

IFHA, and the Link to International Aviation Standards

The International Federation of Helicopter Associations (IFHA) was activated in 1993 through the leadership of the European Helicopter Association (EHA) and Helicopter Association International (HAI), following the general agreement among helicopter interest groups that it would be to a mutual benefit to establish an international organization that could focus exclusively on bringing the expertise and concerns of civil helicopter industries to an international forum.

Frank Jensen, Jr., former President of HAI took the initiative to form IFHA in the early 1990s. After a short and positive discussion between HAI and EHA, it was decided to form a federation, and it was decided that Chairmanship would rotate between HAI and EHA, while secretariat duties would be carried out by HAI. “Because of Frank Jensen’s enthusiasm and dedication to the idea of an IFHA, more and more interest in the Federation was generated by helicopter companies and associations around the world.”¹

In 1992, the Lord Glenarthur became Chairman of the British Helicopter Advisory Board (BHAB), which has now been re-named British Helicopter Association, in the United Kingdom (UK). In 1996, he became Chairman of the European Helicopter Association, of which BHAB was a member.² UK aviation legislation had to comply first with the European Joint Aviation Regulations (JAR), which subsequently morphed into the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). But “the fount of all rule-making lay at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal.”³

ICAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that develops and promulgates standards and recommended practices (SARPs) of international air navigation and transport to ensure safe and orderly growth. The development of international SARPs is under the direction of ICAO’s Air Navigation Commission (ANC) through the formal process of ICAO Panels. Once approved by the Commission, standards are sent to the Council, the political body of ICAO, for consultation and coordination with the Member States before final adoption.

In 1998, the International Federation of Helicopter Associations (IFHA) requested and was granted observer status with ICAO. The IFHA’s recognition as an “organization able to be invited to ICAO meetings” accords them the same status as that of such long-standing international interest groups such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations (IFALP), the International Council of Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations (IAOPA) and others.

¹ Email from Jan Willem Stuurman, dated 15 February 2018

² Email from The Lord Simon Glenarthur DL, dated 5 February 2018

³ Ibid

During the past 60 years, helicopters have become truly international, with manufacturing occurring in at least ten nations, and operated in virtually all the member States of ICAO. Despite this fact, until the late 1990s, helicopters lacked representation by a nongovernmental international organization. The IFHA now maintains a designated subject-matter representative to ICAO, approved by the ANC to serve on the following Panels, and their associated Working Groups:

- Flight Operations Panel (FLTOPSP)
 - Helicopter Sub-Group (HSG)

- Aerodrome Design Operations Panel (ADOP)
 - Heliport Design Working Group (HDWG)

- Instrument Flight Procedures Panel (IFPP)
 - Helicopter Working Group (HWG)