



EGU Newsletter 2/2026

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**Editors note**

On the EGU website <http://www.glidingunion.eu> you find a lot of useful information. If you have forgotten the password to the internal section, please contact EGU.

A report by the President

Arild Solbakken



We are currently experiencing a summer of hot weather, which may be a concern for some but also brings the potential for flyable soaring conditions for those of us who love gliding. We hope that you have been able to enjoy some of it.

As announced in the previous EGU Newsletter, 1-2026, we decided to be present at the AERO 2026, although there was minimum focus on, and representation from, the gliding industry this year. But as reported previously, EASA launched a Rule Simplification Programme as part of the EU's Better Regulation policy at the end of last year. Therefore, the objective of EGU was to connect and meet with representatives from EASA with particular focus on the plans of the Rule Simplification Programme. We used the opportunity to engage with expert level in EASA, and we have, together with the European Ballooning Federation, joined forces with Europe Air Sports to work with EASA and ensure our priorities are included in their future agenda.

EASA had a dedicated GA Conference this year. "Exploring Simpler Rules for Safer GA", focused on

reducing administrative burden and discussing proportionate approaches such as declarations schemes.

The topic was addressed by several speakers from the EU Commission and EASA, and a podium discussion took place immediately after, with participation from many stakeholders, including Europe Air Sports representing all air sports including gliding. Vice President in EAS, Ralf Hubo, defended the position of the air sports, that a simpler set of regulations should be sufficient to ensure flight safety.



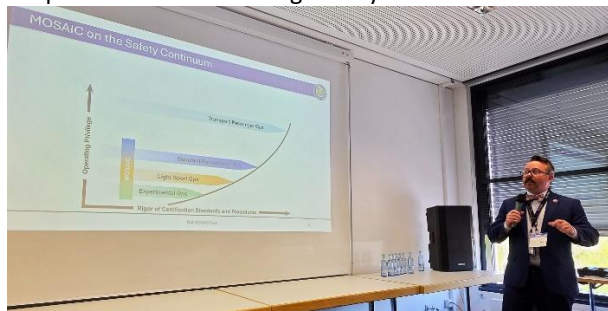
Micaela Verissimo EASA presenting the Rule Simplification Programme



Panel – Exploring simpler rules for safer GA, led by Vladimir Foltin.

EASA also had an information Session with FAA on European and U.S. perspectives on innovation and regulation. The Federal Aviation Administration

presented the MOSAIC initiative, while EASA shared developments on iConspicuity and ADS-L technologies to help prevent mid-air collisions. The orientation of EASA regulatory thinking for GA toward the FAA concept is very exciting and should allow for simplification of the GA regulatory framework.



James D. Foltz, Policy & Standards Division FAA presenting the US MOSAIC concept.

EASA also offered iConspicuity and ADS-L collaboration activities by bringing industry partners together to discuss compatible with future U-space environments. These forums are very important arenas for influencing the development and securing the future access to free airspace for gliding.

In addition to these sessions, dedicated meetings were held with EASA on the modernisation of airworthiness and maintenance requirements (Part 66 L) and the collaboration on the safety of gliding where we hope to achieve an improved understanding of accident and incident rates across Europe.



Ted Richards (left) and Arild Solbakken (right) with Ionut Florian from EASA, discussing safety collaborations

In the last part of June EASA presented their strategy for Rule Simplification and the implications for the European Plan for Safety (EPAS) in the regular SAB Plenary meeting. The EPAS sets out the shared strategic priorities of EASA and the Member States for aviation safety and environmental protection. It includes several existing and new rulemaking tasks, many of which may affect gliding. There seems to be clear ambition to make life easier for General Aviation. We were invited to review and comment on the Draft European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS) 2027. EPAS 2027 will introduce two new chapters—Rule Modernisation and Environmental Protection &

Sustainability—alongside the usual Safety Part. As a result, simplification and environmental initiatives will be integrated into EPAS rather than handled as separate projects.

We have noted with satisfaction that many of our topics for modernisation are being addressed. A main concern, however, is that the Part 66 L topic is beyond what can be considered an acceptable timeline for gliding (start 2028 – finish 2031).

