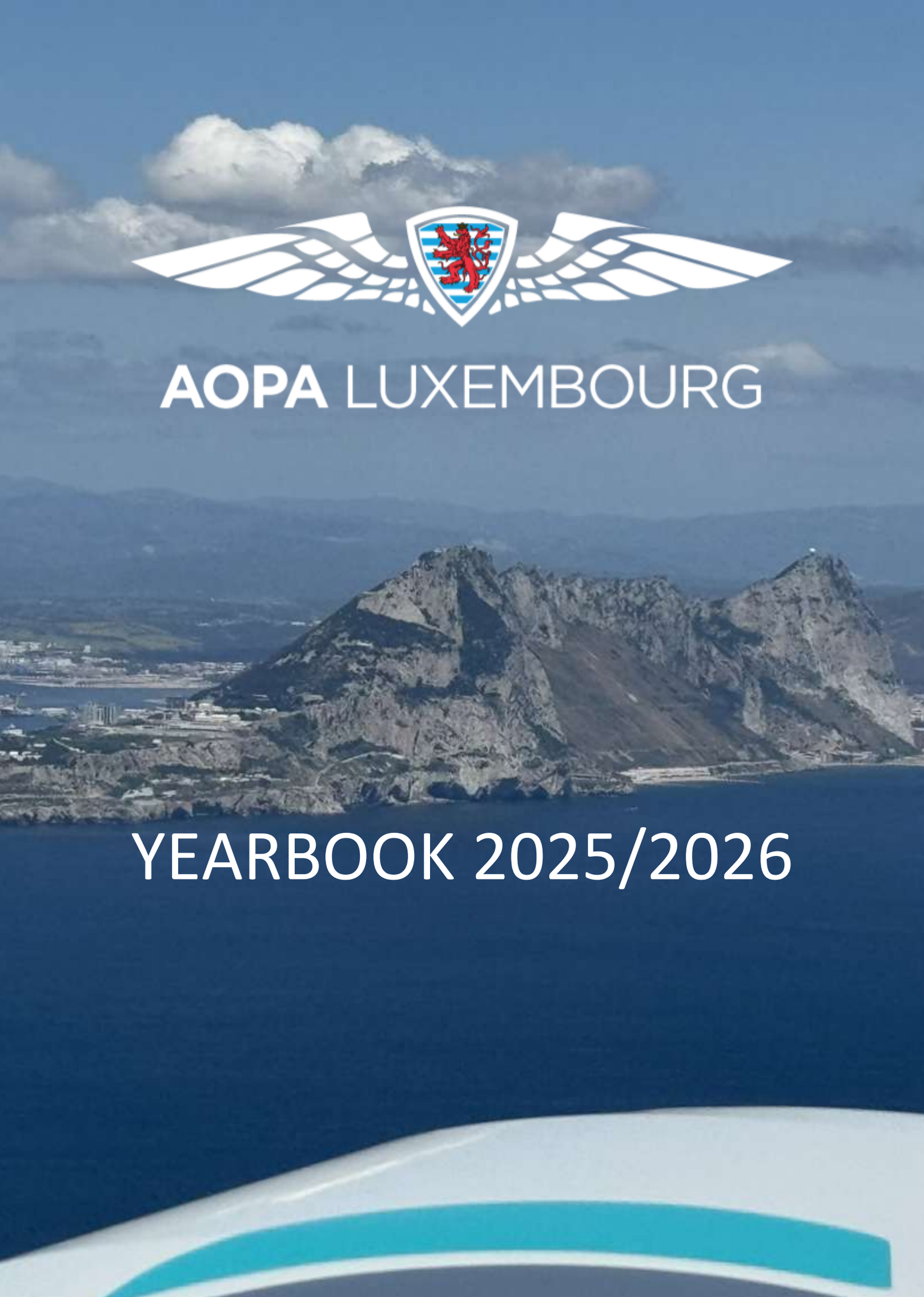

AOPA LUXEMBOURG

# YEARBOOK 2025/2026


PL 89

# AOPA LUXEMBOURG YEARBOOK 2025/2026

## CONTENTS

# President’s Corner 2026

## *Dear Members and Friends of AOPA Luxembourg*

**A Final Call to Arms: Why We Must Fight for the Future of Flight**

As I step down in January 2026 from the AOPA Board after more than a decade of service—including eight years as your President—I have been reflecting on our journey. By any measure, AOPA Luxembourg is one of the most active branches in the world relative to our size. But as we enter 2026, being "active" is no longer enough. We are in a fight for our very existence.

**The Crisis at Our Door**

General Aviation at Findel is currently under siege. We are being squeezed by a Direction de l'Aviation Civile (DAC) that seems intent on making flight training impossible and an Administration de la Navigation Aérienne (ANA) that is imposing aggressive, indefensible tariffs. Public authorities are now openly questioning whether we even have a place at Findel.

We cannot—and will not—simply sit back and watch our passion be regulated into extinction.

**A New Strategic Manifesto**

To take the fight to the authorities, I have drafted a **Strategic White Paper**. This is not just a report; it is a roadmap for our survival. We are sharing it with you today as an exclusive premiere before the new committee takes over in January.

The core of this strategy is simple: **Innovation is our best weapon**.

- **End the Legislative Inertia:** We demand that Luxembourg stops lagging behind its neighbors and finally adopts EU 2018/1139. It is a disgrace that our members are forced to register modern, eco-friendly aircraft abroad because of local red tape.
- **The Carbon Revolution:** We will lead the transition to quiet, green aviation. If the authorities want to talk about noise, let’s talk about the 2,500 night-time cargo flights that actually wake up the neighbors, not our daytime light aircraft.
- **A Sovereign Airfield:** We are calling for a dedicated 800-to-1000-metre innovation runway. This is about more than just hobby flying; it is about national sovereignty, drone

development, and providing the Luxembourg Army with the local facilities they desperately need.

**A Professional European Force**

The current AOPA model in Europe has reached its limit. We can no longer rely on small, isolated national antennas run by overstretched volunteers. I believe we must radically restructure AOPA Europe into a **professional, unified force**—a European powerhouse that commands the same respect and influence as AOPA in the USA. The era of the "amateur" volunteer network must evolve into a professionalised lobby that the regulators cannot ignore.

**Aeronautical Patriotism**

However, professionalism does not replace the heart. We still need "aeronautical patriots"—volunteers who are willing to give their time and energy to defend our skies. Engagement is not a hobby; it is a duty to the next generation of pilots

In January 2026, you will elect a new committee. It will be their job to take this White Paper, sharpen it, and force the government to listen. I ask you to stand behind them with everything you've got.

Thank you for the honour of leading you for the last eight years. The battle for the sky is just beginning.

**Peter Sodermans** President 2018-2026, AOPA Luxembourg

04 January 2026

# Bernard Frechen

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to our dear friend and fellow aviator, Bernard Frechen. For many years, Bernard was one of the cornerstones of general aviation in Luxembourg – a quiet force who contributed tirelessly to our flying community, both through AOPA Luxembourg and through his work with Aérosport and LFTA.

As president of AOPA Luxembourg, I can confirm what many have expressed: Bernard was a hard worker, dependable and precise. Every single year, without fail, he took the lead in organising our Nav Refresher and the Autumn Rally – two events that became benchmarks of excellence, thanks to his preparation, his methodical approach, and yes, his Deutsche Gründlichkeit. He brought structure, quality, and high standards to everything he touched. Bernard didn't need the spotlight. He worked quietly and efficiently, always with the goal of making things better for others.

After retirement, Bernard went "all in" – as board member in AOPA and Aéro-Sport taking on roles such as Safety Manager and Security Manager at LFTA, and publishing regular safety bulletins that were still being sent out even during his illness.

As Reinhard put it so well: Bernard's full time presence at Aérosport made him a cornerstone of running the club and the school smoothly. His vast knowledge of aviation and regulation made him an extremely competent advisor and a strong negotiator with the authorities, such as DAC and LuxAirport. He even once made a successful emergency landing following an engine failure – a testament to the solid airmanship developed through his earlier years as a glider pilot.

Those who worked closely with Bernard also remember his impact on individual pilots. He had a gift for encouraging those who doubted themselves. Cristina shared how Bernard gently supported her to sign up for her first Nav Refresher and Rally – experiences that turned out to be highlights of her flying journey.

Etienne, who flew with Bernard just after obtaining his PPL, described the Nav Refresher as a turning point in his aviation life. Bernard not only helped him discover new ways of thinking, but also entrusted him with continuing the tradition – and coached him throughout the planning of the 2024 and 2025 editions.

Bernard's passion for aviation started long ago, and he never lost that spirit. After graduating as an electrical engineer from the prestigious RWTH Aachen, he built a professional career before dedicating himself fully to general aviation. He was a mentor, a friend, and a silent force behind many of our community's successes.

He passed away at the age of 76. To his family – his two brothers and sister – we extend our heartfelt condolences. Bernard was a pillar of our flying community – always remembered, deeply missed!

Fly high, Bernard. You will always be flying with us.
On behalf of AOPA Luxembourg and the Luxembourg pilots' community,

Peter

# In Memoriam

Our friends who now soar in the sky

**Giuseppe Bottacin**

**Bernard Frechen**

**Guy Klepper**

**Camille Montaigu**

**Jean Peters**

# Editor's Note

From the Editors


As editors we get to document the many events, the attendees, the participants – we get to watch YOU – AOPA members - in action!

We hope that you will all enjoy reading this yearbook as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

The yearbook is always the result of a common effort from not only we editors, but also from You, contributing with ideas, photos, articles and hands-on help to bring the yearbook to you.

Can't wait to get your contributions and help for the next edition!

Cristina and Reinhard

# Navigating the Headwinds

## A Strategic Manifesto for Luxembourg's Aeronautical Future

By Peter Sodermans

As of early 2026, General Aviation (GA) at Luxembourg airport finds itself at a difficult crossroads. The sector is currently struggling under a climate of regulatory and operational pressure: from a Direction de l'Aviation Civile (DAC) that increasingly challenges the viability of flight schools, to the Administration de la Navigation Aérienne (ANA) imposing disputable tariffs in an uncompromising manner. Public authorities have begun to openly question the role and future of light aviation at Findel, while the necessity of a second airfield remains a subject of distant and uncertain debate.

Faced with these existential challenges, the community cannot simply remain passive. To actively contribute to the public debate and defend the sector's interests, **Peter Sodermans of AOPA Luxembourg** has authored a strategic white paper. Here are the important points of the draft Strategic Manifesto:.

The Strategic White Paper: Innovation as a Survival Strategy

The white paper, titled *"Aeronautical Innovation in Luxembourg – Acting Now for European Aeronautical Sovereignty,"* argues that the survival of GA depends on its ability to lead a "Carbon Revolution" rather than being seen as a relic of the past.

- **A Call for Legislative Modernization**: The report highlights that Luxembourg is currently falling behind its European neighbours. While 16 EU countries have already adapted their laws to accommodate modern, eco-friendly, and high-performance light aircraft under EU Regulation 2018/1139, Luxembourg's administrative inertia often forces local pilots to register their innovative aircraft abroad. We demand an immediate alignment of national legislation to stop the discrimination against modern, quiet, and fuel-efficient aircraft.
- **Challenging the Narrative on Noise and Space**: Sodermans addresses the unfair targeting of GA regarding noise pollution. The document points out that while light aviation follows strict daytime noise-reduction procedures, it is actually the surge in night-time cargo flights—with over 2,500 curfew violations in 2023—that drives local complaints. Furthermore, the paper stresses that marginalising GA at Findel puts the training of future pilots for Luxair and Cargolux at serious risk.
- **The Vision for a National Aerospace Incubator**: Rather than simply defending the status quo, the white paper proposes turning Luxembourg into an **Aerospace Innovation Hub**. This involves creating a new 800-to-1000-metre runway dedicated to innovation, light aviation, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). It also suggests leveraging partnerships with the SnT (DroneLab), LIST, and the Luxembourg Space Agency (LSA) to develop green propulsion and autonomous flight technologies.
- **Dual-Use and Sovereignty**: The paper frames the support of GA as a matter of European sovereignty. It notes that providing national facilities would allow the Luxembourg Army to conduct pilot training and "touch & go" exercises locally, reducing the current reliance on foreign military bases for operations like the Airbus A400M.

The upcoming committee, elected by you in January 2026, will use this draft as the foundation for AOPA's roadmap to ensure that General Aviation remains a vital, innovative part of Luxembourg's national identity.

**At the end of this Yearbook, you will find the draft White Paper following page 85.**

# AOPA Luxembourg Agenda 2026

ALL EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE – STAY TUNED

| Date | Event | Organiser |
|---|---|---|
| 17.01.2026 | AOPA General Assembly | AOPA |
| 28.02.2026 | AOPA Safety Seminar | AOPA |
| 22-25.04.2026 | AERO 2026 Friedrichshafen | AERO |
| April 2026 | IAOPA Regional meeting in Denmark | IAOPA |
| May 2026 | Season Opening Fly-Out | AOPA |
| June 2026 | NAV Refresher | AOPA |
| 20-26.07.2026 | EAA Airventure Oshkosh | EAA |
| 29.09.-02.10.2026 | IAOPA World Assembly Frankfurt (Germany) | IAOPA |

# Luxembourg Holidays 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| Sunday-Monday 05-06.04.2026 | Easter (*Paques*) |
| Friday 01.05.2026 | Labour Day (*fête du travail*) |
| Saturday 09.05.2026 | Europe Day (*Journée de l'Europe*) |
| Thursday 14.05.2026 | Ascension Day (*l'Ascension*) |
| Sunday-Monday 24.-25.05. 2026 | Pentecost Holiday (*congé de la Pentecôte*) |
| Tuesday 23.06.2026 | National Day |
| Thursday 16.07. - Sunday 13.09.2026 | Summer school break (*vacances scolaires*) |
| Saturday 15.08.2026 | Assumption Day (*Assomption*) |
| Sunday 01.11.2026 | All Saints *(Toussaint)* |

# AOPA Luxembourg General Assembly 2025/26

By Reinhard Krommes

Our Ordinary General Assembly took place on the 08.03.2025.

As of 31.12.2024, AOPA Luxembourg had 219 full members (229 on 31.12.2023) one honorary member and one adhering member.

Marina Paralingova presents the figures for the 2024 financial year, which closes with a loss of €6,819.16 on a balance sheet of €49,695.36.

The 2025 budget provides for a reduced loss of €2,400.00.

The members voted by acclamation to approve the accounts, the budget and the outgoing board's discharge.

Marc Picard was named as external auditor for 2025/2026.

The foremost events in 2024 were

- February 3, 2024: AOPA Safety Seminar
- March 9, 2024: General Assembly
- 1 May 2024: Fly-out in Midden Zeeland
- May 9 to May 12, 2024, Fly Out Texel EHTX

- June 8, 2024: Nav Refresher 15 aircraft, 32 participants
- June 28, 2024: Rallye en Champagne cancelled
- 221 September AOPA and Aerosport Rally were cancelled for too few participants
- IAOPA meeting in Bulgaria
- IAOPA meeting USA Washington DC
- Young Pilots BarBQ Air-Cadets
- AirCadets Wing Parade in Beauvechain

The Board of Directors consisted of 9 members plus the President. Three members were outgoing and re-eligble: Etienne Haumont, Marina Paralingova and Chris Scott. Patrick Bettendorf, Guy Zenner were outgoing and resigned.

Peter Sodermans, as the only candidate, was re-elected for President.

Paul Farmer stood for election as member of the board and was elected.

Following the votes, the President and 7 members of the board were confirmed.

Again, we thanked all members who contributed to AOPA work and the defence of GA interests.

The Ordinary General Assembly is followed by the screening of the film "Adrienne Bolland: les victoires de l'audace" presented by its author-director Mrs. Coline Béry. Adrienne Bolland was the first woman to fly over the Andes between Chile and Argentina in 19. She was later described as "France's most accomplished female aviator",setting a woman's record for loops done in an hour. The French government eventually recognized her with the Legion of Honor and other awards.

The General Assembly, as is customary, wrapped up with a cocktail reception

# Executive Committee 2025

| Name | Function | E-mail |
|---|---|---|
| **Peter Sodermans** | President | peter.sodermans@aopa.lu |
| | *BOARD* | |
| **Nicolas Bannasch** | Vice-President & legal affairs | nicolas.bannasch@aopa.lu |
| **Chris Berens-Scott** | Vice president & UL Affairs & FAL | chris.berens-scott@aopa.lu |
| **Marina Paralingova** | Treasurer | marina.paralingova@aopa.lu |
| **Paul Farmer** | Secretary General | paul.farmer@aopa.lu *) |
| **Etienne Haumont** | Member benefits | etienne.haumont@aopa.lu |
| **Daniel Schiltz** | Liasion Clubs, ANA | daniel.schiltz@aopa.lu |
| **Christophe Englebert** | Administration contacts, Air Cadets | christophe.englebert@aopa.lu |
| | *CO-OPTED* | |
| **Marco Felten** | Finance and member management | marco.felten@aopa.lu |
| **Julien Lagaldie** | Digital innovation team | Julien.Lagaldie@aopa.lu |
| **Reinhard Krommes** | Publications | Reinhard.krommes@aopa.lu |
| **Cristina Menendez** | Events, Publications | cristina.menendez@aopa.lu |

*) New member of the board

General e-mail address for the board is info@aopa.lu
We work as volunteers and will do our utmost to reply to requests within 72 hours.

# AOPA Safety Seminar 2025

By Cristina Menendez

*Mar 22nd was the annual AOPA Safety Seminar and this year it was more exciting than ever for me – as I volunteered to put it together! It was an amazing day sharing knowledge and experience and by the end, I was relieved to see that everyone – speakers and attendees - enjoyed themselves. This is what it is all about – bringing pilots and speakers together.*

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Jean-Claude Petesch from the Direction de l'Aviation Civile (DAC) returned again this year to provide us with the Annual Safety Review – all the stats and figures at ELLX – always neatly presented and explained.

The 2024 figures were not yet available so he presented those from 2023. Reporting of occurrences has increased alongside traffic and that is a good trend to see. The DAC takes the time to merge reports submitted by various people for one event (ie: the pilot, tower and runway maintenance might each submit a report for a single event).

The DAC has seen an increase in GPS jamming. This is a low risk incident but the volume of reports is high. Jamming is when the GPS provides no information at all. Of greater concern is GPS Spoofing, where the GPS is providing incorrect information. This is more serious as it results in false warnings. The DAC expects both jamming and spoofing reporting to increase in the coming years due to more conflict zones around the world in locations where Luxembourg based airlines are flying to, near or over.

There is now a new cybersecurity expert at the DAC. Keep in mind that security is an issue for the European Commission while Safety remains with EASA.

Regarding drones, when and where they can be flown and their height restrictions can now be found on a live map on the Geoportail website the QR code is at the bottom of this article.

As a reminder, occurrence report handling at the DAC is still manual for GA pilots via a portal: www.aviationreporting.eu. You can submit a report without creating a user however the advantage of creating a user is that you can see a listing of the reports you have submitted.

He was asked by members about the new model airplane site near MERSA and CARLI – their height restriction is 2,000 ft AGL whereas ours in that same space is 2,000ft AMSL – this is a dangerous combination.

In addition our members urged the DAC to encourage pilots to monitor the frequency at ELNT even when it is closed.

He agreed to take the issues raised by our members back to the DAC.

