

Richard Meredith-Hardy  
President: FAI Microlight and Paramotor Commission (CIMA)

Radwell Lodge  
Baldoek  
Herts, SG7 5ES UK  
Tel +44 1462 834776  
Mob. +44 7771 526513



President of the FAI Rotorcraft Commission  
c/o FAI  
Avenue Mon Repos 24  
CH-1005 Lausanne  
Switzerland

21 October 2010

Dear Sir

At the last CIMA Plenary in November 2009 there was a proposal to introduce two new classes of microlight into FAI Section 10, specifically RGL1 and RGL2, Microlight Autogyros. The proposal defined them as "A powered aircraft, which in flight, derives most of its lift from an autorotating rotor system not provided with any form of direct power drive" and additionally must conform to the 'global' microlight definition as stated in FAI Section 10; basically 450 Kg MAUW when flown with 2 people or 300 Kg MAUW when flown solo, and a minimum speed in level flight at MTOW of 65 km/h.

The proposal was accepted unanimously by the CIMA Plenary, and is minuted.

This proposal did not suddenly appear out of thin air, there is quite a long history to it, starting in 2000.

That year, the European Microlight Championships were hosted by France. They had recently had a change of national legislation which created a raft of new types of aircraft which fell within their rules for microlights, including helicopters, autogyros, airships and balloons. Since there were no international competitions for autogyros, and microlight autogyros have a performance similar in many respects to other types of microlight, and were thought to be capable of flying all the standard tasks in a microlight championship without any special arrangements, the local organizers wanted to include them in the championships.

Of course it was recognized that CIMA could not sanction an FAI autogyro championship so the question was put to FAI Secretariat "what to do?" The advice was to approach the FAI Rotorcraft Commission and see whether they would be interested in co-hosting a championship, or making some other arrangement so that microlight autogyros could compete. I understand the response from the FAI Rotorcraft Commission was something along the lines of "It's nothing to do with you" (but I have no record of the correspondence from the time.)

The EMC organizers nevertheless went ahead with an unofficial competition for autogyros which at least established that it was possible to safely fly an autogyro which met the French microlight definition in all the tasks normally flown in a FAI Microlight Championships, and that there was an interest by autogyro pilots to do this.

The same thing happened in 2005, this time at the World Microlight Championships, also in France. I believe a similar approach was again made to the Rotorcraft commission, with a similar uncompromising response.

As I understand it, there were several other 'informal' approaches to the Rotorcraft Commission on the same subject in this 10 year period, either Commission President to Commission President or via Max Bishop, always with the same response, and even though the Rotorcraft Commission had no competition format of its own to offer the autogyro community.

The first time I competed in a microlight competition which included autogyros was in 1989. I dare say that wasn't the first, so there is a long history of them participating in microlight events. Since that first attempt in

2000 to get FAI microlight autogyro competitions going there has been a significant increase in global numbers of 'lightweight' autogyros. Some other nations besides France have realigned their national regulations to include autogyros as microlights, their pilots often must have a national microlight licence, and it is not uncommon to find microlight pilots who fly autogyros as well as other types of microlight. The effect of all this is to have generated an increasing interest by autogyro pilots in the sort of competition as has been done for many years in microlights. Today, microlight autogyros regularly compete at national level in microlight competitions, but are still completely disenfranchised at international level by FAI.

As it happens, I was Section 10 editor last year, 2009. When I received this proposal in October 2009, my first response was rather cautious as it obviously raised an issue involving another FAI commission. Following consultations with the CIMA Bureau, on 19 October 2009 I discussed the matter with Max Bishop, and his advice was to include the proposal rather than deal with it by other means because several 'diplomatic' attempts at a solution had already failed. It was recognized there was a demand, but there was still no evidence the Rotorcraft Commission had any plans to sanction FAI championships for autogyros.

At the end of the 2009 Plenary I was elected the new President of CIMA. Since the CIMA Plenary had agreed unanimously to include microlight autogyros within its remit, one of my new duties was to write a proposal for CASI reflecting the decision. The first draft of this went to Max Bishop on 25 November 2009 with the question "does this look like the right way to approach all this? When we have a final draft, what happens next?"

