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AIC 003/2021 A

Effective Date: 12-AUG-2021

Publication Date: 12-AUG-2021

CNL: AIC 003/2019 A

Operation of ultralight /microlight/ecolight aircraft within Swiss airspace

1. General remarks

It has been possible to register aircraft in the "ecolight" category in Switzerland since 01 JUL 2005.

Note: Outside Switzerland, aircraft that correspond to the Swiss category, "ecolight", include those types designated as "microlight", "ultralight", "Ultraleichtflugzeuge", "ultra-léger motorisé", etc.

In addition, since 15 JUL 2015 it has been possible to register ultralight/ecolight aircraft with an electric motor.

Ecolight aircraft are aircraft that meet the following specifications:

- Three axis fixed-wing aircraft.
- Valid certification in accordance with German standard LTF-UL or British standard BCAR Section S. Certification by one of the following authorities is recognised: Deutscher Aeroclub, Deutscher Ultraleichtflugverband and British Microlight Aircraft Association or equivalent regulation(s).
- Compliance with special Swiss certification requirements.
- Type recognised / validated by the FOCA.

Permit to fly, registration code:

Ecolight aircraft entered in the Swiss aircraft register hold a special category permit to fly (valid exclusively in Swiss airspace).

Ecolight aircraft are entered in the Swiss aircraft register under the following registration codes:

- Ecolight aircraft: HB-W..
- Ecolight touring motor gliders: HB-5000 to HB-5499
- Ecolight motorised gliders: HB-5500 to HB-5599

2. Operation of HB-registered ecolight aircraft within Swiss airspace

Ecolight aircraft in all airspace categories may be operated in accordance with the corresponding authorisations of the pilot, taking account of the Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA).

Minimum licence requirements for pilots:

- Valid EASA licence (at least LAPL[A]) for ecolight aircraft
- Valid EASA SPL for ecolight (motorised) gliders
- Valid EASA Medical (at least category LAPL)
- Possession of national licence according Ordonnance 748.222.1 (Verordnung VABFP)

Operation conditions:

- The same regulations apply as for conventional light aircraft (use of airfield, minimum flight altitudes, flight regulations, etc.).
- Electrically operated ultralight aircraft are not allowed to take-off from or land at Switzerland's national airports.

3. Use of Swiss airspace by foreign ultralight/microlight/ecolight aircraft

Aircraft classified in special categories without airworthiness certificates (in particular for microlight, ultralight, Ultraleichtflugzeuge, ultra-léger motorisé, etc.) may only be operated in the airspace of the country in which they are registered. Special permits for entry into Switzerland may be issued on a case by case basis.

In principle for operation in Switzerland, foreign ultralight aircraft require a special permit for the use of Swiss airspace.

Restrictions and duration of use:

- Intended use of Swiss airspace request a declaration to the authority (FOCA). The maximum duration of operation in Swiss airspace is maximum 2 Months per calendar year.
- Electrically operated ultralight aircraft are not permitted to take-off from or land at Switzerland's national airports.
- If an annual authorization for use of Swiss airspace was issued before 30 JUN 2021, a new annual authorization can be issued on request. Nevertheless, this annual authorization will be renewed only during the transition period, which will end 30 JUN 2024.

Regulations concerning pilots / operating conditions:

- Possession of the necessary valid pilot's licence for flying the type of aircraft in the country of registration.
- Flights by pilots who only hold a national licence (e.g. microlight licence) may only be carried out in Swiss airspace zones G and E.
- Entry into control zones (CTR) for landing and take-off purposes requires a prior permit (PPR) from the local air traffic control authority (as a rule, possession of a valid on-board radio operator's licence is a prerequisite here).
- Pilots who hold a recognised EASA or ICAO licence may fly ultralight/microlight/ecolight aircraft in Swiss airspace in accordance with the relevant Swiss provisions in the same way as normal registered aircraft.

Flight plans and customs formalities:

For cross-border flights, pilots are required to issue a flight plan and use an airport that handles customs formalities.

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