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Dominque Champeval, president of the Luxembourg Examiners and Instructors Association (LEIA) talked about the penal (criminal) and civil code and what are the legal responsibilities of being PIC. The most common reason that results in being condemned is lack of information, lack of proof that would otherwise exonerate you. Keep logs, pics and any other form of proof that you have completed your pre and post flight briefings, be meticulous in your preparation and your methodology.

Dominque highlighted a few items of importance for flight schools and student pilots. Notably, that an examination flight is not a training flight thus the examiner is not an instructor during this flight, the PIC is the responsible party. A student pilot flying solo is PIC. It is prudent to have insurance, not only for the plane but for yourself as PIC and for each passenger.

There is no insurance against penal charges however it is possible to have insurance for civil charges, estimate approximately €1 million per passenger.

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Wendell Lynch, Safety Promotion Programs Manager, from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in Cologne is 'committed to fly another day' – as we should all be! If you never experience the edge of the envelope, how can you be expected to know how to react when the time comes? Seek out instructors and practice those emergency procedures regularly.

We can learn skills but to teach aeronautical decision making – that is tough, it needs mindful, dedicated practice.

Create your personal safety buffer in everything you do – that will allow you to maintain space between various hazards. The more buffer, the lower the risk.

Don't underestimate the importance of a carbon monoxide monitor in the cockpit. Check it during your flight. If you have one that is giving a live reading, even better.

Wendell introduced us to the book "Thinking, Fast and Slow" and explained its premise which questions if we can trust our intuition. The author, a nobel prize winning psychologist, posits that we have two systems that drive the way we think - system 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; system 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical.

He stressed that an estimated 0.069% of the EU population are GA Pilots based on licenses issued within the EU – that makes us an elite group of people.

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Quentin Palmaerts and Thierry Flament joined us from the Belgian Military Aviation Safety Directorate Beauvechain (EBBE). They discussed airspace infringements on military airspace. When an infringement happens, a report will be made and the pilot will be contacted. There will be a request for feedback from the pilot via a BCAA questionnaire – it is important to understand what caused the infringement and why. Despite there being no repercussion for the pilot, there is a lack of feedback being submitted and few GA pilots are even reporting their own mistakes. The DAC was happy to confirm that this is quite the opposite from what we have in Luxembourg.

Belgian military airfields have now allowed certain Belgian flight schools to practice in their circuit, low approach, IFR etc however no landing is allowed. There are specific time slots Mon-Fri for this. They are looking into extending this to neighbouring schools in Germany, France and Luxembourg.

The Belgian military encourages all pilots to contact them on the radio when nearing their airspace – if traffic permits, they will let you transit.

Please note that Belga Radar 129.325 is now only for military use, please use Brussels Info 126.900 instead.

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Representatives from Administration de la Navigation Aérienne (ANA) joined us for the first time this year and they sent over 3 people – fantastic! Pit Probst head of the Safety Department, Pit Schmitt, Operational Investigator and previous Air Traffic Controller and Olivier Matagne, APP Safety Officer.

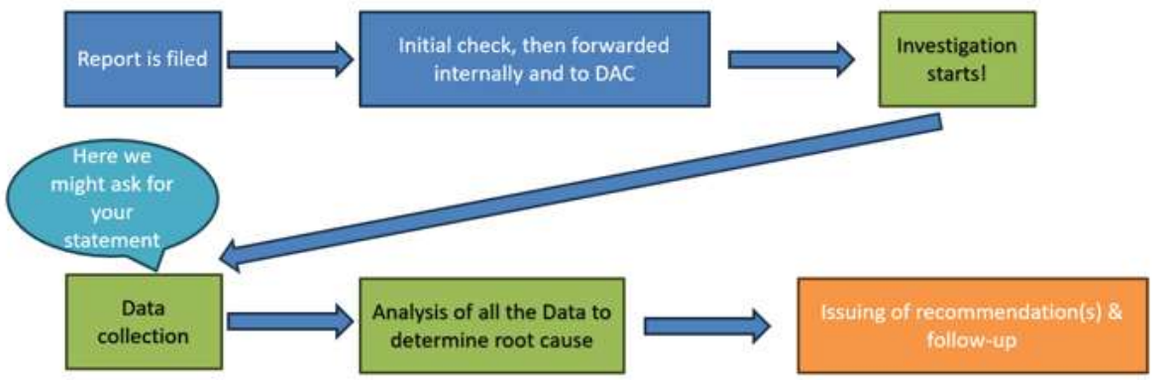
ANA is Luxembourg's ANSP, Air Navigation Service Provider, providing air navigation services for all users of Luxembourg airspace. Among its many responsibilities ANA investigates occurrences related to ATC, MET and ARO. The focus usually lies on procedures and whether a systemic root cause can be determined to have led to an incident.

They explained how the tower is set up and showed us photos of their screens, so that we can get a better idea of what they see as we talk to them on the radio.

They provided us with this QR code – it is a notification of all currently active drone zones in the country, using Geoportail. If you click on a red circle/location on the online map you can see the full details of that specific zone.

Grand Public - Geoportal Luxembourg

They walked us through the flow of an occurrence report – please see the flow chart here:




*Thank you to everyone who participated and helped organize this wonderful event!*
*We hope to see you all again and welcome new faces at the 2026 event!*

AOPA LUXEMBOURG

# NEW IAOPA EUROPE MEMBER DISCOUNTS

JEPPESEN – 15% on all products

ForeFlight – 15% on all products

SafeSky – 20% on all products

## WHY JOIN AOPA LUXEMBOURG?

- One of the best priced memberships in Europe – only 60€ a year
- Strong representation for General Aviation
- Valuable discounts and benefits
- A collective voice for pilots

IAOPA Europe has recently negotiated several **new pan-European discount agreements** on behalf of member associations. I'm happy to confirm that these benefits are now **available to AOPA Luxembourg members**, as our membership list has been **updated and synced with IAOPA**.

New discounts (pan-European)

- **Jeppesen** – **15%** on all products
- **ForeFlight** – **15%** on all products
- **SafeSky** – 20% on all products

You can view all current benefits here:

**IAOPA Europe Member Benefits**

**Global AOPA Benefits**:

Please note that not all benefits are available outside the USA

## Non-Visible Benefits

The cost of our passion is a critical matter, and we aim at reducing such costs through benefits. There are cost savings that you cannot measure but that do exist because IAOPA Europe and countries' AOPAs are deeply involved in discussions with the many authorities that overview and regulate the airspace and flight activities. Among others, our actions help channelling the regulatory changes so that the extremely heavy commercial aviation constraints do not jeopardise our small airplanes, microlights, glider activities.

Your membership in AOPA Luxembourg helps strengthening our representativity and therefore keeping costs as much as possible under control.

We hope to have convinced your that, on top of the passionate experience you can live through your membership in AOPA Luxembourg, you also have a real and high cash return opportunity on your very moderate membership fee thanks to the many benefits you get access to. Don't miss out!

Don't let your pilot friends, who are not yet AOPA Luxembourg members, miss out either!

These come on top of the existing benefits already available through AOPA/IAOPA.

## Why join AOPA Luxembourg?

At **€60 per year**, AOPA Luxembourg is **one of the best-priced AOPA memberships in Europe**—and the value in return is *far higher*. By joining, you:

- **Support strong representation for General Aviation** in Luxembourg and Europe (the work that protects our freedom to fly).
- **Gain access to real, practical member value**, including these new Europe-wide discounts on tools many pilots use every day.

- **Strengthen our collective voice**: the more members we have, the more weight we carry when aviation policy, airspace, airport access, and operational constraints are discussed.
- AOPA Luxembourg organises many member events every year as well as fly out missions

## JOIN AOPA LUXEMBOURG IN A MINUTE

Registration is quick and can be done **directly via the AOPA Luxembourg website**. If you're not yet a member, now is a perfect moment to join—and start benefiting immediately. We are as of now accepting memberships for 2026. The new "Flight Crew" Membership cards will be distributed at the beginning of Spring.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR AOPA LUXEMBOURG CREW CARD


Framework agreements do exist between airports and duty free shops, and the commercial and General Aviation community, which we benefit from through our Crew Card. It's not possible to list them all and we could notice that airport shops' staff don't have a same awareness about such possible benefits.

We have gathered the practical experience of several board members taking cash profit from their Crew Card. The following examples do not aim at giving a comprehensive view. Discount rules may vary with time and we cannot ensure you that what was experienced so far will always be valid.

When flying on commercial flights, in certain cases, if questioned about your airline when showing your Crew Card at a shop's counter, you may answer « General Aviation ». In any case, a gentle claim for a possible discount could always help:

- Luxembourg Airport : -35% on perfume, -30% on fashion, -20% on food, 0% on electronics subject to possible exceptions to be requested at counter.
- Frankfurt Airport : -20% on Scoom food, -15% on Relay newspaper, -10% on Picard travel bags, Sunglass Hut's sunglasses, Heinemann duty free, Wempe luxury watches shop (except Tudor and limited series), Burberry's,
- Milano Malpensa Airport : -10% in certain shops
- Nice airport : Crew card accepted only if you wear an uniform
- USA : No AOPA benefits in airports' shops ; crews usually have their dedicated shop in the airports. San Francisco airport : -10% on DFS luxury watches

When flying on your own :

- Greece :Important discount on handling fees with a valid AOPA card. A summary will be made available on our website soon.
- Biarritz - : No discount on handling fees

# IAOPA Regional Meetings

## The Hague, The Netherlands 10.05. 2025

On 10 May 2025, delegates from 14 European AOPA affiliates gathered at the Babylon Hotel in The Hague for the 151st IAOPA Europe Regional Meeting, hosted by AOPA Netherlands.

A major milestone was the formal adoption of IAOPA Europe's bylaws. Though a draft existed since 2012, they were officially ratified in The Hague, establishing the Netherlands as the organization's legal seat.

Technical and regulatory issues took center stage. Delays in unleaded Avgas regulation and the lack of a 100LL alternative remain pressing.

Medical certification rules—particularly new EASA cardiovascular screening requirements—sparked debate over proportionality. IAOPA Europe is preparing a position paper and seeking medical expertise for dialogue with EASA.

Vladimir Foltin (EASA) updated attendees on Flightpath 2030, highlighting topics such as electronic conspicuity, drone corridors, and greener aviation. New IAOPA President Darren Pleasance (USA) joined virtually, emphasizing global cooperation and praising Europe's leadership in light aviation.

## Zurich, Switzerland 24-25. 10. 2025


Participating countries included: Luxembourg, France, UK, Germany, Spain, Finland, Netherlands Sweden Italy Austria Denmark Turkey and of course Switzerland.

On the evening of our arrival, all the delegates were welcomed by AOPA Switzerland and other members of the board and all went for tour in the City followed by a Swiss cheese fondue dinner which was sponsored by Foreflight.

- The meeting started with a short introduction on the figures of aviation in Switzerland (see picture). There is officially no ULM aviation in Switzerland. The Swiss who fly ultralights have them registered in Germany, Italy or France and pay a fee for a permit to fly in the airspace.
- Next, the Treasury was approved, there are no changes in the budget following the Luxembourg 2023 adoption.
- The statutes of the association have been approved and published.
- The delegates were informed that there had been a major threat to GA regarding a ban on Cumene. Thankfully this has been resolved in Time (EU regulation 2025/1731) by emphasizing that there are fewer GA pilots than car drivers (!).
- Other recent EASA issues include the upcoming ban on Halon fire extinguishers, which for the moment has been postponed.
  ELA2 aircraft over 1.200 Kg are in need of certified fire extinguishers which have been crash-tested.
- AOPA Germany gave a presentation on leaded Avgas and the ban on TEL.
- TEL has been added since 1930 to avoid detonation, initially 0.56 g per liter, now less (about 35 to 40 g).
  There are 3 Avgas producers in Europe Shell, Puma & Warter.
  Alternative fuels: are UL94 / UL91 which has a compatibility with 60% of GA fleet (up to 180 hp).
  For the Future: 100 unleaded only 2 are available in California, but a major problem is that these two (Swift & Dreamline)are incompatible with each other! In Mönchengladbach (EDLN) there is the first SWIFT unleaded gas station in Europe


- The situation in Belgium ( ban on 100LL aircraft in Ostend & Antwerp) was also discussed.
- The EASA Passenger declaration workshop is ongoing and is trying to avoid this extra burden. One of the arguments is to make (again) a parallel with motor car drivers.
  In the UK there is an obligation for the PIC to keep record of the passengers without having to declare them.
- Regarding the EASA simplification project, Was also discussed the way forward on removing the AME medical examination in favor of a statement from a Family Doctor as fulfilling a pilot license medical requirement within the EASA States. A strategy has been proposed.


- **Capzlog** , was sponsor for the evening and presented their digital pilot logbook and the fact that it is now certified in Switzerland.
  Unfortunately, as there is no ULM in Switzerland, this logbook is not operative for UL flight logging.

- IAOPA President Darren Pleasance and IAOPA Secretary General Jim Coon both participated in the meeting via Teams and offered a series of points up for discussion / feedback (see above).L
- Last but not least, Sponsor **Foreflight** presented their products and the 15% discount which is offered to AOPA members, including Jeppesen charts.
- To finish the meeting, we all were invited to a traditional Zurich restaurant for dinner sponsored by Capzlog.

# Medical Madness

## AOPA Luxembourg Demands Evidence, Not Fear, in Pilot Licensing

By Peter Sodermans

For years, we have told the regulators one simple truth: **Pilots are not patients.** Yet, as we move into 2026, the medical certification process remains one of the greatest existential threats to General Aviation in Luxembourg. While our members struggle with increasingly burdensome renewals and "specialist" referrals that lead nowhere, AOPA Luxembourg has taken a stand.

Alongside our colleagues from **AOPA Spain** and **AOPA Sweden**, we have taken the lead at the European level to challenge the "medical madness" emanating from Cologne. If you feel like the goalposts are constantly moving, it is because they are—and we are fighting to move them back toward the realm of common sense.

### The "Cologne Christmas Circus"

In late 2025, EASA hosted a major conference in Cologne titled *"Advancing Health Management in Aviation: Diabetes and Cardiovascular Research Insights."* AOPA was there, represented by Roland Kaps-Becker (President, AOPA Switzerland), who witnessed what can only be described as a "Cologne Christmas Circus."

Of the 150 participants, the vast majority were bureaucrats from Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) or medical specialists. There were almost no representatives from the "concerned community"—the actual pilots. While EASA leadership opened with promises of "evidence-based regulation," the proceedings quickly devolved into what we call **"eminence-based" gatekeeping.**

### Fear vs. Facts: The Kindergarten Fallacy

The most shocking development at this conference was a proposal to **increase cardiovascular requirements for LAPL medicals.** The medical "eminences" present argued that LAPL standards should be tightened to match Class 2 medicals.

Their justification was not based on data, but on polemic fear-mongering. To quote their presentation, they argued that a pilot health incident could cause a crash where **"people on the ground could be injured or killed... for example into a school or a kindergarten."**

**Let's be clear:** There is no statistical evidence to support this. Small aircraft are not falling onto schools. We challenged EASA directly: if they truly believe this level of scrutiny is necessary for public safety, they must immediately apply the same cardiovascular "cut-off" values to every car driver on the road, where heart-related incidents are exponentially more frequent. Unsurprisingly, the room went quiet.

### The AOPA Solution: The European Medical Declaration

AOPA Luxembourg is not just complaining; we are leading the charge for a radical simplification of the rules. We have formally submitted our vision to the **EASA Rule Simplification Programme**. We

are demanding a system that mirrors the proven success of the FAA's BasicMed and the UK's Pilot Medical Declaration.

Our Core Proposal:

- **Derogation for Light GA:** For non-commercial operations in aircraft up to **2,730kg MTOM** with a maximum of **4 occupants**, the current cumbersome medical system should be replaced.
- **The Driving License Standard:** We propose linking medical fitness directly to the EU standards for driving a power-driven vehicle.
- **Self-Declaration:** Pilots should be able to make an online self-declaration of fitness if they hold a valid EU driving license, or have a simple GP certification.

## Why This Matters Now

The current EASA system is expensive, burdensome, and discriminatory. It treats every pilot as a patient-in-waiting rather than a responsible operator. Statistical data from the US and the UK proves that self-declarative systems have **no measurable impact on accident rates.** In-flight incapacitation remains an extremely rare event; the real safety risks in General Aviation are related to training, weather, and decision-making—not whether a pilot's ECG has a minor, harmless deviation.

## The Road Ahead: An Uphill Battle

EASA's intended Rulemaking Task (**RMT.0424**) is scheduled to start in late 2026, with an opinion by 2027 and amended rules in 2028. This is a lifetime in the world of aviation, and it is far too slow for pilots currently being grounded by bureaucratic red tape.

We are fighting for a "Flightpath 2030" that actually includes pilots, rather than excluding them through medical over-regulation. We will continue to work with our European partners to ensure that "proportionality" becomes a reality, not just a buzzword used by bureaucrats in Cologne.

We are pilots, not patients. It is time to end the medical madness and return to evidence-based safety.

