



## EFLEVA Newsletter

December 2025

Dear EFLEVA Members and Delegates,

By the time you read these lines, a new page of the calendar will have turned, heralding the time for wishes and resolutions. It's often said that wishes are like homeopathy, they only work for those who believe in them. It's also said that resolutions are meant to be forgotten before the end of January. But not this time! I sincerely wish you a CAVOK new year and I invite you to join me in the resolution of building a sustainable and exciting future for our members, especially the younger ones, who embody the future of our passion!

One of the unique aspects of our EFLEVA community is that our members are both mechanics and pilots of their aircraft. Sometimes, they are even the designers and builders. This is a source of legitimate pride for them, but also an immense responsibility! And it is an even greater responsibility for our organizations who provide them with advices, supervision, and sometimes issue flight authorizations or airworthiness certificates by delegation from our governing bodies.

Reviewing the ending year, 2025 saw the intensification of some threats targeting our light and sport aviation. The most certain one is the planned phase-out of 100LL in a few years; this fuel is vital for high-power or high-compression engines. Alas, the 2032 deadline is very unlikely to be postponed. The alternative fuels touted in the United States and Nordic countries are eagerly awaited, but they face multiple technical and commercial challenges: to date, very few certified aircraft manufacturers approve them. I am convinced that our associations have a role to play in this area, as our experimental status allows us to conduct tests without the certification constraints that hinder certified aviation.

Regarding airspace, I won't dwell on its increasing complexity. Volunteers from all aviation federations tirelessly make our voices heard by the authorities, but we have very little influence compared to commercial or military aviation. Furthermore, we must share what remains of airspace with drones. Again, our associations have a role to play, for instance in experimenting e-conspicuity cheap devices.

Now for the good news. Our organisations are generally doing well, new amateur-built or restored aircraft continue to take to the skies, despite the abundance of used aircraft that can be found in classified ads. And let's be optimistic, more and more young people take over and hold our future in their hands.

Have enjoyable and safe flights and see you at the EFLEVA Days and other international and national events. Stay safe, remember that if not all the conditions are met, the benefit of the doubt must go to safety!

Dominique SIMON  
President  
EFLEVA





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## Aero Fénix of Portugal

EFLEVA is proud to welcome a new member: **Aero Fénix of Portugal**. This Portuguese organization strengthens the EFLEVA network with its strong commitment to preserving and operating historic aircraft as true *living history*.

### Who is Aero Fénix?

Based at Santarém Airfield, Aero Fénix is dedicated to the restoration, maintenance and operation of historic aircraft in airworthy condition. The organization firmly believes that aviation heritage should not only be preserved on the ground, but also kept alive in the air, allowing future generations to experience the sound, performance and character of these historic machines.

### Flying Heritage in Portugal

Through the Museu Aero Fénix, the organization manages a carefully curated collection of historic military and civil aircraft. Notable examples include the North American T-6 Harvard and the De Havilland Chipmunk, both of which played an important role in pilot training across Europe and beyond. Several aircraft in the collection remain active and regularly participate in national and international airshows.





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### Why EFLEVA?

By joining EFLEVA, Aero Fénix demonstrates its commitment to safety, historical authenticity and international cooperation. The core values of EFLEVA (knowledge sharing, historical accuracy and the active presentation of flying heritage) align closely with the philosophy of Aero Fénix.

For EFLEVA, the inclusion of Aero Fénix represents a valuable expansion of the federation's presence in Southern Europe and creates new opportunities for collaboration, exchange of expertise and joint events.

### Beyond Flying

In addition to flight operations, Aero Fénix plays an active role in education and historical documentation, including publications and public outreach activities. In doing so, the organization contributes significantly to the preservation of Portugal's aviation heritage.

### A Warm Welcome

EFLEVA warmly welcomes **Aero Fénix of Portugal** to the federation. We look forward to a productive and inspiring collaboration in support of our shared mission: preserving and flying Europe's aviation heritage.

For more information : <https://www.facebook.com/p/Aero-F%C3%A9nix-100057165560900/>

## 100LL: Phasing Out Lead Makes Sense

### But Only If There's a Real Alternative

The debate about ending the use of 100LL aviation fuel is gaining momentum again. And rightly so: leaded fuel has no place in a modern society. At the same time, the discussion risks becoming disconnected from reality when hard end dates are proposed without viable, widely available alternatives. The real question is not *whether* 100LL will disappear, but *how and when* that can be done responsibly.





