

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3600/09
by Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Impact of European EU-OPS safety rules on pleasure flight operators

As from 1 April 2009, the EU-OPS Regulation is also to apply to pleasure flight operators in the Netherlands. The Inspectorate of Transport, Public Works and Water Management took the view that the new EU-OPS Regulation, which entered into force on 16 July 2008, no longer permits such operators to be exempted.

Pleasure flight operators are mostly small or medium-sized enterprises with only a few employees or even without any. The aircraft generally have sufficient capacity for only a few passengers, the pilot being the only crew member. Such businesses are now confronted with a series of safety requirements with which they cannot possibly comply. They have to draw up and use a detailed Flight Operations Manual. The Netherlands Advisory Board on Administrative Burden (ACTAL) has calculated that this will involve between 840 and 1490 hours of work per operator. EU-OPS also requires additional training which is out of all proportion to the small-scale character of pleasure flights.

Occasionally (for example with regard to compulsory rest periods before flights), exceptions have been made for small aircraft on which the pilot is the only crew member, but in many other cases no exceptions are allowed.

The costs of obtaining a licence have also grown substantially as a result of EU-OPS, from € 381 with no extra annual charges to an initial charge of € 7630 upon the issue of a licence, followed by an annual charge of € 3179. Although most of the relevant decisions have been taken at national level, the inspection requirements derived from EU-OPS play an important role.

1. What view does the Commission take of the problems arising from the EU-OPS rules for pleasure flight operators?
2. Are all the EU-OPS rules always fully applicable to pleasure flight operators, and is it practical to apply them to such operators? What view does the Commission take of the large charges being imposed for licences?
3. Will the Commission consider the possibility of an exemption from EU-OPS for pleasure flight operators?
4. What other measures will the Commission take to solve or alleviate the problems described here?