

Statement of the Paraglider Manufacturer Association (PMA) Regarding Certification Requirements for Paragliding Equipment

The Paraglider Manufacturer Association (PMA) welcomes the recent clarification from the German Ministry of Transport (BMDV) – as quoted by FFVL/AeroTest on their website on 17-12-2024 – affirming the continued validity of LuftGerPV §11 (4). This provision allows certifications issued by other EU member states to be recognized for the German market.

Multiple Independent Testing Options

The PMA supports the presence of multiple independent testing houses, recognized by national authorities, within the paragliding industry. This fosters competition and innovation, and ensures manufacturers have access to a variety of testing options.

Standardized Testing Procedures and Criteria

The PMA strongly emphasizes the need for standardized testing procedures and criteria across all testing houses. Standardized testing is paramount to ensure a level playing field for manufacturers and to instill consumer confidence in the safety and performance of paragliding equipment.

The PMA's perspective on the impact of accreditation¹ within the paragliding industry is ambivalent. While recognizing the positive contributions accreditation has made, including, for example, improvements in administrative processes, ensuring better traceability of testing folders, and more rigorous management of sensor calibration, the PMA also acknowledges that accreditation has downsides. By introducing additional complexity and by creating significant hurdles to questioning or modifying testing procedures, it can, for example, hinder transparency and repeatability in testing, delay the correction of errors, and discourage methodological innovations and improvements. Furthermore, accreditation has introduced significant costs for testing houses, and it is important to ensure that such costs do not create undue barriers to entry or stifle innovation.

Experience over nearly ten years of accreditation has shown that uniformity and standardization across accredited testing houses remains challenging to achieve. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that not having accreditation does not imply that a testing house fails to meet the necessary technical and procedural requirements and regulations.

A Collaborative Way Forward

The PMA is committed to working with all stakeholders, including testing houses, free flight associations, and authorities to further harmonize testing procedures and criteria across accredited and non-accredited testing houses.

The PMA proposes proactive measures to ensure standardized testing. These could encompass facilitating regular meetings among testing houses, creating platforms for the sharing of best practices, or developing clear guidelines to support consistent implementation of testing procedures across all bodies. The PMA is open to playing a constructive role in such efforts.

Clear and Consistent Regulations

The PMA expects clear and consistent rules and regulations for the paragliding industry, with no short-term or retroactive changes. This fosters long-term business planning and predictable market access for manufacturers, preventing discriminatory market conditions.

Conclusion

The PMA believes that the recent clarification from the BMDV, alongside

- multiple independent testing houses,
- standardized testing procedures,
- a collaborative way forward, and
- clear and consistent regulations

are strong pillars for a robust paragliding industry and will allow paragliding manufacturers to continue to be innovative while continuing to ensure the safety of paragliding equipment.

The Paraglider Manufacturers Association (PMA) represents the interests of paraglider manufacturers globally. We are dedicated to sustainably further the technology and the quality of the paragliding sport. We interact and partner with pilot associations, authorities, flight schools, paragliding institutions, and the general public.

PMA website: www.p-m-a.info

PMA email: info@p-m-a.info

ⁱ Accreditation in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 765/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 9 July 2008 according to ISO/IEC 17020 or ISO/IEC 17025 standard, as required in LuftGerPV §11 (1).