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## **An end date sounds decisive, but solves little**

Policymakers and regulators are increasingly pushing to phase out leaded aviation fuels. In Europe, the use of tetraethyl lead survives only through exemptions and temporary extensions; in the United States, the FAA aims for a lead-free general aviation fleet by around 2030. These goals sound ambitious and environmentally responsible, but a date on paper does not change operational reality.

As long as no broadly usable replacement fuel is available, a hard deadline simply means grounded aircraft, soaring costs, or unsafe workarounds. That helps neither the environment, nor the sector, nor aviation safety.

## **The industry is not standing still**

The idea that aviation is dragging its feet is inaccurate. Serious initiatives are already underway:

- **G100UL:** a lead-free 100-octane fuel that is technically capable of fully replacing 100LL.
- **Swift 100R:** also lead-free, partly renewable, and already certified for a growing number of aircraft types.
- **UL91/UL94 and Mogas:** in use for years, but only suitable for part of the existing fleet.

There is also significant attention on Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), particularly for turbine aircraft. While critical for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, SAF is not a direct available solution for piston-engine aircraft that currently rely on 100LL.

## **What is actually available today?**

This is where the challenge lies. Although alternatives exist, they are:

- not yet available everywhere,
- not certified for all engines,
- and often dependent on local infrastructure and pricing.

For part of the fleet, workable solutions already exist. For another part, they simply do not (yet). As a result, 100LL remains a practical necessity for the time being, however undesirable that may be.

## **Environment versus feasibility**

There is no dispute that lead must be eliminated from aviation fuel. The health and environmental benefits are clear. But sustainability is more than imposing bans; it also requires feasibility. A transition that financially or operationally cripples general aviation undermines support and ultimately slows down progress.



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**Conclusion:** no symbolism, but a phased reality

An end date for 100LL can provide direction, but only if it is tied to:

- proven availability of replacement fuels,
- broad certification across engines and aircraft,
- and infrastructure capable of supplying fuel at scale.

Without those conditions, a deadline becomes a symbolic victory rather than an environmental one. The path forward is not about forcing a ban, but about accelerating what works and acknowledging what still needs time.

## Fire Extinguishers in General Aviation Aircraft

### Safety Measure or Regulatory Side Effect of the Halon Ban?

The recent debate about requiring fire extinguishers on board General Aviation aircraft under 1,200 kg has intensified following the European ban on Halon fire extinguishers, which comes into force at the end of 2025. While the environmental rationale behind the Halon ban is clear and widely supported, the question remains whether this development should automatically lead to a mandatory fire extinguisher requirement for small recreational aircraft.

This discussion deserves nuance because environmental policy and aviation safety, while related, are not the same thing.

### Why Halon was banned (and why that matters)?

Halon fire extinguishers have long been the gold standard in aviation. They are lightweight, highly effective, and leave no residue that could damage sensitive aircraft systems. Unfortunately, Halon agents are also extremely harmful to the ozone layer, which led to their phase-out under international environmental agreements and EU legislation.

The ban is justified and necessary. However, it is important to recognize what the regulation actually does: it prohibits the continued use of Halon, not the presence or absence of fire extinguishers as such. Confusing these two issues risks turning a targeted environmental measure into a broad aviation rule without sufficient safety justification.





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## General Aviation aircraft are not airliners

In commercial aviation, onboard fire extinguishers are part of a comprehensive safety system: multiple crew members, formal training, redundant systems, and clearly defined emergency procedures. That context matters.

General Aviation aircraft operate very differently:

- They are flown by one or two pilots.
- Weight and balance margins are tight.
- Emergency scenarios unfold quickly, leaving little time to fight a fire rather than land or evacuate.

Statistically, in-flight fires in piston-powered General Aviation aircraft are rare. When fires do occur, they are far more likely to happen on the ground, during refueling, maintenance, or engine start. In many airborne scenarios, a handheld extinguisher offers limited practical benefit.

## Halon-free alternatives: not a simple swap

Replacing a Halon extinguisher is not always straightforward:

- Halon-free extinguishers are often heavier.
- They may require different mounting solutions.
- Some installations may need additional approvals or certifications.

For aircraft where a fire extinguisher was never mandatory to begin with, this creates an odd situation: owners are effectively pushed toward adding weight, cost, and complexity for a safety gain that is uncertain at best.