But the Rulemaking Task (RMT) on “Simplification of Light Sports Aircraft (LSA)” covers all technical domains (initial and continuing airworthiness, pilot licensing and medical, air operations and ATM/ANS) at a much more favourable timing. We have reasons to believe that gliding will be part of this RMT, which means our focus on Airworthiness and Maintenance should shift from P66L to LSA. This also means we need to fight for “workable” solutions for examination of new technicians as well as keeping recencies for all the existing technicians the next 4-5 years (at least) until new rules come into effect. The same goes for medical requirements, where the work in the existing RMT’s need to be followed closely and necessary improvements be pushed.

We will now work to influence the Terms and References for the RMT which will be detailed in September with the aim to have the new LSA requirements in force Q4 2029 (TBD). We will continue working through EAS (the formal channels) but we will also work to get direct involvement by EGU in activities / discussions (working groups / committees or similar) affecting gliding. We have previously achieved good results in simplifying regulations through collaboration with other air sports communities and the authorities. Part SFCL, Part OPS and the Sailplane Rule Book, implemented in 2016, are good examples. We believe the fact that many of our key concerns are being addressed by EASA proves that working to influence the rule makers may give results. We encourage you, the members, to join us for this work, through the various working groups in EGU. This will be priority tasks for the EGU this autumn, and next years, and we wish to do it alongside you the members, and with other fellow air sports communities.



Workstream Safety

Ted Richards



During the European summer, activity within the EGU's Safety Workstream tends to be quiet. Nevertheless, work continues toward long-term goals. These include better publicity through the Newsletter and the EGU's Facebook page, and an improved understanding of accident and incident rates in proportion to the number of hours, launches or kilometres flown.

More immediately, considerable effort has been devoted to supporting EASA in their analysis of recent gliding accidents. The intention is to provide subject-matter expertise that enables a better understanding of underlying causes. While the process may be somewhat bureaucratic, it should lead to better categorisation of accidents and incidents and a more robust, evidence-based focus on key safety issues. These can then become the focus of targeted safety initiatives. For example, and without prejudging the full results of the analysis, flight into terrain in mountainous regions, accompanied by loss of control or not, appears to be the most significant safety issue, and will be a major focus for future work.

In parallel, we have also been supporting EASA in refining the sailplane chapter of the EASA Annual Safety Report, making sure the wording is relevant to gliding operations and, we hope, producing a document that glider pilots will want to read. Publication of this year's edition is eagerly awaited and will be signposted on Facebook and elsewhere.

We are also engaged with other EGU Workstreams in analysing and commenting on EASA's European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS) 2026. It's a daunting document, written at quite high level, but it's crucial that the particular requirements of the gliding community are adequately reflected in it

David Roberts OBE (1945-2026)



It is with great sadness that the European Gliding Union reflects on the recent death of David Geoffrey Roberts OBE, a dedicated leader whose vision and tireless voluntary service shaped gliding and recreational aviation at national and European levels for more than 25 years.

Born in May 1945, David qualified as a chartered accountant and brought exceptional financial discipline, strategic insight, and pragmatism to every role. His gliding journey began at his local club (Cotswold Gliding Club, England), where he took on leadership responsibilities, expanded membership, enhanced accessibility for young people and pilots with disabilities, and oversaw infrastructure improvements that benefited generations of pilots.

Nationally, he served on the Competitions Committee and the Executive Committee of the British Gliding Association (BGA), including 6 years as Chairman, 2000-2006. Under his guidance, the BGA became one of the UK's most effective and well-run air sports bodies, with a robust development plan focused on growth, safety, and sustainability. He championed initiatives that improved pilot safety — many of which demonstrably saved lives — while promoting broader participation.

David's impact at the European level was particularly significant. He brought his extensive UK experience into the EGU Board, where he built an extensive network and began his important work for the future of gliding. From that foundation his influence grew steadily, culminating in his leadership role within Europe Air Sports (EAS), the umbrella organisation representing all air sports disciplines across Europe and a key partner to the EGU.

