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Catalina
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Chairman's message

International AOPA

Readers of *General Aviation* will be aware of the family of country AOPAs that constitute IAOPA (Europe), mainly because of the role that IAOPA (Europe) plays in determining EASA and Eurocontrol future policy, but particularly in ensuring that general aviation is treated on an equal basis with commercial air transport, and that our voice is heard in the right places. This important activity mirrors what went on in the early 1960s in relation to ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The initial efforts of ICAO, set up after the end World War II, were aimed at establishing standards and procedures that facilitated international flight, but for the first 10 years or so these were directed almost exclusively towards the operation of large airline transport. The work of ICAO was being incorporated into the regulations of many nations, and general aviation was beginning to suffer from inappropriate rules and constraints.

The absence of a "voice for GA" was recognised by a core group of country AOPAs which included Australia, Canada and the USA, and, following representations, IAOPA, as the group became known, was invited to participate in an ICAO meeting in 1963, and a year later it was formally recognised as the international organisation representing general aviation on a worldwide basis at ICAO. As a result, IAOPA contributed and continues so to a great many international conferences, panels and working groups, so influencing recommendations on subjects encompassing every facet of general aviation flight operations from airspace rules to personnel licensing. Without the formation and intervention of IAOPA, general aviation at large would be far more restricted than it is today.

A good example of how ICAO impacts on GA is Mode S. ICAO develops Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for international flights; to create the necessary common operating regime as far as possible across all countries, it is incumbent on states to endeavour to comply. ICAO required that all aircraft fit an altitude reporting transponder by 2003, but as for any SARP, a state can file a difference, which is what the CAA did pending the introduction of Mode S. It is perhaps useful to appreciate that the origins of the current consultations on Mode S stem from ICAO.

Currently, through membership of 64 country AOPAs, IAOPA directly represents the interests of more than 470,000 fully signed up pilots and aircraft owners worldwide. A World Congress is held every two years, the most recent being in Toronto, Canada, this year. One of the main outcomes of the World Congress is the discussion, formulation, agreement and publication of a series of resolutions. These are centred on specific but common areas of concern affecting GA in all countries and carry the benefit of agreement of those countries (rather like UN resolutions). They are worded in such a way as to be readily useable in lobbying government. The resolutions this year cover topics such as security, pilot licensing, taxes on fuel, environmentally friendly fuels, protecting and preserving aerodromes and UAVs.

For example, on taxes on fuel, IAOPA resolved "that States should give due recognition to the fact that general aviation users already pay of its environmental impact through the burden of taxation and/or fees". On aerodromes, it was resolved "to urge States and responsible authorities to recognise the value of general aviation aerodromes as an essential part of their transportation infrastructure". Such statements have the benefit of worldwide consensus, and thus carry more weight than those developed by individual nation states. Readers who are interested in the objectives, history and contributions of IAOPA should visit the website www.iaopa.org.

A small part of AOPA UK members' subscriptions go to support the activities of IAOPA, which occupies office space within the headquarters of AOPA USA based at Frederick, Maryland, and pays for the salaries of John Sheehan, the IAOPA Secretary General, and Frank Hofmann, the permanent IAOPA representative on ICAO. Over the past several months, what with the huge concern resulting from the CAA charging scheme and the more recent two CAA reviews of GA in the UK, and even the pan-European activities that have been recently dominant, it has been all too easy to be relatively introspective which may have limited our thinking on the future of GA overall. These observations are what provided the motivation for presenting the above more worldly view. Personally, I am proud of belonging to the IAOPA worldwide community of GA pilots and owners, as I expect all our UK members are too.



George Done