



IGC 2024 Plenary Meeting

Agenda Item 10.5.2

Annual Report EGU (*)

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February 2024



Overview of the activities in 2023

After having been through the recovery from the extraordinary challenges following the Covid Pandemic, the year 2023 has passed with a more normal course, even though the situation in Europe has continued to be influenced by the energy crises, and the economic and political crises from 2022.

30 years EGU

The 30th General Conference was held in Oslo on 25th February 2023, hosted by the Norwegian Air Sport Federation. The technical session in the morning received input from Andrea Anesini, President of Europe Air Sports, an online presentation by Vladimir Foltin, EASA Project Manager for the GA Roadmap, and a status report by the technical officers for their domains and especially for airspace, the implementation of U-Space and the interaction with the UAV's. The official general meeting was held in the afternoon. Five board members were re-elected for a three years term, the financial report over 2022 was approved as was the budget for 2023. In the evening a drink and diner were organised to celebrate the 30 years of existence of the EGU. Patrick Pauwels, Honorary President, who served the organisation in various positions, took a view back at how the EGU started, the first congress meeting in 1993 in Strasbourg, decades of hard work by many volunteers what resulted in set of acceptable rule settings for the gliding community in Europe and especially for maintenance and airworthiness, flight crew licensing and operations.

After the last general conference in Oslo, we have arranged one physical meeting in the executive board, one technical conference for the EGU member states, and we have been represented at the Europe Air Sports General Conference and their Technical meeting. In addition, we have participated at Aero 2023 in Friedrichshafen and given a web-based presentation at the Nordic Gliding conference in Finland. These have all been great opportunities to communicate with people about current and future challenges, and to receive valuable inspiration and feedback on the work initiatives in the EGU.

A challenge all air sports are facing is that the use of drones is increasing rapidly, and they operate in the same airspace as air sports activity takes place. The air traffic authorities are facing the question of segregation or integration. The U-space regulation has been implemented as a toll to secure access to airspace for large number of drones without segregation for sole use of drones. Manned aircraft may operate in U-space provided they can make themselves electronically conspicuous to the U-space service provider, by means of e.g. flarm or mobile phone for position transmission.

We have no experience with U-space yet, but the regulations are in place so implementation should be expected soon. 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.

We have continued our collaboration in the Executive Board with a working structure comprising 6 different workstreams, summarised below:

Safety

The Safety Workstream has continued to meet virtually through the year and pursued several important topics within a dedicated group of national representatives. One of the key outputs was an EGU newsletter dedicated to the topic of rigging of gliders.

Airspace & Interoperability

The Airspace & Interoperability workstream with their EGU airspace group (EAG) has in addition to several teams meetings, arranged one physical meeting in Frankfurt in 2023 covering a variety of airspace issues. Efforts have been concentrated on initiatives and measures to ensure controlled airspace and airspace limitations do not exceed what can be justified as necessary, and that unused controlled airspace shall be returned to uncontrolled airspace.

Licensing and Training

The transition period has been passed and focus has been on monitoring of how regulations for licensing and training are implemented on national level. The main subject of the work has been the SPL-theory exams, but other issues have also been discussed, and for the moment more local challenges from different countries are being brought to the workstream for help.

Airworthiness and Maintenance

The Part 66L issues on Training and Recency requirements have been on the table in the Airworthiness and Maintenance Workstream for some time now, but the progress is slow. These issues were on the agenda for a combined GA Com and GA TAB meeting recently and EASA seems to recognise the problems. The battle over the requirement for practical skill assessment has been won. The practical skill module will not be implemented. On the recency topic, a proposal from EASA to use a cross section of maintenance tasks from annual maintenance, but the contents of these tasks remain to be clarified. The long-term solution is to form a working group where stakeholders along with EASA would investigate how to change the next revision of Part 66.

Medical

GA needs a more proportionate approach to pilot medical fitness. As the new Basic Regulation allows more freedom for proportionality, a proposal for self-declaration of medical condition is being developed by Europe Air Sports with support from EGU and others.

Sustainability

The workstream on sustainability consists of two parts; equality and environment. The scope of the WS is to collect information about "good practice" and knowledge. A new female network has been established, but the plans for a gathering last year had to be cancelled, and we will hopefully hear more of it in 2024.

New members

As decided at the last EGU Congress, we encouraged Ukraine to apply for membership in the EGU, and we received their application. In addition, Australia applied for Associate Membership, and have already joined the safety working group.

Admin / Finance

The EGU Executive Board has managed the administrative and financial affairs of the EGU carefully through the year to satisfy the budget for 2023 which was based on fees 10% lower than those for 2020, prior to the pandemic. A significant portion of the EGU's budget goes to cover its membership fee for Europe Air Sports, and travel cost associated with physical meetings. The accounts were closed with a 10% profit, mainly caused by higher interest on savings than budgeted, but also thanks to moderate travel activity and the lean working model adopted by the EGU Executive Board.

Communications

The website (www.glidingunion.eu) provides a lot of information. Robert Danewid edited two newsletters to keep the members informed about the topics of the moment and a special edition related to safety when rigging sailplanes.

Relations

EGU continues to work closely with Europe Air Sports, which is the only platform representing the whole air sport community (large numbers count!) and thus able to establish good relations at the political level, such as the EU-Commission, EU-DG Move and with EASA.

Close contact and exchange of information are maintained with the IGC, the OSTIV Safety & Training Panel, and the Association of Glider Manufacturers. The EGU is very grateful once more again, and as always, for the back office support by the FFVP since 1992!

Next congress meeting 2024

This meeting will take place on 24th February in Luxemburg.

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Since the EGU Congress Meeting 2023, I am no longer directly involved in the EGU work. This report is based on the "Annual Report of the President", Arild Solbakken.

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 unfavorable or even dangerous rules affecting our sport from being set up.

The EGU currently counts 22 full members and represents more than 80 000 glider pilots.

www.glidingunion.eu

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