open Glider Network (OGN) serves as the backbone for this system, using the internet to aggregate and distribute positioning data. SafeSky and most current mobile apps integrate with OGN, making the information accessible also to Search and Rescue teams and drone operators. This aggregated data can be relayed back to aircraft either via the internet through mobile networks or through TIS-B (Traffic Information Service Broadcast)/FIS-B (Flight Information Service Broadcast) protocols, as Ángel highlighted in his presentation.

Technological progress continues. The European Commission's Drone Security Action Plan, published in February, introduces ISAC (Integrated Sensing and Communication), a technology that repurposes mobile cell antennas as radars to detect drones - even those not transmitting signals. By analysing signal disturbances, Doppler measurements, and other techniques, ISAC transforms existing antenna networks into sensing systems. An interesting side effect is that optimising antennas for upward detection also improves mobile network reception at higher altitudes. ISAC is expected to roll out with 6G networks and be retrofitted into 5G cells in critical and sensitive areas.

European alternatives to Starlink, designed to provide connectivity to mobile devices from the sky, are also under development. Within a few years, mobile-based conspicuity technology could become significantly more advanced and widespread. The coming years will determine whether a single technology or a blend of solutions - such as ADS-L's air-to-air and mobile-network variants - will prevail. Thanks to EASA's pragmatic acceptance of non-certified technologies, innovation is accelerating, and we are on the right path.

## **NEW MEMBER OF EUROPE AIR SPORTS**

### ***Patrick Naegeli***

Patrick Naegeli joined the EAS Board at the recent Annual General Meeting. He has been an active private pilot for nearly 40 years, has 8,500 hours flight experience in SEP aircraft and sailplanes, flown across Europe, the USA, Australia and southern Africa, and represented the UK in the 2005 European Gliding Championships.



He has been involved in the leadership and representation of sporting aviation, internationally and in the UK, for 30 years, and has held several senior international leadership positions, including member of the FAI Executive Board 2020-2024, President of the European Gliding Union 2012 to 2022 and the EGU Delegate to EAS.

UK roles include Chairman of the UK Royal Aero Club (2012 - 2018), RAeC Delegate to EAS and British Gliding Association Chairman (2006 to 2012). In addition, at the request of the UK government, Patrick undertook senior roles on bodies providing advice on airspace to parliament, government departments and agencies.

In 2015, Patrick led the delegation that tabled the proposal to Patrick Ky for the complete re-write of EASA's regulations for gliding. He chaired the EASA working group that created the current Part-SFCL regulations, which became European law in April 2020.

Patrick spent the majority of his career as a management consultant, recently retiring from QinetiQ plc, a world-wide science and technology company. Patrick is married to Suzanne, has one daughter, and holds British, Irish and Swiss nationalities.

**FROM THE PROGRAMME MANAGER'S DESK - Nils Rostedt reports ....**



**Happy springtime!**

### **STATUS UPDATE - EASA NOTICES OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS (NPAs)**

The great rush of EASA rulemaking consultations at the end of 2025 is ebbing out, but at press time we still have 2 open consultations to consider:

**NPA 2025-11 – OPEN** - "Alignment of Part 21 with Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 — Review of the ETSO system (European Technical Standing Order) in relation to the demonstration of design capabilities"

Based on feedback from members so far, it seems this NPA is not of great importance for EAS. This NPA consultation closes on 30 April 2026.

**NPA 2025-12 – OPEN** - "Regular Update of the Continuing Airworthiness Regulation (1321/2014)"

At first glance, this seems important, with a connection to Part-66, a "hot" regulatory item for EAS as regards the recency requirements for maintenance personnel. We were happy to see that the NPA proposal is more in line with our members' wishes than the current regulation. This was confirmed by our member unions as well as experts on the Board, and a corresponding comment was therefore submitted to EASA.

This NPA consultation closes on 30 April 2026.

**NPA 2025-105 (RMT.0707)** - "Medical regulation — combination of Part-MED (Annex IV) to Commission Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 and Part ATCO.MED (Annex IX) to Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/340 - RMT.0707 – SUBTASK 2"

In February we heard about a new medical EASA proposal RMT.0707 which may become significant for light aviation. The relevant proposal (NPA 2025-105) says:

"AMC11 MED.B.095 Medical examination and assessment of applicants for LAPL medical certificates

(d) Psychoactive substances [...]

(1) **Drugs and alcohol screening should form part of the initial aero-medical examination."**

This proposal came somewhat as a surprise to the light aviation community. It is to be noted that it was a part of NPA 2025-105, which was a so-called focused consultation, i.e. comments were asked only from a limited set of stakeholder organisations.

According to one aeromedical expert, the proposed test would cause an increase of 300-600 Euros in the cost of obtaining a LAPL pilot licence.

EAS is looking into ways to counter this new development.

The regulation in force prescribes drug and alcohol testing for Class 1 medicals. The NPA proposes to extend this to Class 2 and LAPL initial medical examinations.

In a related proposal, it is proposed that medical certificates are valid always until the end of the calendar month. Furthermore, the student's medical certificate must have entered into force before flight training can start.

The focused NPA consultation has closed, but there is an initiative to bring it up at an upcoming EASA TeB (Technical Body) stakeholder meeting.

## **STATUS UPDATE - COMMISSION REGULATIONS RECENTLY ENTERED INTO FORCE**

Let's end this column with some news about EU regulations of interest to light aviation, which have recently entered into force.

### **Regulation 2025/24** Ground handling activities – “Self handling”

The main content of this regulation is that companies performing ground handling services need to declare this to the aviation authority. Previously, there have been some incidents where ground handling vehicles have collided with aircraft on the apron area.

EAS was active in this rulemaking task, ensuring that today's "self-handling" practices can continue for small aircraft.

### **Regulation 2025/134** Gyroplane pilot licence

In contrast to the national licences of some countries for gyroplanes up to 600 kg, this is a European-wide gyroplane pilot licence without any limitation at 600 kg.

EAS was active during development, to ensure the national licences would still remain valid.

### **Regulation 2025/133** Gyroplane VFR operations

This regulation complements the set of regulations for gyroplanes heavier than 600 kg. As you may guess, the contents build on existing regulations for aeroplanes and helicopters.

### **Regulation 2025/111** Continuing airworthiness for electric and hybrid aircraft

As the title says, this regulation covers continuing airworthiness and maintenance matters for newly developed electric and hybrid aircraft, some types of which are capable of vertical take-off and landing. The regulation comprises 40 pages.

## **SIGN UP FOR THE NEWSLETTER AND SEND US YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS!**

If you would like to receive future issues of the Newsletter direct to your inbox, please sign up on the Europe Air Sports website at <http://www.europe-air-sports.org/>. If you would like to make any comments, ask questions, send ideas or suggest a topic that you'd like to know about, contact me at [d.king@europe-air-sports.org](mailto:d.king@europe-air-sports.org)

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