



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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12.October 2014

Press Release

Air Traffic Controllers in Europe raise safety concerns

More than 130 delegates from all over Europe reviewed their association's reports. Many countries are renewing or upgrading their technical and operational systems. While this is generally welcomed and considered as positive, the implementation of these new systems appears rushed and mismanaged. Comprehensive safety and ergonomic evaluations are not in line with acceptable practices.

While traffic numbers are increasing, staff shortages continue to be a worrying situation in many parts of Europe and training of new recruits is not sufficient. Furthermore, conflict zones cause traffic patterns to shift, overloading neighbouring countries. Other areas of concern include retirement age, pension benefits and just culture implementation.

Eurocontrol's plans of Centralized Services as well as the challenging target values of the European Commission's Reference Period 2 (RP2) were discussed. IFATCA raises serious concerns as to the realism of these values demanding further reduction of en-route delays to a maximum of 0.5 minute per flight. This requirement adds an extreme burden to the existing, already strained air traffic services network.

Workshop discussions were held on stress in general, its relief and prevention, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and safety culture for Air Traffic Controllers.

IFATCA's 31st European Regional Meeting was held from October 10th to 12th in Zadar, Croatia and was attended by 36 of the 44 member associations representing most States in the European region. Continued dedication of Air Traffic Controllers in Europe was prominent and joined by representatives of ATCEUC, IFATSEA, SESAR and EUROCONTROL.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Dragan Bilac, Chief Executive Officer of Crocontrol, the Croatian air navigation service provider and Mr. Omer Pita, Director of the Croatian civil aviation administration.

Mr. Zeljko Oreski, Executive Vice-President Europe, concluded by stating: *"All the above pale in comparison to the tragic loss of lives on board Malaysia Airlines MH17. The overwhelming feeling of helplessness prevails when all efforts to improve air travel safety are destroyed at the simple press of a button in a military conflict. One would think that countries in the European region would know better."*

- 50 Years of Professional Involvement -
IFATCA has been representing air traffic controllers since 1961,
with more than 50.000 members in over 130 countries.