

PRESS RELEASE

8.33kHz - Refunds for GA radio upgrades

A consortium led by IAOPA Europe and aviation consultants Helios has applied for EU funds to offset the costs of upgrading equipment to meet new rules on 8.33kHz channel spacing - and they are calling on General Aviation (GA) users and aerodromes to pre-register now to obtain refunds where applicable.

Expansion of the voice channels available helps relieve congestion in the VHF band as mandated by SESAR – Single European Sky. Upper airspace has already been addressed and regulatory attention is now switching to lower airspace below FL195, commonly used by the GA community. The new regulations will affect all radios operating in the 117.975-137MHz band (the VHF band) - both airborne and ground based - and come into force from 31st December 2017 also for VFR.

If the consortium's application is successful, a refund of at least 20% will ease the financial burden for all general aviation aircraft and aerodromes in no less than 19 countries with the expected upgrades needed costing up to 147 million Euro. The countries covered are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland.

For Belgium the association that made the effort of collecting the data and put together the national application is the **Royal Belgian Aeroclub**. If the consortium's application is successful 20% of the upgrade cost for the 8.33kHz radios will be refunded to the registered participants of the Belgian GA community during the years 2017 and 2018.

Jean-Michel Fobe, Secretary General of the Royal Belgian Aeroclub, commented "We are deeply involved in assisting and representing our local GA community... it is in our DNA to protect the interest of our members and with this project the interest of the entire Belgian GA community will be served."

Philip Church, Helios' project director noted: "The timescales for the mandate are tight and the period to admit claims will be short. To increase the chance of getting a partial reimbursement of your costs we recommend that owners sign up right away and actively plan on equipping within the project timescales. It is a very simple registration procedure and you do not need to submit any documentation at this stage."

The consortium invites all GA aerodromes, aircraft owners, pilots and Aero Clubs of all aircraft registered or owners based within the participating countries to find out more and pre-register at their dedicated website <http://833.iaopa.eu>. The refunds will be available for upgrades of radio equipment after February 7, 2017 on a "first come, first served" basis.

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About the Royal Belgian Aeroclub:

The Royal Belgian Aeroclub is the federation of all Belgian federations for Air Sports. Created in 1901, it was one of the first such organisations worldwide and founding member of the FAI.

The Royal Belgian Aeroclub is a full member of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale and of Europe Air Sports. It is the liaison organ with the Belgian Civil Aviation Authority.

Our member federations are the national representative federations of Motor Air Sport, Aeromodeling, Parachuting, Gliding, Free Flight, Paramotor, Ballooning and Ultra Lights. The combined membership amounts to approximately 13.000 air sporters.

About the consortium:

Full membership of the consortium is available at <http://833.iaopa.eu/index.php/en/the-team>.