

FEDERAL OFFICE OF CIVIL AVIATION (FOCA)

AVIATION WITH MICROLIGHT AIRCRAFT



Client	Federal Office of Civil Aviation
Processing period	2010-2011
Project costs	-

Switzerland is currently one of the few countries in the world that categorically prohibit the operation of microlight aircraft. The FOCA is considering a relaxation of this ban in response to a request from pilots. R+R was commissioned to investigate the interest in microlight aviation in Switzerland.

“Ecolight” aircraft, as they are known, have been permitted in Switzerland since 2005. This category only includes aerodynamically controlled light aircraft. Other microlight aircraft, such as weight-shift control (WSC) trikes, microlight

helicopters or gyrocopters are still not permitted. Microlight aircraft with wing loading of less than 20 kg/m² are totally prohibited according to the Aviation Ordinance. The Swiss Hanggliding & Paragliding Association (SHPA) has submitted a request to the FOCA for the authorisation of electrically-powered hang gliders. In connection with this request, the FOCA is examining the possibilities for authorising additional categories of microlight aircraft and for lifting the prohibition mentioned above. R+R was commissioned by the FOCA to examine the development of microlight aviation in selected neighbouring countries and to compile a study on the interest in microlight aviation in Switzerland.

Authorisation for microlight aircraft in Switzerland would in any case be linked to specific provisos. Due to Swiss conditions, for example, the mandatory use of airfields for aircraft that cannot be foot-launched, as well as some sort of pilot's licence, are almost indispensable requirements. In the first instance, therefore, it was advisable to clarify the interest in motor-powered microlight aviation among existing pilots. R+R defined possible categories for these microlight aircraft as the basis for conducting a survey among pilots of motorised aircraft, gliders and hang gliders as well as flying schools and clubs. Over 1,600 pilots and 57 flying schools and clubs took part in the survey, which made it clear that there is a certain degree of interest in microlights.