# IAOPA PROPOSAL FOR EASA MEDICALS REFORM

*(Draft 4, 5 January 2026)*

***CURRENT EASA MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE AVIATION ARE NEITHER PROPORTIONAL NOR EVIDENCE-BASED***

***INTRODUCTION:***

*Examples from various countries or areas outside EASA jurisdiction show that legacy ICAO medical requirements for the lighter end of private aviation are excessive, and may be dramatically reduced or even completely abolished for private operations without causing any measurable impact on accident rates or overall safety.*

*Three obvious examples are **the US, the UK and France**.*

***US:** The FAA introduced **BasicMed** in 2017. It allows private pilots to fly with nothing more than a GP (General Practitioner) visit once every 4 years and a bi-annual online declaration. This system has been hugely successful, with a large proportion of the pilot population making use of it. It has also been proven perfectly safe. A 2023 FAA report to Congress states: "The study found no difference in accident risk between flights conducted by pilots operating under BasicMed and flights conducted by pilots holding third-class medical certificates."*

*Going even further, introduction of the **Sports Pilot License** in 2004 allowed pilots to operate aircraft up to 1320 lbs with no medical certificate other than a driving license. The success of this initiative led to the launch of **MOSAIC** in July 2025, which removed all weight restrictions and dramatically expanded the number of aircraft that may be flown with this licence, now including the vast majority of the legacy GA fleet. In addition, flying **gliders/TMGs or balloons** requires no medical certificate of any kind.*

*In the **UK**, the **PMD (Pilot Medical Declaration)** was launched in 2016 and is currently used by almost 9 out of 10 of private pilot license holders. The system requires only an online declaration of medical fitness by the pilot. As in the US, no adverse effects on accident rates or on overall safety have been detected.*

*Another example is **France**, where piloting a **ULM** requires no medical certificate beyond a once-off family doctor's "declaration of no contraindications to piloting".*

*Each of these alternative medical certification systems imposes certain limitations, like maximum take-off weight, number of passengers, types of operation etc.*

*However, nowhere is there any indication of an increase in medically related accidents, or negative impacts on overall safety.*

***These examples lead to two conclusions:** (1) private flying without an ICAO/EASA medical is feasible and safe, and (2) our current legacy system of ICAO pilot medical certificates is not only expensive and burdensome, but also unnecessary.*

***PROPOSAL: The "EASA Medical Declaration by Pilots" (EMDP)***

*In the interest **proportional, evidence-based rulemaking** as also advocated by EASA, we call for a new "declarative" system of medical certification for private flights, whereby pilots of light GA aircraft may operate without the need for ICAO medicals.*

*In detail, the "EASA Medical Declaration by Pilots (EMDP)" would work as follows:*

*(1) **Medical fitness** is linked explicitly to Annex III of EU Directive 2006/126/EC ("MINIMUM STANDARDS OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FITNESS FOR DRIVING A POWER-DRIVEN VEHICLE"). A pilot may operate ELA1/ELA2 flights under the "EMDP" if either:*

- *(a) they hold a valid EU driving licence (presumed compliant with Directive 2006/126/EC), or*
- *(b) in absence of such licence, a general practitioner certifies that they meet the medical fitness criteria as laid down in Annex III of EU Directive 2006/126/EC.*

*(2) Member States shall provide an **online portal** with a single digital EU self-declaration form for self-declaration and document upload. The EMPD declaration must be renewed every 5 years until the age of 70, and every 3 years thereafter.*

*(3) Pilots operating under the "EMDP" system would be **limited to the following**:*

- *EASA-registered aircraft with a MTOW of 2730kg (the weight limit for Part ML).*
- *Non-commercial operations only.*
- *A maximum of 4 POB (persons on board) including the pilot.*
- *Any restrictions to the pilot's Driving Licence (i.e. use of corrective lenses) shall also apply to the operation of aircraft.*
- *Valid for flights within EASA airspace only, except when permitted by aviation regulators in territories outside the EASA zone.*

*(4) The "EMDP" programme should undergo a structured **EU-level review** after 36 months based on real safety data. Absent negative safety impacts we propose:*

- *Expansion of the programme to aircraft up to 5700kg.*
- *Harmonisation with especially UK and US aviation regulators to allow for mutual recognition of each region's sub-ICAO medical standards.*
- *EASA recommendation to all National Aviation Authorities to implement an equivalent system for their national licenses (ULM, Annex 1, Historical etc) if not already in place.*

*As is currently the case, no pilot may operate an aircraft when medically unfit to do so on any particular day for any reason (illness, lack of sleep, stress, etc).*

*Fitness to fly remains the pilot's responsibility as it always has been – with or without a medical certificate of whatever description.*

Please send comments to:

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# Loftkadetten

## A Masterclass in Aviation Vision and National Collaboration

By Peter Sodermans

In the world of general aviation, there is a fundamental truth: the future of our skies depends entirely on the passion we ignite in the youth of today. As of January 2026, AOPA Luxembourg is proud to report that our most ambitious project to date—the **Lëtzebuerger Loftkadetten** (Luxembourg Air Cadets)—has transitioned from a bold conceptual masterplan into a fully operational, life-impacting reality.

This programme does more than just offer "flying lessons"; it delivers on the core promise of our association: *"L'association a pour but et objet la formation et la perfection théorique et pratique de pilotes d'aérodynes."*

### The Mastermind: A Legacy of Flight

The Lëtzebuerger Loftkadetten was not born in a boardroom, but in the memories of our President, **Peter Sodermans**. Peter's own journey in aviation was forged as a flight cadet between 1978 and 1981. This formative experience—learning the discipline of the cockpit and the freedom of the glide—became the blueprint for what he would later mastermind for Luxembourg.

Driven by the belief that every young Luxembourger deserves the same life-altering opportunity, Peter and the AOPA board spent years meticulously designing a programme that would meet military standards while remaining accessible to civilian youth. They didn't just propose a club; they proposed a **strategic recruitment pipeline** for the nation.

### A Strategic "A400M" Collaboration


When AOPA presented the concept to the **Luxembourg Ministry of Defence and the Army**, the Minister immediately recognised its value. In an era of shifting geopolitical contexts, the need for high-calibre aviation talent has never been greater. The government subsequently developed a dedicated budget, allowing the Luxembourg Army to implement the project in close coordination with the **Belgian Army**.

This partnership mirrors the successful **Belgian-Luxembourg Bi-National Unit (BNU)** used for the A400M transport aircraft. By leveraging the existing infrastructure and expertise of the **Royal Belgian Air Cadets**, we have ensured that our cadets receive training that is harmonised with NATO standards. This is a "Public-Private Partnership" at its finest: AOPA provided the vision and masterminded the framework, while the Army provides the logistical might and funding.

## Securing the International Stage

The programme's success was further cemented by its "international diplomacy." To get things done and secure global support, we needed to show the world that Luxembourg was ready.

Special recognition must be given to **Kany Touré**, President of the Young Pilots of Luxembourg, and **Christophe Engelbert**. For two years in a row, they hosted a distinguished delegation of international air cadets (third-year students) from the UK, Australia, France, and Germany. By showcasing the Grand Duchy's strategic location and our vibrant aviation community, they helped Luxembourg secure its rightful place within the **International Air Cadet Exchange Association (IACEA)**.

## The 2026 Batch: From Aspirants to Aviators

As we enter 2026, the demand for the programme has reached new heights. From a pool of **over 30 highly motivated candidates**, five were selected by the Luxembourg Army following rigorous physical and psychological evaluations.

- **The Spring Milestone:** In the spring of 2026, this first batch will undergo two weeks of intensive **theoretical training**. They will master the complexities of aerodynamics, meteorology, and air law—the "theoretical perfection" mentioned in our articles.
- **The Summer Challenge:** In the summer of 2026, the cadets head to a Belgian military base for a three-week summer camp. Flying two to three times a day, they will learn the "stick and

rudder" skills that only glider flight can provide. With luck and skill, these aspirants will perform their **first solo flights** before the camp ends.

- **The Autumn Promotion:** A formal ceremony in the autumn of 2026 will see these aspirants promoted to **Flight Cadets**.

## A Three-Year Life-Impacting Journey


The journey does not end after the first solo. The programme is a cumulative, three-year experience. Following their first year, cadets are called up on weekends to a Belgian military base for **advanced glider training**, learning high-performance soaring and energy management.

The third year represents the pinnacle: the **International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE)**. The best cadets earn the chance to visit member nations such as **New Zealand, Australia, and the Netherlands**. This exchange fosters international goodwill and gives our youth a global perspective on aviation that few other programmes can match.

The Pilots of Tomorrow

AOPA Luxembourg's commitment is long-term. Every year, **five additional cadets** will enter the programme. By the time they finish high school, these young men and women have a clear path before them:

- **Military Careers:** Many will opt for a career as officers or pilots within the Luxembourg Armed Forces.
- **Commercial Aviation:** Others transition into the civil sector, becoming the airline pilots of tomorrow.
- **General Aviation:** The remainder stay with us as private pilots, enriching our local community.

By masterminding this pathway, AOPA Luxembourg has not only preserved the "freedom to fly"—we have ensured that the next generation of pilots is ready to take command.

# From Dream to Reality

## The way towards being a plane owner

By Franky Coene (edited)

After always hearing that being a pilot is very expensive, very difficult, or only for a few, my wife Miriam and I decided to challenge that myth. After visiting several aviation schools, we discovered the KFC Club of Kortrijk. As soon as we entered the club's cafeteria, we were greeted by a very kind senior: Peter Herpels, a professional pilot, instructor, and passionate aviator.

After explaining the courses, steps, and expected costs, Peter casually asked if we wanted to visit the hangar. What followed felt almost unreal: we climbed into the OO-FBI, a Robin DR400, and before I could even react, the engine was running. With extraordinary calm and confidence, Peter guided me through my very first flight. The aviation microbe struck instantly. I remember that day almost as vividly as my first solo a few months later.

Together with my wife, I studied for almost a year for the theoretical PPL exam while completing the practical training. Because of our busy schedules, I continued flying with Danny Vandeckerkhove, who was also responsible for most theoretical subjects. The connection was immediate, and we completed the journey together. Despite delays caused by the pandemic, nothing stopped me from passing my final practical exam on 25/05/2020. From that day on, I was a pilot.

Once my licence was completed, I talked with my wife, and she confessed that she had studied the theory only to accompany me each week, and that she was happy just to understand how an airplane works and to be able to land it in case, one day, she needed to help me for some major reason.

Although I had little experience, my cousin Peter Sodermans—who had first introduced me to aviation—invited me on several AOPA Luxembourg fly-outs, including Annecy in the Alps and Melilla in North Africa, where I also helped with the organization.

Those trips were fascinating. The freedom, adrenaline, and responsibility confirmed what Peter once told me: once you become a pilot, you will never look at the sky the same way again. Weather, winds, and light became an integral part of my daily thinking.

As one dream leads to another, together with Peter we organized a new Fly Out with several pilots visiting different ultralight manufacturers: the VL3 factory in Czech Republic, the Shark factory in

Slovakia, where I was even allowed to fly the Shark OM-S443, the airplane used by Sarah Rutherford, the youngest woman to fly solo around the world, and also visiting Corsica, where we were able to fly several times with the incomparable Blackwing.

Each of these experiences, combined with visiting Aero Friedrichshafen for three consecutive years —one of Europe's biggest aviation events— made both my wife Miriam and me start thinking: *why not?* Why not buy our own ULM? After all, during those trips, we had almost become specialists

At the Ellipse stand, I met again with Michel Calabrese, the French importer based in Fayence. Knowing my affection for the aircraft, he made an irresistible offer: his own 2023 Ellipse Spirit with very few hours. A week later, my daughter and I flew to Nice and drove to Fayence. The aircraft was immaculate, equipped with full avionics and a Rotax 915. After a detailed explanation, a simple handshake sealed the deal.

A couple of weeks later, my wife and I traveled to Albrechtice to visit the Ellipse factory. When arriving near Ostrava LKMT, I received a completely unexpected call from my cousin Peter, who, knowing about our visit, flew his Blackwing together with his son Alejandro to surprise us and support us in this unquestionable step toward freedom.

The next day, we were warmly welcomed by Martin Nemec, who runs the factory together with his wife. The tour, Martin's explanations, and the care at every step confirmed once again we had made the correct choice. Quality control, the interest in colors, avionics, engine… everything convinced us completely.

But my question soon came: *where is my airplane?*
Martin took us to a part of the factory where, very well protected under a cover, was OK-CUG-28 — my airplane! The emotion was incredible. Martin and his team had installed the new radiator,


modified the cowling, repainted it in its original color —carefully chosen by Michel— performed the 100-hour service, updated the Garmins… the attention was incredible.

Paperwork took longer than expected, but eventually the moment came to bring the airplane home. With autumn advancing and winter approaching, we carefully monitored the weather and traveled to Ostrava. Strong winds delayed us until nearly sunset, but finally we took off together with Jakub, Ellipse's test pilot. The feeling when I lifted off was indescribable: *my airplane*.

Then came the big moment: *bringing the airplane home*.

Autumn had arrived, days were short, winter approached. After checking weather for days, we saw a high-pressure center almost all along the route. Miriam and I quickly bought tickets to Prague, arriving on a Tuesday evening. We stayed overnight and in one of the first morning trains we left for Ostrava.

We arrived in Ostrava at 10 AM, then took a Taxi to the airport. As soon as we approached the address, we saw a truck and trailer decorated with Ellipse photos —we knew we were in the right place. Two technicians were finishing the last checks. I could barely breathe from the excitement. There it was —ready, or almost ready, to depart.

While waiting for the Ellipse test pilot we noticed the wind: 15 knots with

gusts to 25. We couldn't fly yet. We waited patiently until nearly sunset; the wind calmed but darkness was coming. We didn't hesitate. Together with Jakub, we took off from Ostrava.

It's hard to describe the feeling when I pulled the stick and could finally say: *my airplane!*

The performance was impressive. At about 1300 ft per minute we climbed quickly to 1800 ft and did the first circuit —a very precise touch-and-go. After a few more, we informed the tower we were leaving the circuit but staying within the CTR, accelerated, and without any issue reached 125 knots.

Next day the weather was similar: limited visibility, gusty winds, morning fog, and very few daylight hours. I barely slept, calculating fuel, routes to EBZU, minimum altitudes, radios. We compared forecasts on SkyDemon, Windy, AeroWeather… but weather wasn't on our side.

We flew more —about 7 hours. I felt ready. For the first time, I could leave everything inside "my airplane": headsets, charts, snacks. It was ours.

The following day, at 8 AM, everything was ready: fruit for the trip, charged batteries, printed flight plans.On the way I checked the weather —Ostrava had one problem: instead of improving, visibility was worsening. That was it. Everything was prepared. We loaded our small backpacks, loaded the flight plan into the Garmin, said goodbye to the test pilot Jakub with a strong hug —he had been our companion through all of this— closed the canopy, squeezed each other's hands, and departed.

ATC contact was very professional. Runway 22 was perfect for our 270° course. Takeoff was smooth. We followed our carefully prepared route, passing near Pardubice, Prague, and Karlovy until reaching the German border. We initially chose 4000 ft, but seeing clear skies, we requested FL60, approved without issue.

As weather at the destination didn't look great, we decided to fly to Mannheim, where we had landed before. The airport has a brasserie, all types of fuel including Mogas, Avgas, Jet A-1, a B&B hotel 200 meters away, a tram stop literally at the door, and very reasonable landing and parking fees.

Inside the airport, we were again amazed by their friendliness. The staff gave us detailed tips for visiting Heidelberg, only 30 minutes away by tram. The tram ride cost €3.80 per person with one every 10 minutes —amazing. Arriving in the old town, with Christmas markets being prepared and the view of Schloss Heidelberg, took our breath away. Traditional restaurants serving Schweinshaxe, pretzels, Sauerbraten, and excellent beers were a must.

The next day, back at the airport in Mannheim, we warmed up the engine after removing a thin layer of snow from the wings. Oil temperature reached the required level, we contacted the tower and departed via runway 27, leaving the CTR as instructed.

Approaching home, he wind was much stronger than expected; I only felt it below 2000 ft. My approach could have been better, but I can't complain —I had never landed there before, the grass surroundings and low sun made it hard to spot the runway, and the wind was annoying. Tower support was essential. After two missed approaches —as safety dictates— we landed perfectly.

Our son Johan was waiting with his girlfriend Sol, and together with Johan and Dirk from the club, they congratulated us and came to see the new aircraft.

I must admit I'm not as emotional as my wife, but landing there moved me deeply. We squeezed our hands again, symbol of a mission accomplished.

# AOPA Season Opening May 1st 2025

By Reinhard Krommes

AOPA Luxembourg called pilots to conquer the skies on the May 1st public holiday.

The mission was simple and inviting: depart from various airfields across the Luxembourg region, fly roughly 200 nautical miles, and land at Le Touquet (LFAT). After lunch at the highly valued airport restaurant, L'Escale, the plan was to head to the beach—on foot or by bike—before flying back home.

The idea clearly struck a chord. No fewer than 34 crew members in 17 aircraft signed up. The weather cooperated perfectly, with fine conditions along the entire route throughout the day. On Thursday morning, the skies came alive as seven aircraft departed from Luxembourg, five from Sterpenich, two from Trier, and one each from Micheville and Bitburg. Unfortunately, one aircraft had to stay behind due to a technical issue. Notably, eight of the participating aircraft were ultralights of various types—something that was less common in the past and perhaps a sign of a continuing trend toward smaller, more economical, and more individual flying machines.

I teamed up with Eugène to fly the C172 LX-AIO from Aéro-Sport. With the autopilot having decided to take the day off, we enjoyed hand-flying the aircraft all the way. After an uneventful flight, we joined the mixed traffic on approach to Le Touquet, sharing the airspace with fellow AOPA participants, local traffic, and arrivals from the UK. The apron was nearly full, and we managed to squeeze into one of the last available spots. As Le Touquet is a well-known gateway into Europe for many British GA pilots, the airport proudly bears the honorary name "Le Touquet – Elizabeth II." Parked nearby was an impressive group of legendary Chipmunks from the UK.

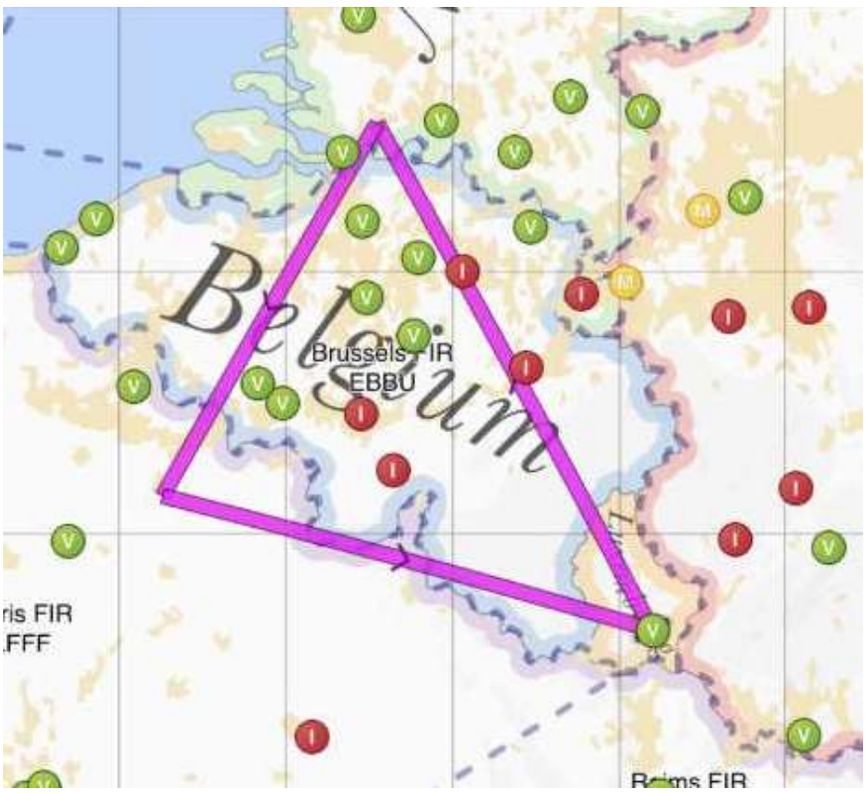
We joined the rest of the group just in time for a well-earned pilot's drink. At the restaurant, he "Ardoise" tempted us with an appealing menu, and we took our reserved seats for an excellent lunch at the airport restaurant.

The afternoon offered something for everyone. Some participants took bikes, others strolled into town or headed straight for the beach. Eugène and I walked through the pine forests toward the sea. With the public holiday, the place was buzzing with people and fully lived up to its nickname, “Paris Plage.” After a coffee, we took an Uber back to the airport, ready for the flight home.

Back at the airport, we discovered that we had managed to lock ourselves out of our Cessna. Something had jammed during the locking process, leaving us with only one option: unlocking the aircraft from the inside. Fortunately, the baggage door was still open, but getting one of us rather fully grown gentlemen all the way to the front seat was no small challenge. Eugène volunteered—and succeeded. With no damage done and after a careful check of the aircraft, we were finally ready to depart for our return flight to Luxembourg.

Another smooth and enjoyable flight followed, and we touched down at ELLX at around 19:30h. All other participants also returned safely to their home bases, and well-deserved post-flight beers were soon in order. What a beautiful day. Many thanks to Peter Sodermans for organizing such an outstanding start to the flying season.

# AOPA “Advanced” NavRefresher 2025




Etienne called for our annual NAVRefesher Fly-Out on June 14th which, in the spirit of Bernard Frechen’s years long tradition, encourages new (and older) to fly to new destinations and share the experience of getting away from the nest. It gives an opportunity to all pilots to improve their knowledge in preparation and realisation of navigation flights.

