

International Helicopter Community signs agreement to develop Helicopter Version of IS-BAO

9 June 2010 – At 15:00 today, key figures from the helicopter and business aviation community signed an Agreement on the Development and Management of an IS-BAO (Helicopter Edition) at the ILA Berlin Airshow 2010. Motivated by a goal to improve the international helicopter accident rate by 80%, the European Helicopter Association (EHA), Helicopter Association International (HAI), British Helicopter Association (BHA) and the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) have reached a formal agreement to develop a code of best practices for helicopter operations based on the existing International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO) and to propose options for a verification audit programme to achieve an IS-BAO (Helicopter Edition) Certificate of Registration.

IS-BAO is a set of performance-based standards that use a safety management system as its cornerstone and addresses operations, maintenance, training and other related issues. The standards also provide linkages to the regulations and recommended practices specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and to national aviation regulations.

The International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) introduced a business aviation version of the IS-BAO programme in 2002, with an aim to foster standardized, safe and highly professional aircraft operations. Since then, more than 1000 copies of the manual have been purchased.

The signatory parties who came together for the signing of the IS-BAO (HE) agreement were Helicopter Association International President, Matt Zuccaro (also co-chair of the International Helicopter Safety Team) and HAI Chairman Mark Gibson; British Helicopter Association Chairman, Brian Humphries (also President and CEO of the European Business Aviation Association EBAA); and Chairman of the European Helicopter Association, Dr. Ing. Vittorio Morassi. IBAC Director General, Don Spruston, signed the agreement simultaneously from the Council's headquarters in Montreal, Canada.

"IS-BAO is a code of best practice developed by the industry for the benefit of the industry. It is our contribution to promoting highly professional and safe operational practices," said British Helicopter Association Chairman Brian Humphries. "IS-BAO has already demonstrated its safety effectiveness and standardization benefits in the business aviation sector, and we are confident that it will achieve similar results for the global helicopter operating community," added new European Helicopter Association Chairman Dr. Ing. Vittorio Morassi.

"This historic safety initiative is in keeping with the goals of HAI and our soon to be implemented Safety Accreditation Program, as well as the International Helicopter Safety Team mission" stated Helicopter Association International President, Matt Zuccaro, adding that "while the core standards for the IS-BAO (HE) will be unchanged from those created for the business aviation community, contents of the helicopter version will uniquely include a Helicopter Hazard Assessment and Operations Manual Templates for Offshore, Onshore IFR & VFR, Special Ops and HEMS".

“This is one more major step in ensuring that the gold safety standard is recognized around the world,” said Donald Spruston, IBAC Director General from Montreal where he is briefing the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization on related matters.

Now that the agreement has been signed, a Steering Committee will be formed, responsible for the development process, including establishing policy as required. Furthermore a Working Group, selected by members of the Steering Committee, will be charged with developing the actual IS-BAO (HE). The IS-BAO Standards Board will approve the contents.

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For Editors:

European Helicopter Association (EHA) – www.eha-heli.eu

British Helicopter Association (BHA) – www.britishhelicopterassociation.org

Helicopter Association International (HAI) – www.rotor.com

International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) – www.ibac.org