



אגודת התעופה הכללית בישראל Israel Association of General Aviation

Tel Aviv 13th of May 2012

Dear Mr. Robinson,

I have read the attached article "Helping Lebanon get on its feet" in General Aviation magazine – February 2012, mentioning your involvement with Cypriot authorities trying to reduce excessive handling charges at Phapos and Larnaka airports.

I would like to strengthen your arguments and remind you that our situation in Israel is very similar to that of the Lebanese AOPA pilots.

Neither we can fly south or north, the only way is westward and Cyprus is vital for GA landings on our way to Greece and further to Europe.

Further more, Israeli pilots used to, years ago before the horrendous price increase, to fly regularly to Cyprus for IFR training for international flight proficiency as well as for holydays and tourism.

The number of GA flight from Israel to Cyprus dropped dramatically since the privatization of LCPH & LCLK.

We tried to change the decision of raising the handling charges by approaching Chief of CAA and the minster of transportation but without any success.

I think that the economic argument will be multiplied not only by Lebanese pilot visitors but even more by Israeli pilots visitor, if only the charges will drop and be reasonable. Moreover, the Israeli handling charges are very similar to those of Greece and make Israeli pilots avoid landing and refueling in Cyprus, advising all European visitors flying to Israel to avoid Cyprus due to the excessive handling charges.

Cyprus economy only can gain from such a logical step toward general aviation.

Sincerely yours

AOPA Israel

Yaron Efrat, Adv. - President



Mail address: P.O.B 840 Kfar Shemaryahu 46910 ISRAEL
Tel: +972-9-9516660
Website: www.aopa.org.il
Fax: +972-9-9557673
Email: iaopa@barak.net.il





Helping Lebanon get on its feet

I AOPA is working to open up the outside world to general aviation in Lebanon, where the inability to cross international borders means GA is dying on its feet. Members of AOPA Lebanon cannot fly north through Syria or south through Israel – the only way out is via Cyprus, 120 miles away across the Mediterranean. But Cyprus imposes such high costs and inordinate security restrictions on Lebanese pilots that it is proving impossible for them to use the island's two airports, Paphos and Larnaca.

In November Martin Robinson, in his capacity as Senior Vice President of IAOPA, flew to Cyprus with AOPA Lebanon's Hadi and Haytham Azhari with the dual purpose of persuading the airport

to revisit its handling charges – a piston single from Lebanon faces fees of €500 – and of talking to the government about easing restrictions on Lebanese pilots, which are not reciprocated; a Cypriot pilot may fly to Beirut with little hindrance.

On the subject of excessive handling charges, some progress was made. Larnaca airport, now privatised, has only two handling agents, whereas IAOPA is pressing the European Commission to suggest a minimum of four to ensure genuine competition. Thanks to Yiouli Kalafati of AOPA Greece, Martin Robinson was able to show the airport authorities contracts held by the same two handling agents on islands in the Aegean, where handling charges were capped at €20 for aircraft under three tonnes. Martin says: "Sometimes it's helpful to explain in plain language that GA doesn't need the services, doesn't need the airstairs, the catering, the push-backs, the baggage handling, that the airlines pay for through their handling fees. Like other airports across Europe, Larnaca is keen to encourage any bit of traffic it can get. The managers were very interested in the effect handling charges have, and I think genuinely receptive to arguments for significant reductions."

In meetings with government officials the economic value of general aviation was explained. Martin says: "We spoke of the economic multipliers and their effect on the hotel, restaurant, tourist and other trades, and again, I think people were receptive to our arguments. From the security standpoint, it would be a positive move for a system of pre-clearances to be established, where pilots vetted through AOPA Lebanon could come and go without excessive demands."

Without a positive response from Cyprus, GA in Lebanon risks being snuffed out. Pilots are restricted to flying up and down their own coast from Beirut, and activity, already small, is falling. ■