Especially pilots, having gotten their licence recently, have the chance to gather more experience, routine and confidence in navigation flights, flying in a team with more experienced pilots.

Three legs are flown, so that each pilot has the chance to fly one leg as PIC.

The plan was to fly from Luxembourg and local airfields to Breda-Seppe (EHSE), Cambrai (LFYG) and then back.

As always, many pilots with light aircraft and UL’s registered for this popular event.

This year weather did not play game. So, only two pilots decided to give it a try and set off for Breda-Seppe. They arrived and then flew back to Luxembourg in less than perfect conditions.

We hope that this the upcoming new board will organise the 2026 NAVRefesher with blue skies!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Text and Photos by Peter Sodermans

*The Blackwing 600RG is not just any ULM: it is a machine that brings distant horizons within reach. In this report, Peter Sodermans (President of AOPA Luxembourg) takes you on a journey from Luxembourg to the far edge of Europe: Narva, on the dividing line with Russia. Two days of flying , through Germany, Poland, and Lithuania, past historical cities and through geopolitically sensitive regions, with his fifteen-year-old son as co-pilot. This is a story about efficiency and freedom in the air , about navigating with satellite data and paper charts , about meetings with fellow pilots, and about the shift from classic GA to modern high-end ULMs. A trip that shows how small-scale aviation, despite increasing restrictions, still has the power to cross boundaries—literally and figuratively.*

On a crisp summer morning, my Blackwing 600RG taxies out to the start of Sterpenich, on the Luxembourg-Belgian border. The field has a short grass runway, surrounded by hedges and fields , forming an almost ironic contrast with the enormous Luxembourg-Findel airport, barely a few kilometres away. Where airliners prepare daily on a 4000-metre runway for the world , I depart from a grass strip that has never lost its simplicity.

The fact that I depart from Belgium says a lot. Luxembourg has no clear legislation for modern ULMs such as the Blackwing, making registration there impossible. The Luxembourg DAC (*Civil Aviation Authority*) does not want high-end ULMs at the national airport. Therefore, my aircraft is registered in France. It is both practical and symbolic: Luxembourg pilots are forced to seek their home base elsewhere , while we could just as easily have our own place here.

## Day 1 – To Gdańsk

My travel destination is far away: Narva, the outermost northeastern city of Estonia, right on the border with Russia. A place with a clear link to the history of the Dutch merchant fleet and not far from Saint Petersburg. I plan to take two days to get there, with a stopover in Poland and Lithuania.

The first leg takes me via Germany and Poland to Gdańsk , a city that has been known for centuries as a Hanseatic trading metropolis. The Blackwing cruises effortlessly at FL95 , at a speed of 150 knots

and an average consumption of fifteen litres car fuel per hour. It is precisely this kind of efficiency that makes long journeys feasible again.

Above Poland, a landscape of plains and forests unfolds. My Golze Iridium satellite receiver keeps me connected with current weather information, even far from urban centres. It gives a reassuring feeling: even over the least populated areas, I know what to expect. The landing in Gdańsk goes smoothly. The airport turns out to be surprisingly GA-friendly , an exception in Europe where many large airports are increasingly closing themselves off to small-scale aviation. It feels good to park my Blackwing in a city that has always symbolised connection and trade. Congratulations Gdańsk!

## Day 2 – Druskininkai in the Suwałki Corridor

The next morning, I depart for Lithuania. My (sanitary) stopover is Druskininkai, in the notorious Suwałki Corridor. The small field is literally on the border of Belorussia , in a region often described in NATO circles as Europe's most vulnerable spot. From the air, it looks peaceful: forests, rivers, rural villages. But beneath that calm lies geopolitical tension.

The field itself is simple and welcoming. The Blackwing lands without difficulty—short strips like this are precisely what it was designed for. For many classic GA aircraft, this would not have been an obvious stop , but for a modern high-end ULM, it poses no barrier. The border post is literally twenty metres from the airfield —a unique setting that perfectly illustrates Druskininkai's location.

## Narva – Europe's Outermost Edge

From Lithuania, I continue north. Eventually, Narva appears. On the European side stands the imposing Hermannsburcht (Hermann Castle) , originally built by the Danes in the Middle Ages. During the Swedish period, in the 1620s and 1630s, the fortress was partly restored and expanded under the supervision of the Dutch engineer Daniel Brandt. Across the river, on Russian soil, towers the Ivangorod fortress. Two castles, two worlds, separated by a river.

Above Narva, history becomes tangible. This is where Europe ends. The fortresses show how power and cohesion make the difference. It makes me melancholic that Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium no longer work together as one block today. How much stronger would we be if the Benelux

had truly remained one nation? To me, that feels like a historical mistake , and the stones of Narva make that painfully visible.

## The Return Flight – with Alejandro

After Narva, I set course for home. My fifteen-year-old son Alejandro is flying this trip with me as co-pilot. The passion for the air has completely gripped him , and this is a special opportunity for us to take a long trip together. We encounter GPS Spoofing ; my son navigates flawlessly with a paper map on his lap, exactly as I learned to navigate at his age.

Our route first takes us to Warsaw and Southern Poland , where we decide to spend a day visiting Auschwitz. The contrast could hardly be greater. Where we experience freedom in the cockpit and literally soar above borders , we are confronted there with the horror of unfreedom and destruction. For me, it was intense to share that with my son. He is at the right age for it. It led to conversations that went deeper than cruise speeds or landing procedures: about freedom, responsibility, and remembrance, with a link to the current geopolitical situation.

## Ostrava – From Classic General Aviation to Modern ULMs

The next stop is Ostrava , where we meet the Luxembourg AOPA member Franky Coene. Franky was a convinced GA pilot for years , flying a Diamond from the flying club, but he recently left that world behind. He, too, chose a high-end ULM of the Czech type Ellipse —another proof of the shift that is visible everywhere.

What I experience myself, I also see with colleagues and friends: the step from classic General Aviation to modern ULMs is not a regression, but a new freedom. Lighter, cheaper, but at the same time technologically more advanced and often better equipped. More and more pilots are following this path. Within AOPA Luxembourg, where I have been chairman since 2018 , we notice the same trend. Nearly half of our board now flies high-end ULMs. Where GA is increasingly being suppressed at Findel , pilots find the opportunity in ULMs to fly more often and undertake long journeys.

I used to fly about 30 to 40 hours per year with the Mooney. With this high-end ULM, that has more than tripled to 150 hours er year. The story is identical for my colleagues.

## A Stop in Sterpenich and on to Fayence

After Ostrava, we set course towards the southwest. We make one more short landing in Sterpenich to change clothes. It feels almost symbolic: returning to the place where the whole journey began, but now as a stopover on the way to another destination.

From there, the next morning at sunrise, we fly on to Fayence-Tourrettes , an idyllic field in Provence, near Cannes on the French Riviera. The grass runways lie between cypress trees and lavender , and the air is filled with gliders circling like birds in the thermals. For me, Fayence is a place of peace and coming home—a second home base in the south. Alejandro will learn to glide there this summer. *L'histoire se répète* (History repeats itself).

The (less than 3 hours) flight from Luxembourg to Fayence cost me 45 litres of carfuel. For such a distance and experience, that feels almost unbelievable: modern ULMs like the Blackwing make this kind of travel not only possible, but also efficient and sustainable. Alejandro steps out, looks at the sky full of gliders, and smiles. I see in his gaze the same feeling that has driven me my whole life: flying as freedom.

For Peter Sodermans, flying is one of the great motivations in his life. Professionally, he built a career in management consulting and real estate investments , but his true passion has been aviation since his youth. His flying adventure began at the age of fifteen with the Belgian Air Cadets, where he learned gliding. In the late 80s, he obtained his PPL and has since explored countless destinations in Western Europe. Impressive journeys followed outside of that area: since 2005, he has made five major trips through the USA, Canada, and Mexico ; he flew to the Caucasus and Georgia in 2015 ; and in 2016, he organised the first aviation rally from Luxembourg to Georgia with 45 participants on behalf of AOPA Luxembourg. In 2024, he added a memorable flight through Uruguay and Argentina in a Cessna 182.

Over the years, Sodermans has flown various aircraft, from the Cessna 172 and 182 to the Mooney 20J, which was his favourite for years. In 2024, he became the owner of a new Blackwing, equipped with the latest technology—a new chapter in his flying story (www.privatepilot.lu). Since 2018, he has been chairman of AOPA Luxembourg , where he advocates for the interests of General Aviation, both locally and in international cooperation with IAOPA. He passes on that same passion to his son Alejandro , who has been flying with him since childhood and is now just as gripped by the aviation bug as his father.

# Flight Adventure with my Risen UL

## From Luxembourg to Cape Verde

## 11112 km - 41 hrs 17 min

By Patrick Bettendorf

### ✈ Day 1 – April 18, 2025: Departure from Luxembourg EDRB and Meeting in France

Route: Bitburg (EDRB) ➔ Figeac (LFCF) (France) ➔ Castellón de la Plana (LECN)

I began my adventure early in the morning, taking off from Bitburg. My first stop was Figeac in France for refuelling. There, I met my friends Eddie and Edwin, who would accompany me on this fantastic journey.

We continued together to the small airfield of Castellón de la Plana, Spain, where we spent our first night.

### ☺ Day 2 – April 19, 2025: Rest Day in Castellón de la Plana

We enjoyed a relaxing day in Castellón. The pleasant weather and the laid-back Spanish atmosphere were perfect for recharging.

## DAY 3 – APRIL 20, 2025: CROSSING TO AFRICA

Route: Castellón de la Plana ➔ Granada (LEGR) ➔ Tangier (GMTT) ➔ Casablanca (GMMT)


In the morning, we flew to Granada for customs clearance. The process went smoothly, and we continued directly to Tangier, Morocco – our gateway to Africa.

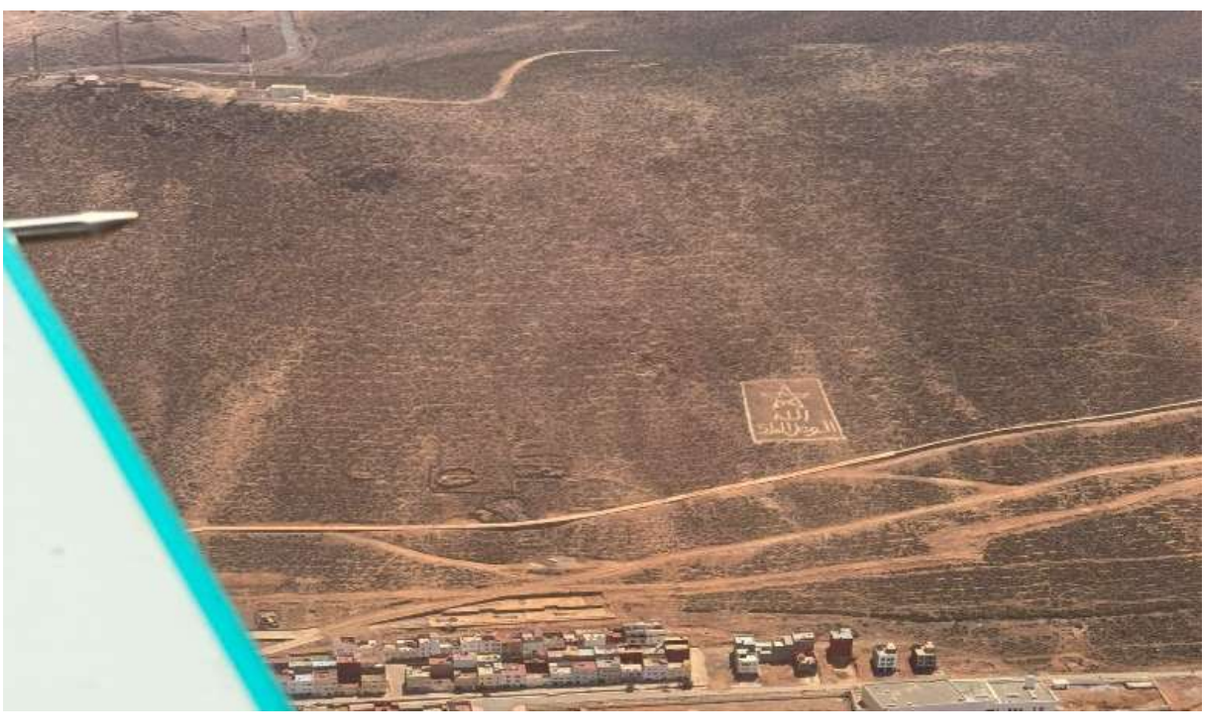
Unfortunately, Edwin faced technical issues and had to end his journey here. It was a tough moment to part ways.

Eddie and I proceeded to Casablanca the same day. We explored the city, enjoying Moroccan hospitality, lively streets, and delicious local cuisine.

## DAY 4 – APRIL 21, 2025: INTO THE WESTERN SAHARA

Route: Casablanca ➔ Dakhla (GMMH)

Our route continued to Dakhla, Western Sahara. The vast, barren landscapes, the bright sunlight, and the proximity to the ocean made this stop unforgettable.



## DAY 5 – APRIL 22, 2025: ATLANTIC CROSSING TO CAPE VERDE

Route: Dakhla ➔ Praia (GVNP)

One of the most exciting legs began: 4.5 hours over water to Praia, Cape Verde. Flying over the endless Atlantic was both thrilling and humbling.

## Days 6-7 – April 23-24, 2025: Relaxation in Cape Verde


We enjoyed 2.5 days of vacation on Cape Verde. Beautiful beaches, pleasant weather, and the relaxed island vibe made this a perfect break.

## DAY 8 – APRIL 25, 2025: BEGINNING THE RETURN JOURNEY

Route: Praia ➔ Dakhla ➔ Essaouira-Mogador (GMMI)

We started our return journey with a stop in Dakhla, then continued to Essaouira-Mogador. Essaouira impressed with its coastal charm and historic city walls.

## DAY 9 – APRIL 26, 2025: STORMY LANDING IN TANGIER

Route: Essaouira-Mogador ➔ Tangier (GMTT)



We flew back to Tangier for customs clearance. The landing here was particularly challenging: 48 kt winds with a 20-degree crosswind demanded full concentration and flying skills.
We stayed overnight in Tangier to rest.

*(Continued on page 50)*


COLLAGE 2025
AERO '25
L2K


YEARBOOK
GENERAL MEETING
SAFETY SEMINAR

*(Continued from page 47)*

## Day 10 – April 27, 2025: Homeward via Granada

Route: Tangier ➔ Granada (LEGR)

Our next stop was Granada again for European customs. Familiar faces and procedures made us feel like we were truly back in Europe.

## Day 11 – April 28, 2025: Fuel Stop in Valence

Route: Granada ➔ Valence (LFLV)

We continued to Valence, France, where a friend was already waiting with fuel. The warm welcome and good support felt almost like a personal reception.

## Day 12 – April 29, 2025: Arrival in Bitburg

Route: Valence ➔ Bitburg (EDRB)

The final leg took us back to Bitburg. After covering 11,112 km and 41 hours and 17 minutes of total flight time, this unforgettable adventure came to a close.

I am grateful for this journey – the experiences, the friendship, the challenges, and the incredible impressions will stay with me forever.

### Preparations before Flight

- Complete, Carefully and in detail - Mecanical Check (Bernhard Altenkemper)
- Structure check (Company Porto Aviation Group)
- Reading all the AIP's from each country
- Always have a Plan B and Plan C
- Biggest Challenges : UL Autorsations & Weather
- Knowing aircraft limits
- As a pilot, you must be aware of your skills and limitations
- Long flights experience and healthy state
- VFR – IFR (in some country's VFR doesn't exist)
- AOPA Card (especially Greece)

### Aircraft Equipment

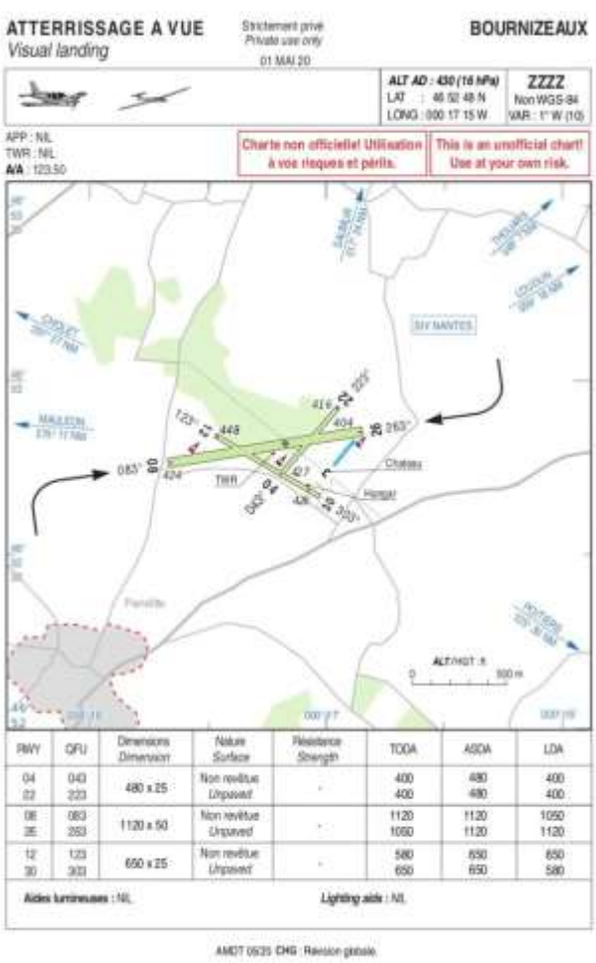
- ADS-B in & out
- Flarm in & out (STRATUX)
- ELT
- PLB
- TCAS (STRATUX)
- Garmin InReach
- AP
- RG – Retractable Gear
- Dynon avionic with AirMate Charts
- Mini-Ipad with SkyDemon/AirMate
- Starlink portable satellite
- 3 Red Hand-Flares
- Oxygen System
- Windy App for the weather
- Waterproof bag
- Handheld Radio with Bose connection
- Powerbank for instant startup (booster)
- Flat-Fuelbags 100L (no fuel Cap Verde)
- Spare tires (front&main)
- Survival Food & Water
- Life jacket
- Life raft (2persons)
- Rescue Parachute (obligatory)
- First-aid Kit

# The AOPA Pilgrimage to Bournizeaux

## A Private Aviation Utopia

By Peter Sodermans

The dream of the "private strip" is a staple of general aviation lore, yet it is rarely realised with such architectural and aeronautical ambition as at the **Château de Bournizeaux**. Situated 4km south of Saint-Varent in the lush Loire region, this estate is not merely a residence; it is a bespoke aviation hub carved into the French countryside by its owner, Erwin, a former military pilot whose passion for the skies is matched only by his hospitality.



## The Garden of Three Runways

To find Bournizeaux, one must look beyond the standard digital flight bags; notably absent from SkyDemon, this purely private enclave remains a sanctuary for those in the know. Navigating the approach requires a shift in protocol. While the field operates on **123.50**, our crews coordinated air-to-air on the newly dedicated General Aviation frequency, **123.065**, moving away from the old 123.45 standard.

