

# General Aviation

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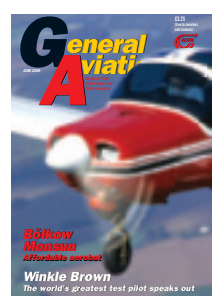
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**Front cover:**  
**Bölkow Monsun**  
Photo: Austin Brown

## Chairman's message

### IAOPA and the political process

The unsavoury nature of the current revelations of some of our Members of Parliament with regard to expenses and allowances provides a compelling distraction from the role of parliamentarians in the governmental process in the UK. It may also do so to a lesser extent within the European scene as we approach the forthcoming European Parliamentary elections. However, the impact of such shenanigans on the overall political process over long periods measured in years is probably minimal, such is the necessarily ponderous nature of political change enacted by democratically elected representatives. As part of its normal programme of activity, the European Parliament recently deliberated on general aviation in the form of a resolution of 3rd February 2009 on an "Agenda for Sustainable Future in General and Business Aviation". The resolution was adopted overwhelmingly by the MEPs with 524 votes in favour, 74 against and 6 abstentions.



The reason why the adoption of the resolution is so important, and why it has been widely reported in the aviation press, is because of the authoritative and well-informed nature of the background statements and subsequent recommendations. The report is divided into three constituent parts, each serving a different but mutually supportive function. To provide the legislative background, relevant EC regulations and similar communications are initially listed. The second part lists a number of phrases that start "whereas..." but actually provide useful statements about the present situation; for example, "...there is currently a lack of data and statistical information on general and business aviation". The third and most important part is subdivided under four headings: "Proportionate regulation and subsidiarity", "Airport and airspace capacity", "Environmental sustainability" and "Other issues". It consists of 35 statements that begin: "The European Parliament welcomes / encourages / urges / insists... etc." with choice of verb appropriate to the importance of the topic. Thus, to quote Recommendation 27 in full on the lack of data referred to above: "[The European Parliament] believes that policy-makers must have at their disposal adequate data and statistical information on general and business aviation *in order to fully understand the sector and thus be able to regulate it properly...*" (my italics). The final two recommendations, in no uncertain terms, request the EC to report back to the European Parliament by the end of 2009 on progress achieved in relation to the issues identified, and asks for the resolution to be forwarded to governments and parliaments of member states.

The importance of this resolution and the impact that the separate recommendations, especially with regard to proportionate regulation, will have on the future of general aviation within the UK and Europe is underlined by more detailed discussion within *General Aviation*. Whilst IAOPA (Europe) cannot claim all the credit for achieving this remarkable position, it was certainly instrumental, the outcome relying on over three years prior groundwork through providing background information to MEPs, and especially pilot MEP Timothy Kirkhope, whose brief biography appeared in the April 2009 edition of *General Aviation*. The material provided by IAOPA (Europe) which was so useful to the MEPs itself arose from a long established process of generating resolutions at IAOPA World Assemblies aimed at achieving a sustainable future for GA. These resolutions are adopted only after full discussion and have the support of the 66 constituent affiliated country AOPAs from around the globe, and so carry more weight than any from countries individually. Thus, to continue the theme of collection of statistical data on GA, one of the resolutions adopted at the 24th World Assembly held in Greece last year states "...that the State regulatory authorities, including the European Commission, should encourage the collection and publication of meaningful data so that in the future proportionality decisions can be reached more readily."

The resolution from the European Parliament has provided a convenient example of the role that IAOPA can play in the political process to the future benefit of GA. It serves as a timely reminder that a small part of our members' subscriptions go towards the financial support of the IAOPA organisation (see [www.iaopa.org](http://www.iaopa.org)) and in particular key personnel John Sheehan, Secretary General, and Frank Hofmann, the permanent IAOPA representative on ICAO. It also bears up my conviction that one of the main reasons that pilots and aircraft owners join AOPA UK is because of the ability of IAOPA to effect change for the better and to sustain the future viability of general aviation on an international basis.

*George Done*