



General Meeting of the European Model Flying Union

Hybrid Meeting – Vienna & Zoom, 25 & 26 November 2023
Commenced 13:00 hrs

Draft Minutes of Meeting

In Attendance

Attendees as per list in Appendix 1.

Opening of the meeting

Greetings of the hosting member (ÖAeC)

The ÖAeC representatives welcomed delegates to the meeting on behalf of the ÖAeC.

The President conducted a roundtable, asking all delegates to introduce themselves. The President commented that the objective was to deal with as many procedural matters as possible on day one, to allow the second day to be focussed entirely on EU Regulation and related issues.

Session 1

Designation of a reporter for the meeting

The General Secretary commented that the meeting was being recorded which would aid the production of the minutes. The President agreed to produce the report of the meeting once again with input welcomed from others.

Approval of the agenda of the 8. General Assembly

The agenda of the meeting was approved.

Approval of the 7. General Assembly minutes of 15 & 16 October 2022

The minutes of the previous Zoom meeting were accepted as a true & accurate record with no objections, subject to the addition of Finesse + as participants of the meeting.

The Treasurer commented that the minutes are currently approved a full year after the General Assembly and that this process should be expedited. It was proposed that ideally the minutes should be circulated for comment within four weeks of the GA and then validated by members, for formal approval by the next GA.

Election of the election supervisor and one election assistant

Espen Bakke and Rob Buckley were confirmed as the Election Supervisor and Election Assistant.

Session 2

Report of the President

The President reported on the recent work of the EMFU.

Cordial relations had been maintained with EASA but there had been a little less activity than some previous years, which was to be anticipated given where they were in the regulatory cycle.

The EMFU had provide input into any relevant consultations including one on Drone Security which Europe Air Sports had also submitted comments in support of the EMFU's position.

EASA were exploring the use of an app-based system for the notification of model flying activity to other airspace users and this was being trialled by the DMFV but could be made available to EMFU Members in time.

Good relations had also been maintained with Europe Air Sports, and the President and Jürgen Lefevere had attended their Technical Meeting in Dübendorf earlier in November, where topics had included electronic conspicuity. The EMFU had received some reassurance from Vlado Foltin (attending remotely on behalf of EASA) that pragmatic measure would be found for the model flying community, most likely using an app-based notification system rather than individual conspicuity devices in the majority of cases.

The EU Basic Regulation was likely to be subject to review within the next couple of years and it was possible that this could present an opportunity to improve the situation for the model flying community. The President and Jürgen Lefevere were planning representations to EASA and the European Commission, supported by Europe Air Sports, to provide input at the earliest possible stage.

The President commented that following Brexit, the regulations in the UK were diverging from the EU regulations and that it was becoming an increasing challenge to monitor both sets of regulations. The President commented that should the GA elect him for a further term, then he may consider stepping down at the end of that term and that consideration should be given to identifying a potential successor.

As part of the President's report, the Secretary provided an update on his work with ISAD e.v. on the ongoing radio spectrum work.

The President raised a discussion point in terms of a potential European Model Flying Day, to helps members raise the profile of model flying within their countries. The BMFA has held a day in May 2022 which had seen 3109 aircraft airborne at noon across the UK and this had (and continued to) generate positive media interest.

The President thanked the Board members for their work and the members for their continued support.

Report of the Treasurer and the committee for the verification of accounts

The Treasurer presented figures for 2020, 2021 and 2022, as he had been unable to participate in recent GA's for health reasons.

Following a decision of the 7.GA, there had been no subscriptions raised for 2020 and 2021 but subscriptions had been collected for 2022. In addition, the EMFU had received a donation of €4000 in return for the Article 16 Implementation Guide which had been prepared by Jürgen Lefevere and the EAS subscription fee had been reduced by 25% due to the global pandemic.

The Treasurer commented that members should take account of transfer charges when paying subscription fees, otherwise they fell to the EMFU which partly explained the current level of banking charges.

