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Operation of ultralight gyrocopters within Swiss airspace

1. General remarks

The possibility of registering ultralight gyrocopters in Switzerland was introduced on 15 July 2015.

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

Ultralight gyrocopters are aircraft that meet the following specifications:

- A **gyrocopter** (also referred to as autogyro or gyroplane), is a rotorcraft that functions in a similar manner to a helicopter. However, the rotor is set passively in motion by airflow instead of an engine (autorotation). The uplift is effected by the resistance of the rotor blade, the surface of which is angled towards the rear. Forward thrust is provided by a propeller engine similar to that of a fixed-wing aircraft.
- Valid certification in accordance with the German registration standards for gyrocopters (BUT) or British registration standard BCAR Section T, Light Gyroplanes. Certification by one of the following organisations is also recognised: Deutscher Aeroclub, Deutscher Ultraleichtflugverband, Austrocontrol and British Microlight Aircraft Association.
- The type is not validated by the FOCA.
- Noise is limited to 65.0 dB in accordance with ICAO Annex 16, Volume 1, Chapter 10, at maximum take off weight (MTOW) of 560 kilograms.

Permit to fly, registration code:

- Ultralight gyrocopters entered in the Swiss aircraft register hold a permit to fly in a special category (valid exclusively in Swiss airspace).
- Ultralight gyrocopters are entered in the Swiss aircraft register with registration code HB-W..

2. Operation of HB-registered ultralight gyrocopters within Swiss airspace

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

Minimum requirements for pilots:

- Valid EASA licence (at least LAPL [A or H])
- Valid EASA Medical (at least LAPL)
- Possession of the necessary valid foreign pilot's licence or authorisation for flying the ultralight gyrocopter in the country of registration
- Authorisation by the FOCA to operate HB-registered gyrocopters¹

Minimum requirements for instructors:

- Valid authorisation by the FOCA for the operation of HB-registered ultralight gyrocopters
- Qualification as ultralight gyrocopter flight instructor
- Total flight time with an ultralight gyrocopter of at least 50 hours
- Authorisation by the FOCA to provide instruction for the operation of HB-registered ultralight gyrocopters (cf. footnote ¹)
- A Swiss ultralight gyrocopter flight instructor licence only permits the holder to carry out familiarisations.

Operation conditions:

- The same regulations apply as for conventional light aircraft (use of airfield, minimum flight altitudes, flight regulations, etc.).
- Ultralight gyrocopters are not permitted to take off from and land at Switzerland's national airports.
- Ultralight gyrocopters are not permitted to take off from and land at mountain airfields.

¹Until the entry into force of the revision of the Ordinance of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) on non-Europe-wide regulated or standardised licences for flight personnel, a provisional licence issued by the FOCA is also required for operating HB-registered ultralight gyrocopters. Application for this licence should be submitted to the Flight Personnel section of the FOCA and must be accompanied by the following items:

- Copy of PPL (A) or LAPL (A) or PPL (H) or LAPL (H) licence
- Copy of ultralight gyrocopter licence or certificate of ultralight gyrocopter familiarisation

3. Use of Swiss airspace by foreign ultralight gyrocopters

Special categories of aircraft without internationally recognised airworthiness certificates (in particular for microlight, ultralight, 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.

For their operation in Switzerland, foreign ultralight gyrocopters require a special permit for their use in Swiss airspace. This does not apply to foreign ultralight gyrocopters that correspond to a type already approved for operation in Switzerland. Such types may be operated in Switzerland without an explicit special permit.

The list of ultralight gyrocopters already approved for operation/authorised to enter into Switzerland may be viewed by clicking on the following link:

www.bazl.admin.ch > Portal for Specialists > Aircraft > Airworthiness > Foreign aircraft that belong to special categories >

And under "Documents", Ultralight gyrocopters approved for entry into Switzerland

Restrictions and duration of use:

- Swiss airspace may only be used on an occasional basis; the aircraft may not be kept permanently in Switzerland.
- Ultralight gyrocopters are not permitted to take off from and land at Switzerland's national airports.

Technical specifications:

- Types approved for entry into Switzerland are entered in a list compiled and constantly updated by the FOCA (see above).

Regulations concerning pilots / operating conditions:

- Possession of the necessary valid pilot's licence for flying the type of gyrocopter 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 or takeoff purposes requires a prior permit from the corresponding air traffic control authority (as a rule, possession of a valid on-board radiophone operator's licence is a prerequisite here).
- Pilots who hold a recognised EASA or ICAO licence may fly ultralight gyrocopters 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.

Required documentation for issuing a special permit:

- An airworthiness certificate or permit to fly from the country in which the aircraft is registered
- A certificate of registration
- A noise certificate with indication of measurement procedure in accordance with ICAO Annex 16, Volume1, Chapter 10
- A certificate of insurance
- An airworthiness documentation (from the country in which the aircraft is registered)
- A maintenance record

Applications for special permits for the use of Swiss airspace shall be submitted to:

Federal Office of Civil Aviation
Swiss Aircraft Registry
3003 Bern

E-mail: aircraftregistry@bazl.admin.ch

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