Upon arrival, the scale of Erwin's ambition becomes clear. He has ingeniously integrated **three unpaved runways** into his garden. While the primary strip, **08/26**, offers a generous **1,120 metres**, the secondary options (**04/22** at 480m and **12/30** at 650m) provide versatility that many municipal aerodromes would envy. Erwin even manages the traffic from a self-built control tower on the property.

## A Diverse Formation

The AOPA fly-out in June 2025 saw a sophisticated mix of five crews and ten participants. The roster reflected the changing face of European GA:

- **Lionel Mamame** arrived in his robust **Turbo Cessna 210**, accompanied by his mother.
- **Pierre Bardaga** piloted his **Diamond DA40**, though he spent much of the weekend casting an admiring eye over the ultra-modern ULM category.
- The "high-end microlight" contingent was represented by **Etienne Haumont's Bristell** and the sleek **Blackwing** of the trip's organiser, **Peter Sodermans**.
- The award for endurance went to **Maciej Krich**, who ferried his crew all the way from **Poznań, Poland**, lured by the promise of Atlantic oysters.

## Life at the Château

For a flat rate of **€145 per night** (inclusive of breakfast, taxes, and landing fees), the experience is peerless. After a 2-hour and 20-minute transit at 150 knots, I was met on frequency by Erwin, guided to a parking spot directly adjacent to the swimming pool by a "follow-me" pickup van, and was in the water within minutes of engine shutdown.

The Château itself is a masterclass in classic maintenance—spacious, historic rooms surrounded by a traditional moat. The Dutch owners, **Judith and Erwin**, have cultivated an atmosphere that is less "hotel" and more "country house party." This was best exemplified when the group opted against dining out, choosing instead an impromptu garden barbecue facilitated by our hosts.

## Coastal Sorties and Future Classics

The estate's location serves as a perfect springboard for the Atlantic coast. We took the opportunity to fly to **Les Sables-d'Olonne (LFJB)** for a walk on the sandy beaches.

For me, the trip held a personal milestone. My son, **Alejandro**, now 15 and beginning his own journey as a glider pilot, served as my co-pilot. Watching the next generation engage with such a vibrant community suggests that the future of GA is in capable hands.

As we departed after three nights, having occupied all seven rooms of the castle, the consensus was unanimous. With its combination of technical challenge, immense charm, and even a courtesy car for pilots, Bournizeaux is destined to become a staple of the AOPA calendar.

# Wellness Roundup 2026

By Cristina Menendez

Your wellbeing and mental health should be part of your preflight check, it is as important as checking your aircraft. Private pilots often shoulder the pressures of aviation on their own, but no one is immune to stress or fatigue. Noticing when you need support—and acting on it—is a sign of strength and self-awareness. Reaching out—to a fellow pilot, a friend, or a professional—is the responsible proactive choice.


Below are some good local contacts to have handy – <u>for you or someone you know</u>.

The QR codes take you directly to the link online.

Read about pilot Carl Eisen's experience with the power of meditation in both of these articles

If you are looking for a local hotline or someone to speak with locally - you can reach out to the Gesond Leiwen section of the Luxembourg Ligue Medico-Sociale

Use the QR code or call: +352 22 01 22

Whatever you are feeling, know that you are not alone. To speak with someone anonymously, SOS Detresse is available at +352 45 45 45 daily from 11am to 11pm (Fri and Sat till 3am) in Luxembourgish, French and German - plus English on Wednesdays

New! Chat SOS

The Chambre des Salariés has a work-related stress hotline available at +352 27 49 42 22

Mon-Fri 8am-2pm or via email at: stressberodung@cls.lu

to speak with someone anonymously. This service allows 5 free consulta

# Flying a Private Plane along the Pioneers' Route

## Rallye Toulouse – St Louis /Sénegal 2025

By Jeanne Hames


*Ever dreamed of tracing the footsteps of aviation pioneers? That's exactly what we did – flying a tiny TB20 from Luxembourg to Saint-Louis, Senegal, along the historic Aéropostale routes. Seventeen aircraft, endless deserts, bustling African rivers, and a few cockpit naps later, we experienced adventure, teamwork, and a taste of freedom only the sky can offer. From sand-stripped runways to luxury hotels, from tailwinds over the ocean to camel caravans in the Sahara, every day was a lesson in flying, friendship, and the thrill of exploration.*

*And this is exactly where our adventure begins – in a private light aircraft, with excitement in the air and a healthy respect for what lies ahead.*

## Takeoff in Toulouse – Rallye Kickoff

On September 20th, the 41st Toulouse–Saint-Louis Rally takes off in Toulouse.

17 aircraft are participating – Pipers, Cessnas, TB20s, and other loyal flying machines.

Gilbert and I are in the mix, flying his TB20, registration LX-SAR.

Our start number: 5.

In this rally, the fastest planes take off first – honor or extra pressure? We take it sportingly.

## Morning Briefings, Daily Adventures

Every day begins with an early morning briefing:

Route, weather, customs procedures, overflight permissions, and anything else that might be important – or at least surprising.

Our first leg is from Toulouse to Muchamiel near Alicante.

Two days later, we cross the Mediterranean towards Morocco, aiming for Tangier.


My co-pilot Gilbert develops his own routine: his daily nap in the cockpit. Sometimes during the flight, sometimes elsewhere. I let him – it seems to work.

On the ground, we wait until all planes have safely landed.

Three planes belong to the organization, staffed with doctors, mechanics, and technicians – a reassuring presence. After landing, every plane is refueled immediately, and then we head to the camp or to the hotel.

Evenings are for sightseeing and lectures on aviation pioneers.

## MOROCCO – HISTORY AND ENDLESS HORIZONS

In Morocco, the flight becomes truly magical.

We pass Essaouira and then reach a very special place: Tarfaya, Cap Juby.

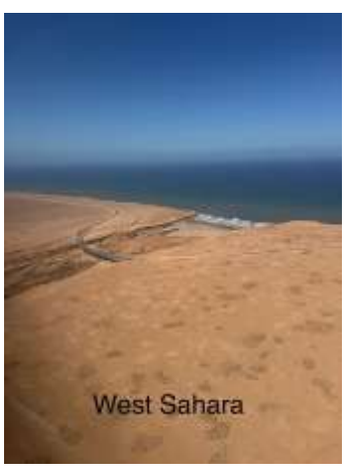
Here, a sand strip demands special caution.

It was Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's base in 1925, flying for Aéropostale – a piece of aviation history long before GPS existed.



Below us lies a landscape that takes your breath away:

desert, sand, endless expanses, occasionally a camel caravan, and sand tracks stretching into nothingness.

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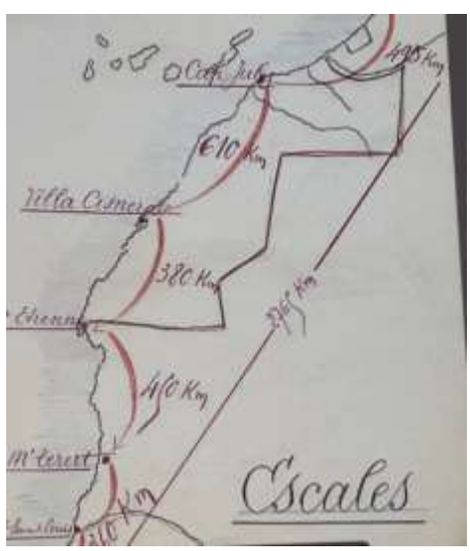
One feels small – and privileged

## DAY 5 – WESTERN SAHARA & MAURITANIA




Day five takes us over the Western Sahara and Mauritania, with stops in Dakhla and Nouakchott.

Isolation, silence, vastness.

We see at a deserted hotel, built over four years but seemingly abandoned.

Nothing works: no water, occasional electricity, sand everywhere.

Yet the mix of desert meeting the sea is breathtaking – far from tourist crowds.

Flying itself is a joy:

We have a tailwind, flying low over the ocean, often near the shore.

Sometimes through fog, usually with perfect visibility.

Excitement peaks when passing other rally planes – or being overtaken – and filming each other.

Memories of flying over the endless desert are unforgettable.

## DAYS 6 & 7 – SENEGAL COMES INTO VIEW

On the sixth and seventh days, it becomes clear: we're approaching our destination.

The Senegal River comes into view, the land becomes greener, and the population density increases.

We pass Saint-Louis and head to Dakar, where a rest day is much needed.

The flights are exhausting:

long legs, intense concentration, and temperatures in the cockpit reaching 37°C at times.

On top of that, the daily rally tasks are demanding:

- Identify photos on the ground and mark them on the navigation chart
- Complete historical and technical questionnaires – no internet allowed
- Fly over certain points at exactly the right time

Flying alone is not enough – you need focus, teamwork, and a cool head.

## Arrival & Team Spirit


In Dakar, we enjoy a comfortable luxury hotel.

Most participants take the chance to hand in their laundry – our luggage had been intentionally minimal, space- and weight-saving.

By now, the 17 teams plus the 3 organization teams have truly grown together.


We flew the pioneers' old routes, helped each other, solved technical problems together, and shared moments in the cockpit – laughing, living, and learning.

On day eight, we fly to Saint-Louis for the awards ceremony.

We achieve a proud 7th place out of 17.

Celebrations take place aboard an old boat on the Senegal River, the perfect setting to look back and soak in the moment.

A big Bravo to the organizers, always professional, attentive, and supportive.

## The Return – Farewell to the Desert

For the return flight, we climb to at least 4,500 feet due to headwinds, enjoying the desert landscapes one last time.

In Tan-Tan, we are treated at a Ksar, a true desert fortress, reached in rickety old Land Rovers.

In Ouarzazate, we stay inside a film studio – and suddenly, we are back in Almería. Europe returns.

The experience passes too quickly.

The rally finally ends on Menorca. From there, everyone flies onward – to France, Belgium, or Switzerland.

Gilbert and I stay a few extra days in Nice due to poor weather.


A quiet ending to an extraordinary journey with memories that will last a lifetime.

# We won’t run out of AVGAS

**Avgas 100 LL aviation fuel will be produced and distributed for years to come. Its producers benefit from both acquired rights and a positive opinion from the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to authorise the use of lead tetraethyl (TEL) in aviation petrol until the end of April 2032. Shell, Trafigura/Puma Energies and Warter Fuels have received a positive opinion from ECHA and a recommendation until 2032. The companies are waiting for the European Commission to sign the permit. This does not limit the production of Avgas fuel due to rights acquired by virtue of the timely application by these companies.**


## THE AVGAS PROBLEM

The issue of fuels containing lead tetraethyl has long been one of the most discussed within general aviation. Two approaches have dominated this discussion. The first, pointing out that the price for improved fuel octane numbers and fuel efficiency was a significant environmental and health risks. The second approach – the socio-economic one – took the view that the risks identified mattered, but that tens of thousands of jobs in European countries and tax issues should be taken into account first. Recall that the market is estimated by EASA to be worth €9 billion per year.

Avgas 100LL is the only usable fuel for about 30% of aircraft whose engines are not adapted to burn other fuels. A significant proportion of these are rescue, sanitation and firefighting aircraft, as well as those belonging to border surveillance services and securing exclusive economic zones. It is estimated that conversion to alternative unleaded aviation fuels will be successful in Europe by then. This is about ensuring production, logistics and distribution standards throughout the supply chain.

## BIZARRE ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of May, Antwerp Airport (EBAW), like Ostend Airport (EBOS), banned the sale, refuelling and use of Avgas 100LL in GA aircraft. This was done without prior announcement or consultation and without any justification. This decision was strongly contested by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Luxembourg and other associations.

## AND AS FOR ALTERNATIVE FUELS....

At this time there are two US manufacturers have received an FAA approval. GAMI G100UL and SWIFT 100R. However usage of these fuels is subject to STC for given types to be requested. Some manufacturers like Cirrus do not approve usage of these fuel.

The fact that Swift 100R unleaded petrol has been certified for several popular aircraft types, including the Cessna 172S an 172R models, is no breakthrough. Avgas 100LL still remains irreplaceable in many cases.

The EU has provided the general aviation community with something it badly needed: **certainty**.

Avgas 100LL is not disappearing tomorrow, next year, or even later this decade. GA in Europe has been granted valuable time — time to fly, to plan, and to transition responsibly when true alternatives are ready.

For now, keep flying — and keep an eye on the horizon.


By Reinhard Krommes and various sources

## WHY THIS MATTERS

GNSS (commonly referred to as GPS) has become essential for General Aviation. It supports navigation, RNAV approaches, traffic awareness, and most EFB functions. Across Europe, however, **intentional interference with GNSS signals is increasing**. What was once rare is now a real operational consideration for GA pilots.

Understanding the risks—and knowing how to respond—has become part of basic airmanship.

## JAMMING VS SPOOFING – THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE

GPS jamming

Jamming involves transmitting radio noise that **overpowers satellite signals**.

Typical effects

- "GPS lost" or "position unavailable"
- GNSS-based navigation and approaches become unusable
- ADS-B traffic may disappear
- Jamming removes the signal but does not create false positions.

GPS spoofing

Spoofing is more advanced. Counterfeit GNSS signals are broadcast to **mislead the receiver**.

Typical effects

- Aircraft position appears displaced on moving maps
- Track or groundspeed does not match reality
- GNSS shows “valid” data, but it is wrong
- Spoofing is potentially more hazardous because it may not be immediately obvious.

## Where this is happening in Europe

Repeated GNSS interference has been reported in:

- The Baltic States and Finland
- Eastern Poland
- Romania and Bulgaria (Black Sea region)
- The Eastern Mediterranean (Greece, Cyprus, Türkiye)
- Northern Scandinavia during military exercises

EASA and national authorities have confirmed **wide-area disruptions**, sometimes extending hundreds of miles. GA aircraft are frequently affected, often without specific NOTAM coverage.

## Why GA aircraft are particularly vulnerable

Compared with commercial aviation, GA typically operates with Fewer independent navigation systems and heavily relies on a single GNSS source. GA pilots often use portable EFBs and uncertified receivers. Plane usually have no backup with inertial navigation. As a result, **loss or corruption of GNSS can quickly increase workload**, especially in busy airspace, marginal weather, or near terrain.

## Recognising GNSS interference in flight

Possible jamming

- GNSS position disappears on all devices
- Integrity or RAIM warnings
- GNSS approaches become unavailable

Possible spoofing

- Position does not match visual references
- One GNSS device disagrees with another
- Unrealistic groundspeed or track changes
- ADS-B traffic appears incorrectly positioned
- A key warning sign: the GPS looks normal, but reality does not.

## Operational risks for GA pilots

- Loss of situational awareness, particularly VFR
- Airspace infringements due to position errors
- Unstable or misleading approach guidance
- Reduced traffic awareness when ADS-B position input is unreliable
- Increased workload and decision pressure

## PRACTICAL MITIGATION MEASURES

Before flight

- Check NOTAMs for GNSS interference (coverage may be incomplete)
- Be aware of known regional hotspots
- Plan routes with ground-based navigation aids available
- Identify alternates that do not rely solely on GNSS approaches

In the cockpit

- Carry paper charts or offline maps
- Maintain proficiency with VOR/DME and visual navigation
- Cross-check GNSS against:
  - Visual landmarks
  - Compass and heading indicators
  - Time–distance calculations
  - Radio navigation aids where available
- Treat unexplained navigation behaviour conservatively

During approaches

- Do not continue a GNSS approach if integrity is doubtful
- Be prepared to go around or divert
- Inform ATC early if GNSS becomes unreliable
  - Request radar vectors if appropriate

## TRAINING AND AWARENESS

AOPA strongly encourages:

- Regular practice of **non-GNSS navigation**
- Training scenarios involving **misleading GNSS data**, not just total loss
- Open discussion of GNSS interference in clubs and flight schools
- Loss of GPS should be treated as **a manageable abnormal situation**, not a surprise emergency.

## REPORTING HELPS EVERYONE

- Pilots should report GNSS interference to:
- ATC when applicable
- National aviation authorities
- Pilot associations and safety forums
- Pilot reports improve situational awareness and support better guidance for the entire GA community.

## BOTTOM LINE

GPS jamming and spoofing are now **part of the European operating environment**. They do not make GA flying unsafe—but they do demand continued navigation discipline.

**The message is clear:**
Use GNSS, but do not trust it blindly. Cross-check, stay proficient, and always have a plan B.

# Repainting My Mooney Ovation

## A 30-Year Investment in Protection

By Khang Vu Tien

The €40,000 Wake-Up Call

Let me be brutally honest: repainting my 1995 Mooney Ovation costs between €30,000 and €45,000—the same as overhauling my six-cylinder engine. It's funny how we obsess over engine hours and avionics when buying a used aircraft, but paint? It's just there, doing its job quietly... until it isn't.

My wake-up call came during a routine pre-flight in 2023. There it was: 10 cm² of bare aluminum grinning at me from the right wing's leading edge. My stomach sank. If I did nothing, corrosion would set in on an otherwise mechanically perfect aircraft. A surprise Luxembourg Civil Aviation Authority CAMO inspection in 2024 confirmed my Mooney was in impeccable condition—they actually congratulated me. I wasn't about to let paint failure undo all that careful maintenance.

My former chief pilot's words echoed: "*Given the same lifespan of an aircraft, the sooner you decide, the longer you'll enjoy it.*" He was right. This wasn't vanity—it was protection.

## Finding the Right Shop

I compared three French workshops: Aerostyll in Lézignan (LFMZ), Aéro-Roussillon in Perpignan (LFMP), and JG Aviation in Gray St-Adrien (LFEV). I also checked options in Breda, the Netherlands, while my club president looked at Poland and Slovakia. Plot twist: prices were identical everywhere. So much for "cheap Eastern European labor."

All three French shops impressed me as serious professionals. I narrowed it down to the last two because both have IFR approaches—convenient when you only want your aircraft grounded during lousy weather. Aéro-Roussillon's price won. I'm just a humble, cost-conscious private owner, and Gray's rates (reflecting their Falcon Jet-sized paint booth) were significantly higher. My Mooney needed standard work, nothing dramatic.

I chose to restore the original factory livery. Boring? Maybe. But easier to resell, and at my age, I'm thinking ahead.

The operation took four weeks minimum—no shortcuts. Here's where my timing (deliberate) might hit: dropping off in early October meant mid-December pickup in terrible weather. Smart operators book late January for late March pickup. Good luck—those slots are reserved years in advance.

## The Teardown and Strip

Repainting an aircraft isn't like repainting a car. EASA standards required disassembling control surfaces and access doors, protecting the retractable gear, complete stripping and repainting, then reweighing the entire aircraft. I chose AircraftTech in Ampuriabrava (LEAP) for this EASA Part 145 work—even though the owner flies a Beech Bonanza V35 😜.

For my Mooney, they disassembled ailerons, flaps, rudder, elevator (the entire empennage is articulated), engine cowlings, landing gear doors, wheels, antennas, and lights. Those hydraulic seals are ridiculously sensitive to paint strippers.

I held my breath during inspection. Would they find hidden nightmares? Blessedly, no. Just degraded antennas needing replacement, a small crack in a wingtip lamp cover, a hole in the engine cowling, and one hinge. I'd watched a YouTube video of someone who found automotive rustproofing and salvaged wreck parts under his paint. I dodged that bullet.

The stripping process was mesmerizing. Aéro-Roussillon sprays chemical gel that penetrates and softens paint over 2-12 hours. You watch it blister and peel away. After meticulous prep—cleaning, drying, masking every sensitive area—they spray, wait, remove softened paint with plastic scrapers, rinse with high-pressure water, and clean with specialized solvent.