The accounts for previous years had all been approved by the Verification Team and were commended by the Board. The accounts were approved unanimously by Members.

Presentation and approval of the budget for 2024

Contribution from the Board, Membership fees. Discussion and decision

The Treasurer proposed that the fees for 2024 should be increased for Full Members from 0.16€ per represented pilot per year to 0.18€.

The proposal was discussed at length, but ultimately approved. It was agreed that any future proposals for fee increases would be presented to Members well in advance of the next GA, to allow Members to discuss any proposed increases with their Associations.

Session 3

Election of the President. Proposal: Dave Phipps (BMFA)

Dave Phipps was re-elected as President.

Election of the General Secretary. Proposal: Frank Tofahrn (DAeC)

Frank Tofahrn was re-elected as General Secretary.

Election of the members of the committee for the verification of accounts

It was agreed that the committee for the verification of accounts would be comprised of:

Hans Krijne
Bengt Lindgren

Session 4

New Members:

1. Hangflug Europa (Austria)

Gerd Holzner provided a presentation to introduce Hangflug Europa and highlight some of the challenges their members faced with regulations.

Hangflug Europe was unanimously approved and welcomed to the EMFU as a full member.

2. Federação Portuguesa de Aerodelismo (Portugal)

There had been no submission received and there was no representative present, so it was agreed that consideration of the application for membership could not proceed at this time. It was agreed that should the application proceed, then the decision would be delegated to the Board.

2. Finesse Plus (France)

Didier Friteaux provided an oral introduction to Finesse Plus and the challenges that they perceived for their members. It was confirmed that their relationship with FFAM was cordial and complimentary, and they were not in competition with each other.

Finesse Plus was unanimously approved and welcomed to the EMFU as a full member.

Session 5

Website and Social Media and any other issued raised by members.

Jürgen Lefevère provided an update as webmaster of the EMFU web site. He requested that members should make a landing page available on their own websites for the EMFU website to link to. The landing page would ideally contain any country specific regulatory information and details for visiting pilots which would be the Member's responsibility to maintain and keep updated. This would significantly reduce the workload for the EMF webmaster.

A 'Resources' page had been added to the website to share useful material and information, such as wildlife studies on the impact of model flying. It was hoped that the resources available would build over time and Members were invited to submit any useful information for inclusion,

Jürgen also requested that any positive/good news stories about the value of model flying to the aviation sector would also be useful additions to the Resources and invited members to submit any that they may see.

Jürgen also highlighted the 'Natura 2000' network of protected areas, established to cover Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, extending across all 27 EU Member States, both on land and at sea. There has been some concern about the potential negative impact on established model flying sites which may fall within the network of protected areas which is something the EMFU and its Members will have to monitor.

The President recorded thanked Jürgen for the significant effort he had put into making the website a valuable information resource.

In terms of social media, there had been no change in the EMFU's current position of not engaging in social media channels.

Session 7

As the meeting had run a little ahead of time, it was agreed to bring Session 7 forward to free up additional time on day 2.

Timing of General Assembly meetings (change of statutes, proposal from the Board)

The Board proposed a minor amendment to the statutes to allow greater flexibility for the scheduling of future GA's. This was approved unanimously.

No date was agreed for the 9.GA, which it was envisaged would most likely take place in the final quarter of 2024.

Location for the 2024 General Assembly (Proposal Dübendorf CH)

Two offers for the hosting of future GA's had been received by the Board, from Switzerland and Spain.

It was agreed that the 2024 GA would take place in Dübendorf, generously hosted by the SMV.

It was noted that the offer from Spain to host would remain valid for 2025.

This concluded the proceedings for day one.

Delegates in physical attendance enjoyed a social evening at the Vienna Rathauskeller.

Day 2

Session 6

EU Regulation and related issues

- **Experiences with implementing the EU rules**

Members are invited to give short contributions on their "lessons learned"

- **Ideas for reviewing EU legislation concerning model aircraft operations.**

Jürgen outlined two main objectives of the session:

1. Identify the focus area for the EMFU to influence EU regulations.
2. Work ahead of the upcoming changes and come up with concrete proposals towards EU.

