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China Airspace open for General Aviation!

A pilot project to relax airspace restrictions around a Shaanxi province industrial park could be a welcome boost to the further development of China's aviation industry.

The move relaxes military control of the low altitude airspace around the Pucheng general aviation industrial park, opening it up for a wider range of flights.

“It means general aviation flights within the designated area no longer need to apply to the Air Force for permission,” said Jin Qiansheng, director of the managing committee of Xi'an Yanliang National Aviation Hi-Tech Industrial Base.

General aviation refers to flights other than military and scheduled airline flights. It includes civilian flights as well as rescue, offshore exploration and aerial photography. The project could open up the skies to private jets, airships, helicopters and other aircraft.

Except for designated commercial routes, airspace over the mainland is under the administration of the Air Force. General aviation planes and private jets have to apply for permission from the Air Force.

The restrictions have resulted in the relatively slow development of general aviation in China. According to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), China has only 898 general aviation aircraft, compared to 250,000 in the United States.

CAAC encourages overseas investment in general aviation companies and supports individual ownership of private jets, said Liu Wanming, deputy director of the transport department of CAAC. But the inconvenience of using the airspace and the resulting lack of air and ground services have restricted the development of the sector, industry insiders said.

Thus, this shows the new wave for China aviation liberation! Are you ready ?

- Alan Tay, www.avglobe.ca

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