

**BGA Executive Committee member Chris Gibson, who chairs the Association working group that's preparing for the change to an EASA-controlled system of pilot licensing, provides a first look at what could be happening over the coming months and years**

If you have been following developments with EASA (the European Aviation Safety Agency), you will be aware of the intention to extend its scope to include more responsibilities than it currently holds. These responsibilities will include pilot licensing and, in line with the rest of Europe, all UK glider pilots will need to have an EASA-compliant glider pilot's licence within the next two to three years.

The BGA has established a working group to monitor the development of EASA pilot licensing; to liaise with the UK authorities; to work with our colleagues across European airports organisations; and to ensure the best possible outcome for UK pilots, taking advantage of any benefits of the change, while minimising the effects on glider pilots. The licence options are likely to be:

- The EASA Light Aircraft Pilot's Licence (Sailplanes) – 'LAPL(S)' – this is often referred to as 'recreational'.
- The EASA ICAO-compliant Glider Pilot's Licence – 'SPL'.

These licences are likely to be very similar, if not identical, to each other, but details are still subject to formal ratification at the time of writing. The principal difference is likely to be that the ICAO licence would require an ICAO Class 2 medical whereas the LAPL(S) would need only a GP endorsement.

Timescales are still uncertain but it is likely that the transition period will not start before late 2008 – and possibly later.

The licence format will be a modular one and will, in all probability, include ratings or endorsements for:

- Cross country
- Launch method
- Night
- Cloud
- Aerobatics
- Flight Instructor
- Flight Examiner

The BGA has been working closely with colleagues in the EGU (European Gliding Union), EAS (Europe Air Sports) and EASA in representing the interests of UK glider pilots and negotiating the most suitable licensing structure for our needs. The exact method of transition, the maximisation of grandfather rights, and the effect on the way in which the BGA will manage glider pilot licensing, badges, and training are still to be agreed. However, it is likely that a standard not dissimilar to that required for the existing BGA Glider Pilot's Licence will be recognised as a 'benchmark' in the transition process. The European legal process for formalisation and introduction will be similar to that for the new C of A system. An NPA document (Notice of Proposed Amendment) is being finalised and will be issued by EASA for public consultation in the near future – that's

likely to be by the end of the first quarter of 2008. Following this consultation the new licence will be introduced over a period yet to be determined.

The NPA will cover the proposed Light Aircraft Pilot Licence structure and include sections relevant to glider pilots. The BGA will issue a formal response to this on behalf of UK glider pilots but you will also have the opportunity to respond on your own behalf. In the meantime, please keep an eye on the BGA website at [www.gliding.co.uk](http://www.gliding.co.uk) for updates, information on responses, and its effect on you.