Watching 30 years of factory paint disappear, revealing naked aluminium, was surreal.


https://youtube.com/shorts/O5ucxj4LNgI

## Building Protection: The Layer Cake

The coating system follows a precise sequence. First, Alodyne treatment (chromate conversion coating) creates invisible anti-corrosion protection. Then one coat of two-component epoxy primer—mine got the green chromate version. This bonds chemically with metal and blocks corrosion.

Interesting discovery: I found another 1995 Mooney Ovation (serial 29-0069, mine's 29-0071) with identical leading edge paint loss. Several aircraft from this production series apparently had a primer application defect preventing proper base coat adhesion. This repaint fixed that permanently.

After the beige primer coat, two thin coats of two-component polyurethane followed—the stuff that resists UV, gasoline, and abrasion. This is where my Mooney got its color back.


## Ceramic Coating: The Game Changer

Here's where things got really interesting. After two weeks for paint curing, they applied ceramic coating—one of my best decisions in the entire process.

Aéro-Roussillon was the only shop among the three that even offered this option. It's a transparent protective layer of silicon dioxide ($SiO_2$) nanoparticles creating a hard, smooth, hydrophobic "second skin" bonded to the clear coat. Think armour for your new paint.

The benefits are remarkable:

Protection against scratches, chemicals, UV rays, dirt, and moisture

Gorgeous water-repellent effect (water beads up and rolls off)

Much easier to keep clean—bugs and grime wash off with minimal effort

Maintains showroom shine with basic care

Lasts up to five years before needing a booster

Yes, it meant waiting those extra two weeks. But considering this paint job should last 30 years, what's two weeks? The ceramic coating makes maintenance so much simpler. Instead of worrying about every bug splat degrading my expensive new paint, I just wash with pH-neutral soap every couple of months and it looks fantastic.

Will ceramic coating complicate stripping in 2055? Sure, they'll need degreaser or light sanding first. But that's a 30-year problem. Right now, I'm enjoying protected, easy-to-maintain paint that looks stunning.

The ceramic coating investment was modest compared to overall repaint cost. The peace of mind? Priceless.


## First Flight and Living with the Results

Weight and balance showed a 30 kg drop—from 1090 kg to 1060 kg. I suspect the previous weighing was incorrect.

My test flight came during the December return to Luxembourg—naturally, terrible weather. Poor visibility forced diversions: four IFR approaches, three landings (Villefranche-Tarare, Lyon Bron, Chambéry, finally Luxembourg). The aircraft performed beautifully. TAS increased only slightly, from 175 kts to 178 kts. Don't repaint for speed—do it for protection.

Maintenance: Easier Than You'd Think

Maintaining ceramic coating is straightforward—not some fragile, high-maintenance diva. Just follow simple rules and your aircraft stays gorgeous with minimal fuss.

**Regular Washing (Every 1-2 Months):** Two-bucket method with pH-neutral, wax-free shampoo (CarPro Reset or Gyeon Bathe). The key: "pH neutral" and "no wax"—regular car wash soap interferes with hydrophobic properties. Washing is actually easier now. Dirt doesn't bond as strongly, so it rinses off readily. Bugs that required serious scrubbing? Now they wipe right off. I never air-dry (invites water spots). High-quality microfiber towels or filtered air. Takes 15 minutes, looks showroom-fresh.

**Quick Contaminant Response:** Bird droppings and bug splats need attention within 24 hours when possible—acidity can affect coating. But honestly, even this is easier with ceramic coating. Soften, gentle wipe, done.

**Periodic Maintenance (Every 3-12 Months):** Apply ceramic booster spray—30 minutes for the whole aircraft. These $SiO_2$ products revive hydrophobic effect and add fresh sacrificial layer. Water beading returns strong, shine deepens. Satisfying work.

**Avoid:** Abrasive polishes, waxes, strong solvents (acetone, ammonia), automatic car washes, anything not labelled "Ceramic Safe" or "pH Neutral."

In Luxembourg, I found excellent products at **Phoenix-Shop.lu** (Gyeon brand) and specialized detailing centers. **Goedert Autocenter** stocks mainstream brands, but avoid "Wash & Wax" products—wax additives mask or weaken ceramic coating.

Bottom line: with ceramic coating and basic care, my aircraft can look better six months after painting than most look one month after. The shine holds, water beads off, and I'm not constantly worried about damage to my expensive new paint.

Best decision I made.

## Key Lessons

**Choose professionals wisely.** Skilled pros justify every euro.

**Budget for surprises.** I was lucky with just antennas and minor repairs.

**Go complete, not partial.** Would you want a Porsche 911 with only two wheel arches repainted?

**Time is non-negotiable.** Four weeks minimum, plus two for ceramic coating.

**Ceramic coating is absolutely worth it.** Extra wait and modest cost pays dividends every wash. Easy maintenance, lasting protection, gorgeous shine—no-brainer.

**Schedule strategically.** October drop-off meant December pickup in terrible weather. Learn from my mistake.

## The Market Reality

Considering retirement, I researched comparable Mooney Ovations. American prices for 1995-2001 models range from $145,000 to $275,000. Most have digital displays; only one was repainted (after gear collapse).

Here's the kicker: aircraft N453MF (serial 29-0069—same paint problem as mine) reports peeling leading edges needing repaint, yet asks $235,000!

My LX-JCO has dial displays, but this complete repaint with ceramic coating cost more than a Garmin G1000—and provides better airframe protection. Smart buyers understand that math.

I'm asking €245,000, including Bose A20 headphones, electric tractor, hood cover, and equipment. This aircraft prioritizes careful maintenance and complete IFR avionics over cutting-edge digital displays.

Because protecting the airframe matters more than fancy screens. This paint with ceramic coating will last 30 years. Digital displays? Outdated in five.

That's the calculation I made choosing repaint over avionics upgrades. No regrets.

And every time I wash it and watch water bead off in perfect spheres, I smile. Worth every euro.

# Governing the Invisible

## How ICAO Is Quietly Rewriting the Rules of Flight
## Reflections from AOPA's Permanent Observer


By Peter Sodermans

The most consequential decisions in aviation are rarely dramatic. They are taken in committee rooms, refined in working papers, and implemented years after the original debate has faded from memory. Yet these decisions—about data, medicine, navigation, automation and responsibility—determine how pilots fly, how regulators act and how safe the system ultimately is.

This is the environment in which **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** operates, and it is why **AOPA** has, for many years, maintained a permanent observer presence within the organisation. That continuity matters. ICAO does not respond to short-term pressure; it responds to sustained engagement.

That engagement is currently assured by **Frank Hofmann**, whose observations from the latter half of 2025 offer a revealing picture of how aviation's future is being assembled—piecemeal, cautiously, and under growing strain from technological and operational change.

### The Air Navigation Commission returns to work

With the conclusion of **ICAO Assembly 42**, the **Air Navigation Commission (ANC)** has resumed its weekly meetings after an extended recess. That recess was not idle time: it made space for Assembly deliberations and political direction-setting. The ANC now finds itself in a dual role—completing the work programme inherited from Assembly 41 while simultaneously assessing new mandates emerging from Assembly 42.

Before any new task becomes operational, it must pass through the ICAO Council. This sequencing matters. It reinforces the reality that ICAO is not a rapid-reaction organisation, but a standards body whose legitimacy depends on deliberation and consensus.

The ANC's **Strategic Review and Planning (SRP)** discussions this autumn revealed several uncomfortable truths. In some States, the separation between regulator and service provider remains inadequate—a structural weakness that undermines oversight. Equally concerning is the continued absence, in parts of the world, of truly independent aircraft accident investigation authorities.

At the same time, ICAO regions are diverging in emphasis. In the Middle East, amendments are being introduced that explicitly prioritise **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** in air navigation services, particularly for safety analysis. Another issue rising rapidly up the agenda is **Clear Air Turbulence (CAT)** detection, which is set to become a high-priority item in ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan for the next three years.

## WHEN TRAFFIC GROWS FASTER THAN SEPARATION MARGINS

One of the most sobering discussions concerned **mid-air collision risk over the North Atlantic**. The data shows a **31% increase in risk** compared to the 2021–2024 period, driven largely by a **95% increase in traffic**. Loss of vertical separation remains the primary contributor.

Yet the causes are not purely technical. Crews following pre-programmed flight plans instead of clearances, ATC workload, and weather effects all play a role. ICAO's judgement is that operations remain safe—even though the historic target safety standard of $5\times10^{-9}$ is no longer met.

This has prompted a more fundamental question: whether that standard itself is still appropriate in an era of trajectory-based operations and concepts such as **Flight and Flow Information for a Collaborative Environment (FF-ICE)**. But ICAO is clear on one point—such systems must be **globally harmonised** before they can justify revised safety assumptions.

## DATA EVERYWHERE—AND NOWHERE

Modern aviation depends on data, yet ICAO faces a paradox: the very States whose data is most needed are often the least able to provide it. This issue surfaced repeatedly in discussions on **mental health**, **pilot age limits** and **risk-based decision-making**.

The **Mental Health Working Group (MHWG)**, operating under the Medical Protocol Study Group, reviewed the outcomes of Assembly 42, where **11 mental-health-related papers**—out of more than 200—generated some of the highest engagement among delegates. A clear theme emerged: safety management must be data-driven, and human performance is central to system safety.

The Assembly resolution explicitly recognised the role of human performance in effective safety management and highlighted the need for high-quality crew training to mitigate automation-related risks. Notably, data presented showed that on **23% of commercial flights**, crews intervened to maintain safety—an important corrective to narratives that portray automation as a substitute for human skill.

Yet many States openly acknowledged that they lack the personnel and budget to contribute meaningfully to international data sets. This undermines ICAO's ability to make evidence-based decisions—for example, on the airline industry's proposal to increase the maximum commercial pilot

age to 67. Without comprehensive data, decisions stall. The MPSG is therefore exploring how ICAO might support States in collecting usable health, risk and safety data.

## Regulation meets reputation: RPAS at a crossroads

Few areas expose ICAO's balancing act more clearly than **Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)**. The ANC's Commission Group 1 was asked to consider setting an Applicability Date for **Annex 6, Part IV**, despite unresolved issues and incomplete alignment with other Annexes.

Industry pressure favours an early 2026 date. The ANC is unconvinced. Its concern is not merely technical but reputational: endorsing a Standard that has not been fully vetted risks weakening ICAO's authority. At present, the RPAS package has not even been formally recommended to the ANC by the RPAS Panel.

The emerging preference is to wait until around **2030**, when a complete and coherent first edition of Annex 6 Part IV can be adopted. In ICAO terms, restraint here is seen as institutional strength.

## Navigation without a compass

The debate over **True North versus Magnetic North** may sound arcane, but it encapsulates the pressures facing modern aviation. Magnetic-variation tables are expensive to maintain, there is no obligation to update them, and many are now badly outdated. Meanwhile, **Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)** and **Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM)** systems increasingly require Earth-fixed, True-North-based references.

ICAO is now openly weighing three options: continue as is, invest in magnetic data updates, or begin a transition to True North. Any transition will impose equipage costs on users, and the global fleet is being categorised accordingly. The decision, once taken, will ripple through cockpits for decades.

## Digital ambition and digital vulnerability

ICAO's push toward **System-Wide Information Management (SWIM)** continues, but not without unease. The ANC's meteorology group (CG-4) reviewed amendments to **Annex 3** and **PANS-Met**, driven by advances in the World Area Forecast System, volcanic ash modelling and advisory services.

Yet a stark vulnerability was highlighted: SWIM relies on internet-based infrastructure and currently lacks a safety-grade backup. In other words, it is **fully vulnerable to cyber attack**. Until that is addressed, the group advised that legacy systems—often dismissed as obsolete—should not be dismantled. In aviation, redundancy remains a virtue.

## Training for a world of complexity

Perhaps the most forward-looking discussion concerned **simulated air traffic environments** and the limits of current pilot training. Modern simulators excel at aircraft systems and visuals, yet they struggle to replicate the **operational environment**—dynamic communications, dense traffic and real-world complexity.

The emerging **Simulated Air Traffic Control Environment (SATCE)** represents a shift. By providing synthetic ATC communications, realistic traffic interaction and new threat scenarios, it allows

evidence-based threat management training in ways previously impossible. It also frees instructors from role-playing, enabling deeper observation and assessment.

ICAO now faces the question of how to support global adoption of such tools without fragmenting training and licensing standards.

## GENERAL AVIATION: PRESENT, IF UNNAMED

The ICAO Assembly made no explicit reference to general aviation in its closing technical plenary. That absence should not be mistaken for irrelevance. GA's future is shaped indirectly—through medical standards, navigation concepts, spectrum policy, automation philosophy and data governance.

This is precisely why **AOPA's permanent presence at ICAO matters**. Representation at ICAO is not about winning votes; it is about understanding trajectories early enough to respond intelligently. That is what government affairs is all about. In an era when aviation is becoming more automated, more data-driven and more politically constrained, the quiet work of observation, interpretation and continuity may be more valuable than ever.

**With thanks to Frank Hofmann for his sustained and rigorous engagement on behalf of the AOPA community of Luxembourg**

# EASA and General Aviation

From EASA

In 2025, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) continued to advance its initiatives in General Aviation (GA), focusing on safety, innovation, and international collaboration. Key developments include:

## Annual Safety Publications & Safety Trends

### Annual Safety Review 2025 (ASR 2025)

EASA published its 2025 Annual Safety Review, covering safety data from 2024 across all aviation domains, including general aviation.

- It reports 27 fatal accidents with non-complex aeroplanes in general aviation (44 fatalities).
- Sailplanes had the lowest recorded level of fatalities.
- Helicopter and balloon operations were also analysed.

This review is key for understanding risk trends relevant to GA operators and informs future safety priorities.

### Annual Safety Recommendations Review 2025

EASA's review of safety recommendations shows how the Agency is responding to accident investigation findings and safety-critical feedback. This publication signals regulatory attention areas that may impact future GA safety requirements.

### European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS 2025)

The updated EPAS outlines EASA's strategic safety priorities through 2025, with many "actions" that influence risk reduction and regulatory focus. It is a roadmap that drives rulemaking, training, and safety promotion — including for general aviation domains.

## Rule Simplification Initiative — A Major 2025 Focus

### EASA Rule Simplification Programme

EASA launched a system-wide regulatory simplification program in 2025 with a broad consultation process. The aim is to simplify and modernise aviation regulations while maintaining safety, innovation, and proportionality to risk.

General aviation is explicitly part of this process — e.g., aircrew (licensing & medical), airworthiness, air operations, and airspace usage.

Organisations like AOPA Luxembourg encourages GA pilots to participate in a survey to influence future rule design.

This initiative is very relevant to the GA community because simplified regulations can reduce administrative burden and make compliance more practicable for smaller operators.

## Consultations & Proposed Amendments That May Affect GA

### Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA) 2025-09 — SERA / Rules of the Air

EASA issued NPA 2025-09 proposing amendments to the standard European rules of the air (SERA) and associated guidance. While this applies broadly, changes in flight/flow information and operational concepts can affect GA flight operations and airspace integration. Comments on this NPA are open into early 2026.

### Acceptable Means of Compliance & Guidance Material Updates

Several EASA ED Decisions in 2025 update AMC/GM material (guidance for regulatory compliance) that touch on pilot licensing, medical requirements, and operational procedures — items that also influence GA pilots through clarifications and improved interpretability of rules.

## Policy Decisions With Indirect Impacts Focus on safety culture and complacency

At the EASA Annual Safety Conference (Copenhagen, Nov 2025) the emphasis was placed on cross-domain safety — including non-technical aspects like complacency and human factors — themes strongly relevant for general aviation operators.

## General regulatory environment & consultations ("Reality check on EU aviation safety rules")

A stakeholder event in Nov 2025 (co-organised with the European Commission) reviewed the EU safety regulatory framework, aiming to identify unnecessary burdens and make rules more effective. Although not GA-specific, outcomes may later influence how GA regulations are framed.

## Single-Pilot & Reduced-Crew Research (Related but Mostly Commercial)

### EASA halts or pauses moves toward single-pilot commercial operations

In 2025, studies on "Extended Minimum Crew Operations (eMCO)" and single-pilot commercial operations were effectively shelved or paused due to safety concerns — e.g., EASA found current cockpit tech can't yet match the safety of two pilots. While aimed at commercial aviation, this has indirect implications for broader regulatory philosophy around new operating concepts.

## Part-IS & Information Security Updates

### 📌 Part-IS Implementation & Updated Easy Access Rules (Dec 2025)

EASA continued implementing information security (Part-IS) requirements that apply to aviation organisations. While not GA specific, the updated Easy Access Rules for Information Security shape how organisations involved in operations and training protect data and systems — relevant to flight schools, maintenance organisations, and recreational operators.

## General Aviation Series & Safety Promotion

### "Sunny Swift" & Conspicuity Initiatives

EASA promotes safety tools and awareness campaigns such as ADS-L / Sunny Swift for enhanced situational awareness — which are key to reducing mid-air collision risk for GA pilots. (Referenced indirectly from GA season opener materials, part of EPAS objectives).


# Do You Have the FAI Sports Licence?

## It's Free!


By Chris Scott

### Is flying a sports activity?

Flying can be considered a sport for several reasons as it involves the physical, mental, and competitive aspects that are characteristic of traditional sports:

- Skill and Competition
- Physical and Mental Challenges
- Recreational Enjoyment
- Training and Certification
- Community and Events
- Adherence to Rules and Regulations:
- Variety of Disciplines
- National, International and World records

### History and background

The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) in English: World Air Sports Federation, is the World governing body for air sports and human spaceflight. It was founded on 14 October 1905, and is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The FAI was founded in 1905, which was organized following a resolution passed by the Olympic Congress held in Brussels on 10 June 1905 calling for the creation of an Association "*to regulate the sport of flying, ... the various aviation meetings and advance the science and sport of Aeronautics*."

Luxembourg is an active member since 1929, represented by the **Fédération Aéronautique Luxembourgeoise (FAL)**. Since 2023, all the member clubs in the Federation (including AOPA Luxembourg) have a representative on the board of FAL which meet regularly, thus exchanging news and supporting each other.

FAL also is in charge of preserving Luxembourg's aeronautical heritage, particularly through the Aviation Museum (Fliegermusee) in Mondorf-les Bains.

## FAI AIR SPORTS DISCIPLINES:

The FAI is the international governing body for the following 13 air activities:

- **Aerobatics** (Commission Internationale de Voltige Aérienne – CIVA)
- **Aeromodeling and drones** (Commission Internationale d'Aéro-Modélisme – CIAM)
- **Ballooning** (Commission Internationale de l'Aérostation – CIA)
- **General Aviation** (General Aviation Commission – GAC)
- **Gliding** (International Gliding Commission – IGC)
- **Hang gliding & Paragliding** (Commission Internationale de Vol Libre – CIVL)
- **Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft** (Commission Internationale des Aéronefs de Construction Amateur – CIACA)
- **Microlighting (ULM)** (Commission Internationale de Microaviation – CIMA)
- **Skydiving** (FAI International Skydiving Commission)
- **Rotorcraft** (Commission Internationale de giraviation – CIG).

The FAI establishes the standards for records in the activities. The FAI also oversees international competitions at World and continental levels, and organizes the World Air Games and FAI World Grand Prix.