Due to a new EU Parliament in 2024, it was anticipated that there would be a slowdown in EU legislative activities, but it may also be the right moment to put forward suggestions/improvements to the EU Basic Regulation for the benefit of the model flying community.

It was hoped that the EMFU would be able to gain help from the professional lobbyist engaged by Europe Air Sports and a preliminary discussion had taken place with him at the EAS Technical Meeting.

Jürgen was preparing some proposals to put forward and input from Members would be invited. It was hoped to submit the proposals to EASA and the EC early in the New Year.

Discussions with the EAS lobbyist suggested that any changes to the Basic Regulation would be unlikely to be implemented until 2028/29, so it would potentially be a long process of negotiation.

It was likely that the war in Ukraine would also impact on the regulatory review process as a result of security issues arising from the use of drones.

Jürgen outlined some of the upcoming regulatory challenges, in terms of U-Space and electronic conspicuity. It was hoped that there would be a range of options available to allow model flying to meet the requirements and continue to operate with minimum possible impact.

As previously highlighted, model flying was also faced with challenges arising from the EU focus on the protection of biodiversity and natural habitats and this was something had the potential to negatively impact model flying and was something which would have to be closely monitored.

EMFU Priorities and common members interests were identified as:

- Supporting the economic and social role of aeromodelling
- Encouraging new entrants into the sport
- Respect diversity
- Two main priorities were to ensure regulatory continuity/stability and to gain further derogation from regulations intended for primarily for 'drones' on the basis that model flying is a distinct activity with a recognised and long-established record for safety.

Open discussion points :

- The issue of regulatory harmonization was discussed, but from the outset of the regulatory process it had been agreed that this would have potentially resulted in more losers than winners.
- The issue of noise from model aircraft was raised, with several Members reporting on the noise measurement regulations within their countries. It was agreed that it was a potential issue which the EMFU may have to address at some future point, especially in relation to potential EU Biodiversity Regulatory constraints. At the present time, it is more a an issue within individual Member States.
- Josef Jahn provided a presentation on "Implementing EU rules" in Austria, in particular the app-based airspace notification system that had been developed. The presentation generated several discussions around the concept presented by Josef. Jürgen mentioned that a similar system was being used for the model flying clubs located within the Zurich airport zone and that this was working well with the modellers being considered as part of the general aviation family.

The session ended with a full participant round table. Bernhard Rögner reported that it would be his last time in attendance at an EMFU meeting. The President offered a vote of thanks to Bernhard who had been one of the original driving forces behind the formation of the EMFU.

A vote of thanks was proposed to the ÖAEC for hosting the EMFU GA.

The President closed the meeting offering thanks to the General Secretary for his organisation of the GA and thanking members for their ongoing support.

The meeting closed at 13.30hrs

Appendix 1

Attendees

Present in Vienna

Dave Phipps	EMFU President & BMFA
Laurent Henry	EMFU Vice President & FFAM
Frank Tofahrn	EMFU General Secretary & DAeC
Jürgen Lefevere	EMFU Board Member & SMV
Espen Bakke	EMFU Board Member & NLF
Haagen Valanes	EMFU Treasurer
Achim Doerfler	Hangflug Europa
Gerd Holzner	Hangflug Europa
Bernhard Rögner	ÖAEC
Josef Jahn	ÖAEC
Ernest Mattiusi	FAL
Didier Friteaux	Finesse Plus
Hans Krijne	FLRCV
Leo Van Eylen	VML
Benoit Lejoly	LBA

Present Online for all or part of the meeting

Rob Buckley	LMA
Arsenio Solana	AEAMD
Robert Herzog	LBA
Paulette Halleaux	LBA
Ian Pallister	BMFA
Michael Österlund	RCFF
Carles Aymat	RFAE
Bengt Lindgren	SMFF
Ben Jansen	KNVvL
Anders Jonsson	SMFF
Conny Ulvestaf	SMFF