His response was: "Good work .... When you have CIMA agreement, just send it to me officially with a covering letter asking that the FAI General Conference and CASI be requested to take the necessary amendment action."

In due course our final draft was sent to FAI Secretariat together with my covering letter, and these were subsequently dispatched by Max on 15 January 2010 to the President of CASI. As the proposal document also included some changes to FAI statutes, on 21 January it was also sent by Max to the Chairman of the Statutes Working Group with the note "Most of the CIMA proposals concern the SC General Section only. However, Proposals 7, 8, and 9 call for minor changes to the Statutes and By Laws. The FAI President has seen these and voices no objection."

Since the whole thing was done with the explicit advice of the FAI Secretary General and seemed to have been extensively distributed I assumed that everything was in hand. I have no knowledge of when it was distributed to the Rotorcraft commission, but in any case, on 13 Sept 2010 all FAI commission presidents received a link to the CASI agenda from the FAI Secretary General, and one of its attachments was our proposal document.

At no time before the CASI meeting of 7 Oct 2010 did I receive any question or comment about our 'Microlight Autogyro' proposal from anyone, not the FAI President, the FAI Secretary General, the President of CASI, nor the President or any other representative of the Rotorcraft Commission.

So when our proposal came up in the CASI meeting it came as a considerable surprise to me that there was such vehement opposition from the Rotorcraft Commission.

So now we're back at the beginning, having to explain everything again:

- CIMA has identified a demand for competitions from amongst a section of the autogyro community.
- There are various clauses in FAI statutes, notably in the Functions and responsibilities of the FAI, "1.3.3. To establish and enforce rules for international air sports competitions" and "1.3.4 To organize World and Continental Championships and other air sports events in those disciplines recognized by FAI" which clearly establish the fact that FAI is obliged to organize championships for the autogyro community.
- Since CIMA already organizes championships highly suited to microlight autogyros it is quite simple to include them in its existing events, it has tried to get the Rotorcraft commission involved, but has been consistently rejected over a number of years.

/ continued 3

- So far as I have been led to believe, there has never been any intention by the Rotorcraft commission to provide competitions for microlight autogyros, and this finally led the FAI Secretary General to a position where he encouraged CIMA to introduce its proposal.

It is very important to be clear about one thing; the CIMA proposal is NOT an attempt to 'steal' something from another commission. There's no question of 'removing' or 'usurping' anything from the control of the Rotorcraft commission, CIMA is simply proposing to introduce a new class of microlight based on its existing rules in which some types of autogyros have the option to participate; that's all.

CIMA has even chosen to identify them with a different name: 'Microlight Autogyro', to prevent any possible confusion with nonclamenture in any other FAI documentation.

And there is a precedent: The net effect of this proposal will be no different to the long standing 'overlap' between microlights and the two GAC classes C-1a/o (< 300 Kg TOW) and C-1 (< 500 kg TOW). GAC doesn't provide competitions designed for these lightweight aircraft, CIMA does, so pilots of these aircraft come and compete with us. And it works both ways; sometimes pilots of aircraft which are usually considered 'microlights' have claimed records in these GAC classes, usually because there isn't an equivalent record in Section 10, or for some reason the aircraft did meet the GAC criteria but couldn't be proven a microlight for the flight in question. This is good for pilots as it provides an alternative method for their exceptional endeavour to be recorded for posterity, and good for FAI whose function is "To establish, define and verify international air and space records". CIMA does not have a problem with this, and since there has been no 'complaint' we are aware of in the last 30 years it could be reasonably assumed GAC doesn't have a problem with it either.

Starting 11 November 2010 CIMA has its next Plenary. As commission President, naturally I will be obliged to report on Bureau activities since the last Plenary, and CASI decisions will obviously be a topic. Since all CIMA delegates will want to know why the Rotorcraft Commission is so opposed to this proposal I would be most grateful if you could explain the reasons so the Plenary can make an informed decision as to where it goes from here.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Meredith-Hardy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Richard Meredith-Hardy  
CIMA President