The Air Sport Commissions control the activities of the different sports governed by FAI: the Technical Commissions control non-sporting activities such as Aviation Medicine, Education and Environmental issues. International Records held by Luxembourg pilots are of course also published on the FAI website.

## HOW TO OBTAIN A SPORTS LICENSE?

The Sports License is issued free of charge (cost = zero Euro) by the FAL to members of federated clubs, (AOPA, Aerosport, Aviasport , ….) upon request from these federated clubs to the FAL. Sports Licenses are then revalidated annually (again free of charge).

It gives you the right to participate in sporting activities recognized by the FAL and the FAI, for example participation in the AOPA and / or the Aéro-Sport rallye.

To do this, simply download the FAL form https://aeroclub.lu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Demande-licence-sportive-FAL-FAI-2022-v2.pdf (to be found under "downloads" on FAI website: aeroclub.lu), complete it and provide the **signature of the president of your aeroclub (or AOPA Luxembourg)**, and send it to the FAL.

Once the application is received, the Sports License is registered with the FAI to appear in the FAI Sports Licenses database. The candidate will then be able to download their Sports License from the FAI website https://extranet.fai.org/en/check-license .

If you have any questions on this exciting subject, do not hesitate to contact me directly.
chris.berens-scott@aopa.lu

Demande-licence-sportive-FAL-FAI-2022-v2.pdf (aeroclub.lu)

# The Value of Joining AOPA Luxembourg

## Beyond Club Membership and Individual Flying

### Introduction

Joining AOPA Luxembourg brings a unique set of benefits that extend beyond these individual or club experiences. Here's why becoming a member of AOPA Luxembourg is essential for anyone involved in aviation.

### Bridging Associations and Enhancing Collaboration

AOPA Luxembourg serves as a vital bridge between various aviation associations and clubs. This role is critical in fostering a cohesive aviation community in Luxembourg. By being a member, you become part of a larger network that collaborates closely with key aviation entities such as Lux-Airport, the National Aviation Authority (ANA), the Directorate of Civil Aviation (DAC), and the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA). This extensive network offers unparalleled opportunities for advocacy, learning, and influencing aviation policies.

### Influential Voice in Aviation

As a member of AOPA Luxembourg, you contribute to a powerful voice that represents pilots and aircraft owners at both the national and international levels. The association's active interaction with Lux-Airport, ANA, DAC, and IAOPA means members' interests and concerns are heard and considered in important decision-making processes. This collective influence is crucial in shaping a more favorable aviation environment for all.

In Luxembourg, we are known as the non-profit organization AOPA Luxembourg asbl (Formerly UPL) and we're aiming at promoting your freedom to fly in Luxembourg and throughout Europe. We serve the interests of our members as aircraft owners and pilots, promoting the economy, safety, utility, and popularity of flight in general aviation aircraft. AOPA Luxembourg has brought forward and contributed important items with the Luxemburgish Administration:

- EASA rules Simplification
- Medical ruling
- Aviation Fuel availability
- European and national ruling for Ultralights
- Airspace for VFR flights in Luxembourg
- U-Space (Rulings for airspace for Drones (UAV)
- New possibilities for young aviators
- Aerospace Hub in Luxembourg

### Varied Flying-Related Activities

AOPA Luxembourg is not just about representation and advocacy; it's also about actively engaging in a variety of flying-related activities. From organizing fly-outs to distant and exotic locations to hosting safety seminars and workshops, the association offers a rich calendar of events that cater to all interests and skill levels. These activities are not only fun but also provide valuable opportunities for skill enhancement and knowledge sharing.

### Fostering Friendship and Community

At the heart of AOPA Luxembourg is the spirit of camaraderie and friendship. The association is a melting pot of individuals from different flying backgrounds, be it club members, individual plane

owners, or members of other aviation groups. This diversity fosters a vibrant community where experiences, stories, and expertise are shared, leading to lasting friendships and a supportive network.

## CONCLUSION

Being a member of AOPA Luxembourg complements and enhances the experience of being part of a flying club, owning an aircraft, or being affiliated with other aviation groups. It offers a unique blend of advocacy, networking, diverse flying activities, and a warm, inclusive community. For anyone passionate about aviation in Luxembourg, joining AOPA Luxembourg is not just a choice—it's a step towards being part of a broader, more impactful aviation community.
You can easily join AOPA online by going to the member area and select sign up. If you encounter any problems during the signing up process, please email info@aopa.lu. We're happy to welcome you you onboard.

# AOPA and IAOPA – Your Freedom to Fly


*Countries with an AOPA organisation*

## AOPA WORKS FOR YOU

Our non-profit Luxembourg Pilots association is the Luxembourg branch of AOPA, which was created in 1932 in the USA. Throughout the years, AOPA has served the interests of its members as aircraft owners and pilots, and promotes the economy, safety, utility, and popularity of flight in general aviation aircraft. Now, it is an organisation with some 400,000 members worldwide. AOPA USA is the biggest and the largest, most influential general aviation association in the world. It is providing member services that range from representation at the federal, state, and local levels through legal services, advice, and other assistance. This prominent position of AOPA was achieved through effective advocacy, safety education and training, enlightened leadership, technical competence, and simply ….hard work.

AOPA has thus a direct influence on proposed rulemaking and legislation. AOPA opposes decisions that violate international agreements, standards or constitute a discrimination of General Aviation.

## IAOPA THE WORLDWIDE AOPA COMMUNITY

Through IAOPA, the international community of national AOPA's, we not only have, but alsoaccess to many special member benefits for aviation and navigation products, airport fees, hotels, rental cars etc.

One of IAOPA's primary accomplishments has been advocating for the recognition of general aviation as a critical component of global transportation systems. IAOPA has also been instrumental in raising awareness of general aviation's economic and social benefits, such as job creation, improved connectivity, and emergency response.

There are some 83 IAOPA Member Organisations worldwide, a number which keeps growing. The numbers of members outside of the USA are varying a lot. Given the size of our country, we perform particularly well with AOPA Luxembourg. IAOPA obtained official observer Status with ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) and we are proud to note that nearly half of the pilots worldwide are a member of AOPA.

The policies and positions of IAOPA are formally debated and adopted at the IAOPA World Assembly taking place every second year. In 2024 it took place in Washington DC.

## IAOPA EUROPE - ASSERTING OUR INTERESTS IN EUROPE

IAOPA-Europe is a group within IAOPA focussing on matters of European Interest. Here the focus is on the GA situation in Europe and the EU. Various board members of local European AOPA's also participate in committees at EASA, SESAR, Eurocontrol, ICAO – this is how AOPA works for you!

IAOPA Europe www.iaopa.eu (with 33 countries and counting) is the European branch of IAOPA. As an individual person you become member of IAOPA Europe by joining your national AOPA.

Regional Meetings are held twice per year. Iin 2023 the first one was in Seven Oaks, south of London in the spring and the second one was here in Luxembourg in the fall. To receive news from IAOPA Europe you can sign up to receive their monthly e-newsletter. Just visit their website and enter your email - it is free and available for both members and non-members.

www.IAOPA.org

www.IAOPA.eu

# Digital AOPA Luxembourg

AOPA Luxembourg's Website: https://www.aopa.lu

AOPA Luxembourg on X (Twitter):
https://twitter.com/aopaluxembourg/

AOPA Luxembourg on Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/AOPAluxembourg/

AOPA Luxembourg on Instagram:
https://www.instagram.com/aopaluxembourg/

AOPA Luxembourg on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIJ1gtLj9pZCnKlNNUYHjcQ

Are you aware of AOPA Luxembourg’s presence on the Web and in social media?

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to get there!

# Livre Blanc Stratégique : L'Innovation Aéronautique au Luxembourg – Agir Maintenant pour la Souveraineté Aéronautique Européenne

**AOPA Luxembourg, rédigé par Peter Sodermans**

**Status : draft – not to be released yet**

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## Contents

# 1. Introduction

Le Luxembourg est à un carrefour stratégique en matière d'aviation, confronté à des défis complexes liés à la croissance continue du trafic commercial et cargo, aux nuisances sonores nocturnes, et à des restrictions croissantes pour l'aviation légère. Parallèlement, le pays est en retard dans l'adaptation de sa législation pour intégrer de nouveaux types d'aéronefs innovants et durables, conformément au règlement (UE) 2018/1139.

Ce Livre Blanc Stratégique met en avant l'urgence pour le Luxembourg de prendre des mesures décisives afin de préserver son écosystème aéronautique tout en respectant les exigences environnementales et en stimulant l'innovation dans l'aéronautique et l'aérospatiale.

En examinant les modèles inspirants en Europe et en proposant des initiatives stratégiques, ce document offre une vision claire pour positionner le Luxembourg comme un leader européen de l'innovation aérospatiale. En particulier, il plaide pour :

- La création d'un pôle d'innovation aérospatiale en attirant des constructeurs européens et en promouvant le développement de technologies aéronautiques avancées.
- Le développement d'un incubateur national aérospatial pour catalyser l'innovation dans l'aviation générale, les UAV (drones), et les technologies spatiales.
- La mise en place d'infrastructures dédiées pour accueillir l'aviation légère innovante et durable actuellement exclue de Findel.
- Un alignement législatif pour permettre l'immatriculation locale des aéronefs innovants, renforcer la compétitivité aéronautique du pays et contribuer à la réduction des émissions de carbone.

Ce document se veut un appel à l'action pour les décideurs politiques, les acteurs économiques et les partenaires stratégiques afin de renforcer la souveraineté aéronautique européenne tout en positionnant le Luxembourg comme un épicentre de l'innovation aéronautique et aérospatiale.

## 2. L’Enjeu : Ne Pas Sacrifier l’Aviation Générale Européenne

Contrairement à nos voisins, le Luxembourg ne dispose que d'un seul aéroport international, le Findel, équipé d'une unique piste orientée 06/24, longue de 4 000 mètres et large de 60 mètres. En raison des contraintes d'espace, l'ajout d'une seconde piste est impossible.

- **Absence de terrain dédié à l'aviation légère** : Malgré des demandes répétées de la communauté aéronautique, aucun terrain spécifique n'a été attribué pour l'aviation légère. Les aérodromes existants, tels que ceux d'Useldange et de Noertrange, sont principalement réservés au vol à voile (Useldange) et ne répondent pas aux besoins des avions motorisés légers (Noertrange)
- **Attribution erronée des nuisances sonores** : L'aviation générale est souvent pointée du doigt pour les nuisances sonores. Cependant, les avions légers opèrent principalement en journée et suivent des procédures strictes de réduction du bruit. En réalité, l'augmentation des vols cargo, notamment nocturnes, est la principale source de nuisances pour les riverains.
  Les nuisances sonores constituent une préoccupation majeure pour les riverains de l'aéroport. En 2023, plus de 2 500 vols de nuit ont enfreint le couvre-feu aérien, principalement en raison de l'augmentation des vols cargo nocturnes et des retards des vols réguliers bénéficiant de dérogations. Cette situation a conduit à une hausse significative des plaintes pour nuisances sonores. Il est

donc crucial de distinguer les sources de bruit et de ne pas attribuer injustement ces nuisances à l'aviation légère, qui opère principalement en journée et suit des procédures strictes de réduction du bruit.

- **Menace pour la formation des pilotes** : La marginalisation de l'aviation générale met en péril les infrastructures de formation des pilotes. Des institutions telles que la Luxembourg Flight Training Academy (LFTA) et Aviasport jouent un rôle crucial dans la formation des futurs pilotes, indispensables pour des compagnies comme Luxair et Cargolux. Sans un soutien adéquat à l'aviation légère, la relève de ces professionnels est compromise.

Il est donc essentiel de reconnaître l'importance de l'aviation générale et de mettre en place des mesures pour préserver et développer ce secteur au Luxembourg.

## 3. Un Défi Européen : La Souveraineté Aéronautique en Jeu

L'aviation légère est un pilier stratégique pour la souveraineté aéronautique européenne, incarnant l'innovation, l'indépendance technologique et le dynamisme économique du continent.

- **Production européenne et innovation** : Les avions légers et ULM modernes sont majoritairement conçus et fabriqués en Europe, soutenant ainsi l'économie, l'innovation et les emplois locaux. Des entreprises comme **Elixir Aircraft** en France se distinguent par des conceptions novatrices, telles que l'utilisation de la technologie OneShot pour produire des structures monoblocs en matériaux composites, réduisant le poids et améliorant la performance des appareils.
- **Marques emblématiques à l'avant-garde** : Des constructeurs tels que **VL3** (République tchèque), **Shark** (Slovaquie), **Blackwing** (Suède), **Bristell** (République tchèque) et **Risen** (Italie) sont à l'avant-garde de l'innovation aéronautique mondiale. Leurs appareils se caractérisent par des performances exceptionnelles, une efficacité énergétique accrue et l'intégration de technologies de pointe, reflétant le savoir-faire européen en matière d'aéronautique légère.
- **Indépendance technologique et durabilité** : L'Europe s'affirme comme un leader dans le développement de solutions aéronautiques durables. Des initiatives telles que la démonstration réussie d'une turbine à gaz alimentée à l'hydrogène liquide par **Turbotech**, en collaboration avec **Safran** et **Air Liquide**, illustrent l'engagement du continent envers la décarbonation de l'aviation légère. De plus, des événements comme les **Green Aero Days 2024** à Toulouse mettent en lumière les avancées européennes en matière de propulsion électrique et

hybride, consolidant ainsi la position de l'Europe en tant que centre d'innovation pour l'aviation légère durable.

- **Avancées dans l'aviation électrique** : L'Europe est à la pointe du développement des avions électriques, symbolisant une révolution dans le secteur de l'aviation légère. Le **Pipistrel Velis Electro**, conçu en Slovénie, est le premier avion électrique certifié au monde, utilisé notamment par la compagnie française **Finistair** pour des vols régionaux. En France, l'**INTEGRAL-E**, un biplace entièrement électrique, représente une avancée majeure dans la volonté de décarboner le secteur aérien, avec une autonomie de vol d'une heure et une capacité de recharge rapide en 30 minutes. Ces initiatives démontrent l'engagement européen à promouvoir des solutions aéronautiques écologiques et innovantes.

Soutenir et promouvoir l'aviation légère européenne est essentiel pour préserver cette souveraineté, encourager l'innovation continue et renforcer l'autonomie technologique du continent dans le secteur aéronautique.

## 4. Pourquoi le Luxembourg doit agir pour soutenir et stimuler l'Innovation dans l'aviation générale Européenne

Le Luxembourg a l'opportunité stratégique de devenir un pôle d'innovation aérospatiale en soutenant activement l'aviation légère européenne.

- **Création d'un pôle d'innovation aérospatiale** : En attirant des constructeurs européens et en promouvant le développement de technologies aéronautiques avancées, le Luxembourg peut renforcer son écosystème technologique. Des initiatives telles que la **Luxembourg Space Agency** démontrent déjà l'engagement du pays envers le secteur spatial, et une extension vers l'aviation légère serait une progression naturelle.
- **Contribution à la souveraineté européenne** : En soutenant l'aviation légère, le Luxembourg réduit la dépendance aux fabricants non européens, renforçant ainsi l'autonomie technologique de l'Europe. Cette démarche s'aligne avec les efforts européens pour consolider les capacités de défense et de sécurité, où l'innovation joue un rôle clé.
- **Alignement stratégique** : Harmoniser la politique aéronautique nationale avec les intérêts européens renforce le rôle du Luxembourg au sein de l'Union européenne en tant que leader en innovation aéronautique. En collaborant avec des entités telles que la **Direction de l'Aviation Civile** et en participant à des initiatives européennes, le Luxembourg peut influencer positivement l'avenir de l'aviation générale.

En investissant dans l'aviation légère et en soutenant l'innovation, le Luxembourg peut non seulement diversifier son économie, mais aussi jouer un rôle crucial dans le maintien de la souveraineté aéronautique européenne.

## 5. Révolution du Carbone : L'Avenir de l'Aviation Légère Européenne

L'industrie aéronautique européenne est en pleine transformation grâce à l'adoption croissante de la fibre de carbone dans la conception des aéronefs légers. Ce matériau révolutionnaire offre des avantages significatifs en termes de performance, d'efficacité énergétique et de durabilité environnementale.

- **Nouveaux ULM haut de gamme** : Les aéronefs ultralégers modernes, avec une Masse Maximale au Décollage (MTOM) de 600 kg, intègrent de plus en plus la fibre de carbone dans leur structure. Cette incorporation permet une réduction substantielle du poids tout en améliorant la rigidité et la résistance des appareils, établissant ainsi de nouvelles normes en matière d'efficacité et de performance.
- **Avantages environnementaux** : L'utilisation de la fibre de carbone contribue à une diminution notable de la consommation de carburant, réduisant ainsi l'empreinte carbone des vols. De plus, ces avions sont conçus pour fonctionner avec du MOGAS (essence sans plomb), en remplacement de l'AVGAS traditionnel contenant du plomb, ce qui minimise les émissions de substances nocives et favorise une aviation plus verte.
- **Efficacité énergétique** : Grâce à la légèreté et à la robustesse de la fibre de carbone, ces aéronefs consomment jusqu'à 50% moins de carburant que les avions traditionnels en aluminium, selon une analyse de l’AOPA. Cette efficacité accrue se traduit par des coûts opérationnels réduits et une autonomie de vol améliorée.
- **Performances supérieures** : Les propriétés mécaniques exceptionnelles de la fibre de carbone, telles que sa haute résistance et sa rigidité, permettent aux avions légers d'offrir des performances optimales. Ces appareils bénéficient d'une meilleure maniabilité, d'une vitesse accrue et d'une capacité à opérer sur des distances plus longues, tout en étant plus silencieux et respectueux de l'environnement.

L'adoption de la fibre de carbone dans l'aviation légère européenne marque une étape cruciale vers une industrie aéronautique plus durable et innovante. En investissant dans ces technologies de pointe, l'Europe consolide sa position de leader mondial dans le secteur de l'aviation légère.

# 6. Luxembourg en Retard – Une Situation Inacceptable

**Retard législatif et non-conformité avec le règlement (UE) 2018/1139**
Le règlement (UE) 2018/1139 du Parlement européen et du Conseil établit un cadre pour la sécurité de l'aviation civile et encourage l'innovation technologique en aviation, notamment en facilitant l'intégration de nouveaux types d'aéronefs plus écologiques et économes en carburant.

- **16 pays de l'UE en avance** : La France, l'Allemagne, la Belgique, et 13 autres États membres ont déjà adapté leur législation nationale conformément au règlement (UE) 2018/1139. En revanche, le Luxembourg accuse un **retard notable**, compromettant sa compétitivité dans le secteur de l'aviation.
- **Obligation d'immatriculation à l'étranger** : En l'absence d'un cadre législatif adapté au Luxembourg, les propriétaires luxembourgeois sont contraints d'immatriculer leurs aéronefs dans cette catégorie innovants à l'étranger, ce qui entraîne des complications administratives et des coûts supplémentaires.

**Exclusion de l'aéroport de Luxembourg (Findel)**

- **Discrimination des aéronefs modernes** : L'aéroport de Luxembourg refuse de baser ces aéronefs pourtant conformes aux normes européennes de sécurité et de respect de l'environnement, en contradiction avec l'esprit du règlement (UE) 2018/1139 qui vise à promouvoir une aviation moderne et durable.
- **Impact environnemental positif ignoré** : Ces avions sont **plus écologiques**, économes en carburant et **silencieux** par rapport à la flotte traditionnelle. En les excluant, Luxembourg rate une opportunité de réduire son empreinte carbone aéronautique.