## The real safety question: effectiveness

The key issue is not whether fire extinguishers are “a good idea” in general, but whether mandating them meaningfully improves safety in this specific category of aircraft.

In many realistic scenarios:

- A pilot’s best response to smoke or fire is immediate landing and evacuation.
- Fighting a fire in flight may distract from aircraft control.





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- Preventive measures (proper maintenance, fuel system integrity, and pilot training) are often far more effective than reactive tools.

A rule that looks sensible on paper but offers minimal real-world benefit risks becoming symbolic regulation rather than effective safety policy.

## Environmental goals should not create unintended safety burdens

The Halon ban is an environmental decision and a correct one. But using it as a trigger to impose new equipment mandates on light sport aircraft risks conflating two separate policy domains.

Well-intended regulation should:

- Be based on risk analysis and evidence, not assumptions.
- Avoid placing disproportionate burdens on sectors with limited safety gains.
- Encourage voluntary, informed safety choices, rather than blanket mandates.

## Conclusion: keep the debate grounded in reality

Eliminating Halon from aviation is the right step forward. But it should not automatically lead to a mandatory fire extinguisher requirement for all sport aircraft under 1,200 kg.

Safety in general aviation improves most when rules are:

- proportional,
- evidence-based,
- and aligned with real operational risks.

Rather than focusing on equipment mandates driven by regulatory side effects, the conversation should center on what actually reduces accidents and saves lives. In light aviation, that usually means prevention, training, and sound judgment and not simply adding another item to the cockpit.





## Drones in GA Airspace

### Growing Congestion and the Quiet Impact on General Aviation

The airspace long used by General Aviation (GA) is changing rapidly. Where pilots once mainly shared the sky with other crewed aircraft, they are now increasingly confronted with drones operating in the same airspace. This shift is happening quickly, often with limited visibility for GA pilots and without equivalent safety infrastructure. The question is no longer *whether* this will have an impact on General Aviation, but *how serious that impact will be*.

#### Drones are no longer a niche

Drones have moved far beyond recreational use. They are now widely deployed for inspection, agriculture, media, security, and soon for logistics and medical transport. As a result, drone operations are expanding into the very same uncontrolled airspace where GA aircraft routinely operate.



What makes this development fundamentally different from previous changes is scale. The number of GA aircraft is relatively stable, while the number of drones is growing rapidly. Airspace congestion is therefore increasing, not because of more airplanes, but because of an entirely new class of airspace users.

#### “See and avoid” is under pressure

Visual flight rules rely on a simple principle: *see and avoid*. That principle becomes increasingly fragile when drones enter the picture. Drones are:

- small and often extremely difficult to see,
- operated without a pilot on board,
- sometimes flown autonomously or beyond direct visual oversight.





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For GA pilots, this introduces a risk that cannot be actively managed through visual scanning alone. Drone operators, meanwhile, often depend on procedures and technology rather than direct situational awareness. The result is an asymmetric traffic environment, where one party must visually avoid objects that may not be visible at all.

## Congestion without supporting infrastructure

Unlike commercial aviation, drone traffic is expanding faster than the systems needed to manage it safely. Today, there is:

- no universally deployed detect-and-avoid solution,
- no mature, widely integrated U-space system accessible to GA pilots,
- no standard real-time traffic information in light aircraft cockpits.

For General Aviation, this translates into increased workload, reduced predictability, and elevated risk, without corresponding safety tools.

## Consequences for General Aviation

The impact on GA is tangible:

- **Airspace restrictions:** temporary drone zones often overlap with GA training areas and local routes.
- **Operational burden:** new procedures and equipment requirements tend to fall on GA operators, not drone users.
- **Reduced accessibility:** flying becomes more complex, less spontaneous, and less attractive for training and recreation.
- **Safety perception issues:** drone-related incidents quickly trigger political responses, and GA often becomes collateral damage in broad regulatory measures.

## Not anti-drone, but pro-balance

This is not an argument against drones. Their economic and societal value is clear. But shared airspace requires shared responsibility.



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Current policy appears focused primarily on enabling drone operations, while expecting General Aviation to adapt. That approach is inherently unbalanced.

A sustainable airspace system requires:

- true integration, not merely legal separation,
- safety systems usable by both crewed and uncrewed aircraft,
- clear accountability in conflict situations,
- protection of established GA activities and training environments.

