



## France announces private pilot instrument rating

By Sarah Brown

French private pilots now have the option to earn an instrument rating similar to that in the United States.

To earn an instrument rating under pan-European rules, pilots must enroll in a professional flight training school, spending more than 20,000 euros and studying such topics as the hydraulic systems of airliners and calculations of Mach number, according to AOPA France. The new rating, announced at the Paris Air Show June 24, is designed for private pilots' needs and operations. It meets International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requirements, and supporters hope that it could be adopted by other European countries.

France's Directorate General for Civil Aviation cooperated on the new rating with [AOPA France](#) and the French [Federation of Aero Clubs](#). [DGAC Inspector General Patrick Gandil](#), himself a private pilot, also discussed plans for the rating, as well as general aviation in the United States, with AOPA US.

"Today's practical test standards in Europe are complex, expensive, and geared toward pilots flying air carrier aircraft," said AOPA Vice President of Operations and International Affairs Craig Spence. "The new French rating puts instrument flying within reach of many private pilots."

AOPA France said the first candidates could be taking knowledge and practical tests by September.

While the rating is limited to French-registered airplanes in French airspace, it includes a provision for foreign pilots with instrument ratings, such as those from the United States, to validate their instrument rating on their French certificate. In addition, the rating opens the door for other countries to follow suit.

"If enough European countries accept the French rating, [the European Aviation Safety Agency] could decide to adopt a system that is already functional and has been proven as a functioning alternative," AOPA France said in a news release.

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