**Entraves à la modernisation et à l'innovation**

- **Frein à l'innovation technologique** : En empêchant l'intégration de ces aéronefs modernes, le Luxembourg bloque la **modernisation des flottes** et limite l'adoption de nouvelles technologies plus respectueuses de l'environnement, allant à l'encontre des objectifs de l'UE en matière de durabilité.
- **Conséquences économiques et compétitivité** : Cette situation pousse nos pilotes à se baser à l'étranger, ce qui non seulement **affaiblit le secteur aéronautique luxembourgeois**, mais diminue également son attractivité pour les investissements dans les technologies de pointe en aviation.

## Conclusion et Recommandations

Le Luxembourg doit **aligner rapidement sa législation** avec le règlement (UE) 2018/1139 pour :

1. **Permettre l'immatriculation locale** des aéronefs innovants et ainsi soutenir les propriétaires luxembourgeois.
2. **Ouvrir l'aéroport de Luxembourg aux avions modernes** pour encourager l'adoption de technologies plus écologiques.
3. **Renforcer la compétitivité aéronautique** du pays tout en contribuant à la réduction des émissions de carbone conformément aux engagements environnementaux de l'UE.

# 7. Initiatives Similaires en Europe : Des Modèles Inspirants

Plusieurs pays européens ont mis en place des pôles d'innovation aérospatiale combinant recherche, développement et aviation opérationnelle. Ces initiatives peuvent servir de modèles pour le Luxembourg.

### 7.1. DronePort à Sint-Truiden, Belgique

- **Présentation** : DronePort est un parc d'affaires et un centre de test de pointe pour les entreprises innovantes, spécifiquement conçu pour le secteur de l'aviation et des drones.
- **Facteurs Clés de Succès** :
    - **Écosystème Intégré** : Combinaison d'installations de test en vol avec des espaces de coworking et un incubateur pour startups.
    - **Collaboration Public-Privé** : Coopération étroite entre les gouvernements locaux, les institutions de recherche et les entreprises privées.
    - **Focus sur les Technologies Émergentes** : Spécialisation dans les systèmes autonomes, la mobilité sans carbone et la gestion des données.

### 7.2. Aéroport d'Aachen-Merzbrück, Allemagne

- **Présentation** : L'aéroport d'Aachen-Merzbrück est en cours de transformation pour devenir un centre de compétence pour l'aviation électrique et hybride. Des projets pilotes y sont menés pour tester de nouvelles technologies de propulsion respectueuses de l'environnement.
- **Facteurs Clés de Succès** :
    - **Infrastructure Dédiée** : Pistes et installations adaptées pour accueillir des essais de nouvelles technologies aéronautiques.

- **Partenariats Stratégiques** : Collaboration avec des universités, des centres de recherche et l'industrie pour développer des solutions innovantes.
- **Engagement envers la Durabilité** : Mise en œuvre de projets axés sur la réduction des émissions et le développement de l'aviation verte.

### 7.3. Aerospace Innovation Hub à Delft, Pays-Bas

- **Présentation** : Situé au sein de la faculté d'ingénierie aérospatiale de l'Université de Delft, ce hub offre aux jeunes startups et aux étudiants la possibilité de se connecter avec l'industrie pour accélérer l'innovation dans le domaine aérospatial.
- **Facteurs Clés de Succès** :
  - **Accès aux Ressources Académiques** : Les startups bénéficient de l'expertise et des installations de l'université pour développer leurs projets.
  - **Programmes de Mentorat** : Des initiatives comme le "startup voucher" offrent un encadrement aux entrepreneurs en phase de démarrage.
  - **Réseau Industriel** : Connexion directe avec les acteurs majeurs de l'industrie aérospatiale pour faciliter les collaborations et les opportunités commerciales.

### 7.4. Aero EDIH en Europe

- **Présentation** : Le Aero European Digital Innovation Hub vise à soutenir la transformation numérique et verte des PME, des aéroports régionaux et du secteur public dans le domaine de l'aérospatiale au sein de l'Union européenne.
- **Facteurs Clés de Succès** :
  - **Soutien à la Transformation Numérique** : Aide les PME à adopter des technologies numériques pour améliorer leur compétitivité.
  - **Promotion de la Durabilité** : Encourage des pratiques écologiques pour contribuer à une aviation plus verte.
  - **Réseau Européen** : Fait partie d'un réseau plus large de hubs d'innovation numérique, facilitant le partage de connaissances et de ressources à travers l'Europe.

## 8. Le Rôle de l'Armée Luxembourgeoise dans l'Utilisation des Infrastructures Aériennes

Le Luxembourg, bien que petit en taille et en population, joue un rôle stratégique dans le domaine de la défense européenne et transatlantique, notamment à travers son

engagement au sein de l'OTAN. L'acquisition de l'Airbus A400M démontre l'engagement du pays à contribuer aux opérations multinationales et humanitaires. Cet avion de transport militaire polyvalent est exploité en collaboration avec la Belgique dans le cadre d'une unité binationale basée à Melsbroek, près de Bruxelles. Cette coopération témoigne de l'approche pragmatique de Luxembourg, maximisant ses ressources tout en renforçant ses alliances stratégiques.

Cependant, l'absence d'infrastructures aériennes militaires dédiées au Luxembourg pose des défis pour une utilisation optimale de cet appareil et limite la souveraineté opérationnelle du pays. En outre, cela restreint les opportunités de formation et d'entraînement pour les équipages et le personnel militaire luxembourgeois.

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## Besoins Stratégiques

### 1. Souveraineté Opérationnelle

- **Défis Actuels :**
  Le Luxembourg dépend actuellement des infrastructures aériennes étrangères, principalement en Belgique, pour l'exploitation de son A400M. Cela limite sa flexibilité opérationnelle, en particulier dans des scénarios où un déploiement rapide est nécessaire.
- **Opportunités :**
  Disposer d'une infrastructure aérienne nationale permettrait au Luxembourg de planifier et d'exécuter ses opérations militaires et humanitaires de manière plus autonome. Cela renforcerait également sa capacité à répondre rapidement aux crises internationales en coordination avec ses partenaires de l'OTAN.

### 2. Formation et Entraînement

- **Défis Actuels :**
  Les pilotes luxembourgeois et le personnel au sol doivent se former à l'étranger, principalement en Belgique, limitant ainsi le nombre de sessions d'entraînement disponibles et augmentant les coûts logistiques.
- **Opportunités :**
  La création d'un terrain d'entraînement dédié au Luxembourg permettrait de :
  - Effectuer des exercices de "touch & go" pour l'entraînement des pilotes.
  - Développer les compétences du personnel au sol pour le chargement, le déchargement, et la maintenance des aéronefs.
  - Accueillir des exercices conjoints avec des alliés de l'OTAN, renforçant l'interopérabilité et les capacités collectives.

# 9. L'Importance des UAV dans le Développement Aéronautique

Les Véhicules Aériens Sans Pilote (UAV), communément appelés drones, représentent un segment en pleine expansion dans l'industrie aérospatiale mondiale. Leur utilisation croissante dans divers secteurs offre des opportunités significatives pour le Luxembourg.

## Applications Diversifiées :

- **Surveillance et Sécurité** : Les drones sont utilisés pour la surveillance des infrastructures critiques et des frontières, offrant une couverture efficace et en temps réel.
- **Agriculture de Précision** : Ils aident à monitorer les cultures, optimiser les rendements et réduire l'utilisation de ressources grâce à des analyses précises.
- **Livraison de Colis** : Les drones facilitent la livraison rapide de petits colis, notamment dans les zones difficiles d'accès, améliorant ainsi la logistique du dernier kilomètre.
- **Inspection Industrielle** : Ils permettent d'inspecter des infrastructures telles que les lignes électriques, les pipelines et les éoliennes, réduisant les risques pour le personnel et les coûts associés.

## Initiatives Nationales :

- **Luxembourg Drone Federation (LDF)** : Créée pour fédérer les professionnels du drone au Luxembourg, la LDF vise à promouvoir l'utilisation des drones dans une multitude d'industries et à faciliter les échanges entre les acteurs du secteur.
- **Cadre Réglementaire** : Face à la croissance exponentielle de l'utilisation des drones, le Luxembourg travaille à l'élaboration d'une législation nationale spécifique pour encadrer leur utilisation, en complément du cadre européen existant.
- **AeRoLab du SnT** : Le Centre Interdisciplinaire pour la Sécurité, la Fiabilité et la Confiance (SnT) de l'Université du Luxembourg dispose de l'AeRoLab, un laboratoire équipé d'un système de capture de mouvement. Ce laboratoire permet de tester, évaluer et valider des approches de navigation autonome pour les drones, contribuant ainsi à l'avancement de la recherche et de l'innovation dans le domaine des UAV.

L'intégration des UAV dans les stratégies de développement aéronautique du Luxembourg est essentielle pour rester compétitif et innovant sur la scène internationale.

# 10. Concept d'Incubateur National Aérospatial au Luxembourg

Avec un Accent sur l'Innovation Aéronautique et Aérospatiale : Un projet phare qui transformera le Luxembourg en un épicentre de l'innovation aérospatiale en Europe, tout en renforçant son indépendance technologique et sa souveraineté nationale

## Vision et Mission de l'Incubateur Aérospatial

**Vision :**
Positionner le Luxembourg comme un **leader européen de l'innovation aéronautique et aérospatiale**, en catalysant la collaboration entre les startups, les instituts de recherche, l'industrie aéronautique, le secteur militaire, et les organismes nationaux.

**Mission :**

Créer un écosystème dynamique favorisant l'innovation dans les domaines de l'aviation générale, des UAV (drones), des technologies aérospatiales, et de l'exploration spatiale, en s'appuyant sur les forces locales du **SNT (DroneLab), du LIST, de la LSA (Luxembourg Space Agency), du réseau de l'aviation nationale (via AOPA Luxembourg), de Luxinnovation et de Technoport.**

## Pourquoi un Incubateur Aérospatial au Luxembourg ?

- **Écosystème Innovant :** Le Luxembourg est reconnu comme un **hub de l'innovation spatiale** grâce à la LSA et à son engagement dans l'économie spatiale.
- **Synergies Naturelles :** La présence de **Luxinnovation, du SNT, du LIST et de Technoport** offre un environnement fertile pour la collaboration interdisciplinaire.
- **Réseau d'Aviation Active :** Le **réseau de pilotes d'AOPA Luxembourg** apporte une expertise opérationnelle et un réseau d'acteurs clés dans l'aviation générale.
- **Marché en Croissance :** L'aviation générale, les drones (UAV) et le secteur spatial connaissent une croissance rapide nécessitant des solutions innovantes.

## Partenariats Stratégiques

### 1. SNT (DroneLab) :

- **Développement de UAV avancés** et de solutions de navigation autonome.
- Collaboration sur des projets de recherche liés à la **sécurité des drones**, à l'**intelligence artificielle embarquée** et à la **communication inter-aéronefs**.

### 2. LIST (Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology) :

- Développement de **matériaux aérospatiaux innovants** et légers.
- Recherche sur les **technologies de propulsion verte** (hydrogène, électrique) et les **solutions énergétiques durables** pour l'aérospatial.

### 3. Luxembourg Space Agency (LSA) :

- Développement de **solutions innovantes pour l'exploration spatiale** et les technologies de communication par satellite.
- Collaboration avec des startups pour le développement de **technologies spatiales** et de **systèmes de navigation satellitaire**.
- Facilitation de **partenariats internationaux** avec d'autres agences spatiales et entreprises du secteur spatial.

### 4. AOPA Luxembourg :

- Accès à un **réseau étendu de pilotes** et de professionnels de l'aviation générale.
- Promotion de **nouvelles technologies aéronautiques** à travers des **tests opérationnels en conditions réelles**.
- Expertise en matière de **réglementation aéronautique** et **connaissance approfondie des besoins opérationnels**.

### 5. Luxinnovation :

- **Soutien aux startups** par le biais de programmes de financement, de mentorat et d'accès à des investisseurs internationaux.
- Promotion de l'incubateur sur les plateformes européennes pour **attirer des talents et des entreprises innovantes**.

### 6. Technoport :

- **Accélération des startups** en fournissant des **espaces de coworking** et des **services d'incubation personnalisés**.
- Accès à un **réseau d'experts et de mentors** dans l'innovation technologique et la croissance des startups.
- **Programmes de développement entrepreneurial** pour les startups en phase de démarrage et de croissance, en particulier dans les secteurs de l'aérospatiale et des technologies UAV.

## 11. Infrastructures : Création d'un Nouveau Terrain Aéronautique dédié à l'Innovation Aérospatiale

Pour soutenir l'aviation générale, l'innovation aérospatiale, les UAV, et l'exploration spatiale, il est proposé que l'État luxembourgeois investisse dans la création d'un **nouveau terrain aéronautique** doté d'une piste de **800 à 1000 mètres**, comprenant :

- **Zones dédiées aux UAV** pour le développement et le test en conditions réelles.
- **Hangars pour héberger l'aviation générale**
- **Laboratoires de recherche** pour les technologies spatiales et aérospatiales.
- **Espaces collaboratifs** pour les startups, les centres de recherche et les partenaires industriels.

### Objectifs de l'Infrastructure :

- **Pôle d'Innovation Aérospatiale :**
  Créer un environnement propice pour les startups, les centres de recherche (SNT, LIST, LSA, Technoport) et les entreprises spécialisées dans les technologies aéronautiques et spatiales.
- **Accueil des Avions Légers et UAV :**
  Offrir une base opérationnelle aux aéronefs innovants actuellement exclus de l'aéroport de Luxembourg-Findel.
- **Tests et Validation :**
  Accès exclusif aux zones de test pour les **UAV**, les **technologies spatiales** et les **nouvelles technologies aéronautiques**.

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## Programmes et Services de l'Incubateur

### 1. Programme d'Accélération Startups :

- Sélection de **startups prometteuses** dans les domaines de l'aérospatial, des UAV et des technologies spatiales.
- Accès à un **financement initial**, à des **mentors industriels** et à des **experts techniques**.

### 2. Laboratoires de Recherche et Développement :

- Création de **laboratoires de prototypage avancé** (impression 3D, matériaux composites, propulsion verte).

- Collaboration avec le **DroneLab du SNT**, les **laboratoires du LIST**, et le **LSA** pour des projets de recherche appliquée.

### 3. Zone de Test et de Validation :

- **Accès exclusif au nouveau terrain aéronautique** pour les tests en conditions réelles des UAV, des technologies spatiales et des nouveaux avions légers.
- **Environnement sécurisé et contrôlé** pour des expérimentations avancées.

### 4. Programmes de Formation et Certification :

- **Formation pour les opérateurs de drones** et les **ingénieurs aérospatiaux** en partenariat avec le réseau national de l'aviation, **AOPA Luxembourg** et **Technoport**.
- **Certification des nouvelles technologies aéronautiques** en partenariat avec les autorités de l'aviation civile.

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## Impact et Bénéfices

### 1. Pour le Luxembourg :

- **Positionnement en tant que leader européen** de l'innovation aérospatiale et spatiale.
- Création d'**emplois hautement qualifiés** et développement d'une main-d'œuvre spécialisée.
- Accélération de l'innovation dans les **UAV**, l'**exploration spatiale**, et les **technologies de propulsion verte**.

### 2. Pour les Partenaires :

- **SNT, LIST, LSA et Technoport :** Accès à des **projets de recherche appliquée** et à des collaborations industrielles internationales.
- **AOPA Luxembourg :** Modernisation des infrastructures et **promotion des innovations aéronautiques**.
- **Luxinnovation :** Renforcement de son rôle en tant que **catalyseur d'innovation nationale et européenne**.

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# 12. Rôle de l'État dans le Développement de l'Infrastructure Aéronautique

L'État luxembourgeois joue un rôle stratégique et central dans la promotion et le développement de l'aviation civile et militaire. La Direction de l'Aviation Civile (DAC) est l'autorité compétente en matière de sécurité et de sûreté aériennes.

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**Recommandations pour l'État :**

1. **Identification d'un Site Approprié**
    - **Études de Faisabilité** : Mener des études approfondies pour déterminer l'emplacement optimal du nouveau terrain aéronautique, en tenant compte des contraintes environnementales, logistiques, économiques et sociales.
    - **Impacts Environnementaux** : Réaliser des évaluations d'impact environnemental pour minimiser les nuisances sonores et les émissions de CO2, en conformité avec les réglementations européennes et locales.
    - **Accessibilité et Connectivité** : Sélectionner un site offrant un accès facile aux infrastructures de transport existantes
2. **Développement d'un Concept Intégré**
    - **Plan Directeur Global** : Élaborer un plan directeur englobant :
        - Les infrastructures de base (pistes, taxiways, hangars, terminaux).
        - Les services associés (maintenance, carburant, sécurité).
        - Les modalités de gestion et d'exploitation, avec une vision à long terme pour assurer la flexibilité et l'extensibilité des infrastructures.
    - **Consultation des Parties Prenantes** : Collaborer avec les acteurs du secteur aéronautique (compagnies aériennes, opérateurs au sol, écoles de pilotage, aviation d'affaires et de loisirs) pour adapter le projet aux besoins du marché.
    - **Innovation et Durabilité** : Intégrer des solutions écologiques et innovantes, telles que des infrastructures favorisant l'utilisation de carburants durables (SAF) et des systèmes de gestion énergétique efficaces.
3. **Financement et Partenariats**
    - **Modèles de Financement Public-Privé (PPP)** : Explorer des modèles de financement public-privé pour soutenir la construction et l'exploitation du nouveau terrain aéronautique, minimisant ainsi l'impact sur le budget public.

- **Exemples Européens Réussis** : S'inspirer des exemples réussis d'autres pays européens, comme l'aéroport de Berlin-Brandenburg (Allemagne) pour la gestion des coûts, ou l'aéroport de Lisbonne (Portugal) pour le modèle PPP.
- **Partenariats Stratégiques** : Collaborer avec des investisseurs privés, des institutions financières internationales et des fonds d'investissement en infrastructure pour diversifier les sources de financement.
- **Incitations et Subventions** : Mettre en place des incitations fiscales et des subventions pour attirer des investisseurs stratégiques, notamment dans les domaines de l'aviation verte et de l'innovation technologique.

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**Impact et Bénéfices Attendus :**

- **Renforcement de la Compétitivité** : Positionner le Luxembourg comme un hub aéronautique régional en améliorant la connectivité et en attirant de nouveaux acteurs économiques.
- **Croissance Économique** : Générer des emplois directs et indirects dans le secteur aéronautique, contribuant à la croissance économique nationale.
- **Leadership Environnemental** : Promouvoir un modèle de développement aéroportuaire durable en intégrant des technologies vertes et en respectant les normes environnementales les plus strictes.

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**Conclusion :**

Le développement d'une nouvelle infrastructure aéronautique au Luxembourg nécessite une approche stratégique intégrant des études approfondies, une planification collaborative et des modèles de financement innovants. En s'appuyant sur les meilleures pratiques internationales et en mobilisant les parties prenantes locales, l'État peut non seulement renforcer le secteur aéronautique mais aussi contribuer à la croissance économique tout en respectant les exigences environnementales.

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