### **Conclusion: without coordination, congestion becomes the new challenge**

Airspace is becoming busier, more complex, and less transparent. If this evolution continues without proper coordination, General Aviation will bear the cost in safety, freedom, and long-term viability.

The real challenge is not how to accommodate drones in the airspace, but how to prevent that airspace from becoming unmanageable and unsafe for everyone. Without clear governance, technological parity, and respect for existing users, General Aviation risks being slowly pushed out of the skies it has responsibly operated in for decades.

And that would be a loss—not just for pilots, but for aviation as a whole.

## The Santos-Dumont Demoiselle

### **A Jewel of Early Aviation at the EAA Museum**

Some aircraft made history simply by flying. Others changed the very idea of what flying could be. The Demoiselle (designed by Brazilian aviation pioneer Alberto Santos-Dumont) belongs firmly in the latter category. This delicate and elegant aircraft is currently on temporary display at the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where it represents a remarkable chapter in the dawn of powered flight.

### **What Makes the Demoiselle So Special?**

The name Demoiselle (French for “dragonfly” or “young lady”) perfectly captures the aircraft’s appearance. Light, slender, and minimalist, it was one of the earliest ultralight sport aircraft ever conceived



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## Design and Specifications

- Designed around 1907 by Alberto Santos-Dumont in France
- A lightweight monoplane featuring a bamboo fuselage and an exposed structural frame
- Weighed less than 300 pounds (about 136 kg), an astonishingly low weight for its era
- Single-seat aircraft with the engine mounted above or just ahead of the pilot

Santos-Dumont built several versions, but the Demoiselle No. 20 became the most refined and widely recognized configuration.

## Why Was the Demoiselle Important?

At a time when aviation was still experimental and risky, the Demoiselle pushed boundaries in several important ways:

- **The First Ultralight Sport Aircraft**  
The aircraft was intended to make flying more accessible, not just to governments or wealthy patrons, but to private individuals and enthusiasts.
- **An Open-Source Airplane**  
In 1910, Santos-Dumont released the Demoiselle's construction plans to the public free of charge. An extraordinary move that inspired countless amateur builders across Europe and beyond.
- **Records and Public Demonstrations**  
Santos-Dumont flew the Demoiselle on long-distance flights between French cities, setting records and captivating large crowds. These demonstrations helped popularize aviation at a time when powered flight was still a novelty.

Although the aircraft had a reputation for being fragile and demanding to fly, it is remarkable that relatively few fatal accidents were reported. No small achievement given the technology of the time.





## **The Demoiselle at the EAA Aviation Museum**

The aircraft currently on display in Oshkosh is a faithful replica, built by the French Club Aéro des Garrigues. It was transported across the Atlantic to take part in EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, the world's largest aviation gathering.

Although it arrived shortly after the event, the Demoiselle now holds a place of honor in the Pioneers of Flight exhibit at the EAA Aviation Museum. There, it stands as a striking contrast to later aircraft, highlighting just how bold and imaginative early aviation truly was.

Visitors can examine the aircraft up close and gain a deeper appreciation for the ingenuity and courage required to take to the skies more than a century ago.

For anyone interested in aviation history, engineering, or human innovation, the Demoiselle is a must-see. It tells the story of a time when flight was still a dream, and of a man who believed that flying should be simple, elegant, and accessible to all.

More information :

Club Aéro des Garrigues : <https://clubaerodesgarrigues.com>

EAA Museum Oshkosh : <https://www.eaa.org/eaamuseum>





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## CALENDAR of Flying Events 2026

We aim to list any event with an 'international' character on our calendar that we share with the members.

If your organisation has an event wishing to attract aircraft from other countries, let us know and we will report it on the calendar



## 2026 EFLEVA MEETINGS

The 2026 EFLEVA General Assembly and the Technical & Business meeting will take place on November 7th& 8th.

Herr Thomas Schaeffler, on behalf of the German association OUV, offered to organise the meeting at the Oberschliessheim Airport, Germany (EDNX).

The T&B meeting is open to all members of EFLEVA member Associations. The General Assembly on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> is reserved for the Delegates from member organisations.

A visit of the Oberschliessheim Museum is planned.

(<https://www.deutsches-museum.de/flugwerft-schleissheim>)

For details, ask our secretary at [catherine.dartois@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.dartois@gmail.com)



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## Seasonal Greetings

