EASA’s perspective on ATCO licensing and language proficiency

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Your safety is our mission.
What is EASA?

- EASA is located in Cologne, Germany
- It employs around 700 professionals from all EASA Member States
Why EASA?

- Certain tasks performed at Community or national level to be carried out by a single specialised expert body

- Establish the European Aviation Safety Agency
  - independent in technical matters;
  - legal, administrative and financial autonomy;
  - Community body with legal personality;
  - exercising the implementing powers conferred on it by this Regulation

- EASA system = shared roles between Member States, Commission, EASA & stakeholders
Rulemaking on ATCO licensing

» Subject: Development of rules on Air Traffic Controller licensing

» Task: ATM.003, ToR adopted in 2009

» Working Method:
  » Rulemaking group (11 members from stakeholders, unions, ANSPs, authorities + Commission)
  » Medical requirements addressed by ad-hoc expertise
  » Eurocontrol expertise involved where appropriate
  » Phased approach
European developments

**Directive 2006/23 on Community ATCO licence**

- LPR introduced, transposition deadline: 17/05/2010

**Regulation 805/2011 on ATCO licences**

- **NEW:** ANSPs to provide justification when requiring level 5 + CA approval

**Regulation xxx on ATCO licensing – EASA NPA 2012/18**

- **NEW:** 9 years validity for level 6 + criteria for language assessment bodies
Implementation status in the EU

Common LP requirements + uniform application

Language endorsements are mutually recognised within the EU

EASA Standardisation Inspections to check compliance
Inspection results show certain non-compliances

Corrective actions adopted, implementation on-going

Examples:

- Missing records demonstrating that an adequate level of English language proficiency has been achieved
- Language assessment procedures not approved / not overseen by CA/NSA
- Validity issues
- No consequent periodical assessment
- Issues with the local language requirement, if applicable
  > often no language test and no formal phraseology
» **Level 4** in English & in the language(s) published in the AIP
  » Level to be determined by using the holistic descriptors + rating scale
  » Level 5 may be required for safety reasons, justified and approved by CA

» Proficiency attested by a **certificate**

» **Validity:** 3/6/9 years

» **Revalidation:** within 90 days preceding expiry = no time loss, otherwise validity counting from date of assessment

» **Expiry >> renewal**
9 years validity for level 6

**Reasons:**
- Language erosion affects all levels
- Differences in assessments and test standards
- “Native speaker” issue
- Granted or tested ???
- Non-discriminative tool for ANSPs
- ...

**Impacts:**
- 9 year validity means revalidation ca. 4 times within the career of an ATCO
- Availability of tests ???
- Costs depending on the current availability of tests
Assessment of language proficiency

- Method of assessment established by the CA
- Containing assessment process, organisation requirements, qualification requirements, appeals procedure

Focus on language rather than operational procedures

- Visual and non-visual communication in routine and non-routine situations

- Suitably trained and qualified assessors (aviation or language specialists / team)

- Criteria for the acceptability of language assessment bodies

- Inspired by ICAO Doc 9835 and Cir 318/AN/180
NPA 2012-18 – state of play

NPA consultation 22 Nov’12 until 29 April’13

Opinion to EC – Q4/2013

EASA Committee – 2014 (?)

Entry into force + transitions - TBD
Considerations

Language proficiency endorsement = Mutual Recognition

Trust in the system requires equal standards

However:
- Diverse testing / assessment methods
- “Slipping test standards”
- “Native speaker” issue
- Phraseology vs. plain language
- Different validity period for pilots and ATCOs
Thank you for your attention!

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