Former President of the European Gliding Union, Roland Stuck, remembers how David entered into the work for the gliding movement:

I first met David in 2000 at the European Gliding Union (EGU) annual meeting, shortly after his election as Chairman of the British Gliding Association. His vision and dynamism immediately impressed us at a pivotal

moment, as we prepared to defend the future of soaring before the newly established European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

Over the years that followed, David proved to be an indispensable ally. Together with Patrick Pauwels, we authored a landmark policy paper on licensing that introduced a recreational pilot license with lighter medical requirements—proposals that EASA ultimately adopted almost in full. Through nearly 30 trips to Cologne as part of the MDM.032 working group and his work with Europe Air Sports, David fought relentlessly for practical, balanced rules. His sharp advocacy, tireless dedication, and passion for the gliding community will always be remembered.



David, his wife Gillian and Roland Stuck at the EGU Congress in Helsinki in 2009

As President of EAS, he provided strong British leadership as he played a central role in advocating for proportionate, practical regulation that protected and supported recreational aviation. He also helped shape collaboration and progress across the wider European aviation community.

His contributions included personally presenting the case for more realistic and relevant European maintenance regulations, which led to very significant positive revisions benefiting glider owners and operators across the continent. He also made a leading contribution to European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) working groups addressing frameworks for lighter-touch regulation. In 2007, he presented EAS's views on regulation directly to a European Parliament and Commission Forum, helping shape a Commission paper on "A Sustainable Future for General and Business Aviation."

Through his work with EAS and close collaboration with the EGU, David ensured the voice of glider pilots — and the wider recreational aviation community — was clearly heard in Brussels, Cologne, and beyond on critical issues including airspace access, airworthiness, licensing, operations, and environmental matters. His efforts helped secure a more enabling regulatory environment for the approximately 80,000 glider pilots represented by the EGU and the broader air sports community.

Beyond his organisational roles, David remained an active and enthusiastic glider pilot throughout his life. His personal flying took him well beyond the UK, with many hours spent soaring the ridges and thermals of France and further afield. He was a regular and welcome participant at the Vågå Wave Camp in Norway, where he revelled in the challenge and beauty of mountain wave flying, sharing those experiences with friends and fellow pilots from across Europe.

In recognition of his outstanding services to aviation, David was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2020 New Year's Honours List. This honour celebrated a lifetime of committed, effective leadership across local, national, and international arenas. He also received the Royal Aero Club's Gold Medal and other accolades for his many contributions.

Colleagues remember David as a man of integrity, warmth, determination, and quiet humour — someone who combined rigorous analysis with a genuine passion for flight and a deep belief in the value of voluntary service. He mentored many and left organisations stronger, more professional, and better equipped for the future. David's legacy lives on in thriving clubs, safer operations, more accessible gliding, and a stronger European voice for our sport. The EGU and its member associations owe him a profound debt of gratitude.

The European Gliding Union extends heartfelt condolences to David's family, friends, and all who worked alongside him in the BGA, Royal Aero Club, EAS, and EGU networks.

Fair winds and blue skies always, David.



David in an ASW 28 on the ice at Norwegian Vågå wavecamp

WINGS

TE Lilla Szamosujvári



The recipients of the EGU WINGS scholarship 2026 has been announced, see below.

You can read more about them here (use the translation function for your language)

<https://nordicgliding.com/svenske-lina-blev-en-af-de-6-udvalgte-egu-wings-stipendiater/>

And our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579521585558>



EGU congratulates our WINGS Scholars!

EGU List of contacts

President: Arild Solbakken

1st Vice President: Meike Müller

2nd Vice President: Henrik Svensson

Secretary General: Ted Richards

Treasurer: Robert Danewid

Contact details can be found on the website

The EGU is the association of European Gliding Federations or Gliding Sections of National Aero Clubs. Its aim is to represent the interests of all glider pilots in Europe with respect to regulatory affairs. EGU monitors the developments in European aviation regulation and when necessary, takes action to prevent unfavourable or even dangerous rules affecting our sport from being set up. The EGU currently counts 23 full members and represents more than 66,000 glider pilots

Full members of the EGU are the gliding organisations of:

