



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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To All Those Concerned:

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) is the independent, non-political and non-industrial professional association representing more than 50,000 air traffic controllers in 133 countries worldwide. Among the aims of the Federation is the promotion of safety, efficiency and regularity in international air navigation, along with safeguarding the interests of air traffic controllers. In order to accomplish our aims and objects, we closely co-operate with various other aviation authorities and institutions including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Airline Pilots' Association (IFALPA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), and Eurocontrol.

The ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) focuses attention on current and future safety issues, and requires States to implement safety management programs, ensuring their ATS systems, including personnel, receive an appropriate level of consideration. Annex 19 establishes what is needed to comply with ICAO Standards and Recommendations. "Staffing" is a process that determines number(s) of persons deemed necessary to carry out designated tasks and goals.

IFATCA is concerned about the recent reported developments within ISAVIA and the difficulties it has and will cause for the safe and efficient flow of traffic in the airspace controlled by Iceland.

Recent publications of NOTAM that indicate that due to shortage of staff an ATCO is left alone in the international airport of Keflavik for 8 hours or more, is proof of the failure of ISAVIA to guarantee an adequate level of service and safety that is paramount when it comes to air traffic control.

This is the culmination of a missed personnel policy from the past and a short-sighted economically pressed undertaking by ISAVIA, which poses questions with regard to compliance with international recommended standards and practices at ICAO and the participation to SES initiative of the European Union based on the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

Like others before, Iceland has chosen to push the limits of its ATM system to an unacceptable boundary.

In their quest to save money, ISAVIA have been relying on staffs' willingness to work overtime and cut the investments in training of new staff. This strategy by ISAVIA has led to a situation where there is staff shortage and, as a consequence of this, it has occurred that there is not enough staff to open up the required amount of sectors to safely handle the traffic. Furthermore, in many situations, ISAVIA has failed to restrict traffic to a level where the Air Traffic Controllers are under a sustainable

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IFATCA has been representing air traffic controllers since 1961,
with more than 50.000 members in over 125 countries.**

workload, reducing their ability to comfortably secure an orderly and safe flow of traffic. Detrimental long term effects of excessive workload and overtime needs to be addressed.

Similar strategies have in the past led to catastrophic failure of the ATS system. In both traumatic accidents of Milano Linate (2001) and Ueberlingen (2002), the reduction of investment in the ATM system and the staffing, the same pattern as currently exists in ISAVIA, have been observed and were not stopped by the Regulator.

IFATCA questions the actions taken by ISAVIA; we are concerned about the future of Air Traffic Management in Iceland. IFATCA thinks it is time to invest in recruitment and quality training of additional air traffic control staff to secure the long-term performance of the ATM system in this important gateway between the continents. IFATCA recommends with a matter of urgency that ISAVIA in close collaboration with its employees and ICEATCA as staff representatives takes the following actions:

- ISAVIA shall acknowledge the lack of staff and the need to react swiftly.
- ISAVIA shall establish, and follow load traffic values and maximum sector occupancy and complexity loads for their sectors. This is of vital importance while the staffing issue is being addressed. Eurocontrol has tools to support the process.
- Develop a long-term strategy to ascertain sufficient and safe staffing figures. It must be guaranteed that the quality of training does not suffer in order to raise the number of ATCOs.

IFATCA believes that our proposals, which are based on the experience in other countries in Europe, will provide a way forward for Iceland to contribute to a safe and orderly flow of traffic based on international rules and regulations.

IFATCA is willing to assist and contribute to a solution finding process and offers its expertise and mediation capabilities to overcome the current unpleasant situation. Air traffic control staff is highly trained and responsible experts, they are the biggest asset of each air navigation service provider.

I remain with best professional regards,



Tom Laursen
IFATCA Executive Vice President Europe

CC: IFATCA Executive Board
Ms. Hlín Hólm, Deildarstjóri flugleiðsögudeildar / Head of ANS section