



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

360 St. Jacques, Suite 2002, Montreal, Quebec H2Y 1P5 CANADA
Tel.: +1.514.866.7040, Fax: +1.514.866.7612, Email: office@ifatca.org

29 May 2020

To: Mr. Asgeir Palsson, CEO of Isavia ANS

CC: Mrs. Thordis Sigurdardottir, Chief Operations Officer at Isavia ANS
Mr. Sveinbjorn Indridason, CEO of Isavia ohf.
Mr. Sigurdur Ingi Johannsson, Minister of Transport and Local Government
Mr. Henrik Hololei, EU Director-General for Mobility and Transport
Mr. Filip Cornelis, EU Director Aviation
Ms. Christine Berg, Head of Unit DG MOVE
Mr. Eammon Brennan, Director General of EUROCONTROL
Mr. Iacopo Prisinotti, Director NM EUROCONTROL
IFATCA Executive Board

Subject: **ISAVIA ANS announcement of all ATC staff redundancies.**

Distribution: Transferred by email

IFATCA is calling upon Iceland and ISAVIA ANS to safeguard the provision of Air Navigation Services and its critical infrastructure status by not laying off its ATC staff during the current COVID-19 crisis.

Dear Mr. Palsson:

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations, IFATCA, is a professional entity representing more than 50,000 air traffic controllers from 130 countries worldwide.

Our Federation expresses concern on behalf of the international controllers community, after the announcement by ISAVIA ANS, which is the part of ISAVIA group that controls flights across the Atlantic and the Approach for both Reykjavik (BIRK) and Keflavik (BIKF) airports, confirming in a staff meeting that it will lay off every single controller working for the company - effective from the 1st of June - and at the same time, ISAVIA ANS will offer everyone a new contract on part time basis, ranging from 75% up to 100%.

Having been alerted recently about this announcement, allow us to address you this letter as **a matter of urgency**.

It is fully understood that the entire world is experiencing unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtually all industries and businesses have been impacted but the aviation industry has been one of the worst affected.

- More than 50 Years of Professional Involvement -
IFATCA has been representing air traffic controllers since 1961, with more than 50,000 members in over 130 countries.

Yet amid this pandemic, Air Traffic Management (ATM) staff and, in particular, air traffic controllers continue to work, keeping our skies safe. They provide an essential service to the medical, humanitarian, military, repatriation and cargo flights still taking place. International organisations, governments, regulators and Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) must ensure continuity of operations by complying with the health and sanitary requirements that this situation demands. They must also provide sufficient financial and regulatory support to the ANSPs to fulfil their mission.

Iceland is an essential part of the transatlantic traffic and therefore will play a key role in the current flow of cargo traffic and in the imminent recovery of the European Network Westerly access and the global recovery of the commercial aviation in general.

The draconic measure that ISAVIA ANS is about to commence not only risks immediate and grave disruption in the existing service but also will have a devastating impact on the motivation of the ATC staff concerned.

In addition, there is a genuine risk of staffing gaps and the associated traffic restrictions in the near future, ultimately endangering the ICAO agreement on the Joint Financing of Certain Air Navigation Services in Iceland (1956) as amended in 1982 and 2008, art II, para 1.

Air Traffic Controllers are not “commodities” to store on a shelf for a length of time, to “sack and hire” and then be re-activated without a serious risk of service deficiency and eventually safety margins reduction. Without ATC staff, there will be no flying to/from Iceland, over the Atlantic North, and/or Europe, when traffic will be ready to fly again. As recognised throughout, the European Network, including its transatlantic components, needs to maintain a robust resilience so it does not run into the same difficulties as experienced in previous crises.

The current situation highlights that **Air Navigation Services (ANS) are part of a country's critical infrastructure, playing a key role in the distribution of much-needed medical supplies to address this health crisis.** In the case of Iceland, it is even a dimension of **intercontinental critical infrastructure!**

Regrettably, the funding of this critical infrastructure is at risk due to the flawed financing mechanism that includes airspace users wanting to defer or simply waive, the payment of route charges already incurred. This will severely impact both the current and future operation of ANSPs.

It is therefore paramount that States provide ANSPs and the ATM critical infrastructure with the required financial support throughout this crisis and during the recovery period, as they do to support other components of the airline industry. IFATCA believes that discharging highly qualified staff and/or **implementing irreversible cost-reduction measures** will delay the recovery of the aviation industry and should be avoided at all cost.

In this context, and with due respect to the current problems ISAVIA ANS management is confronted with, **IFATCA kindly asks you to reconsider the magnitude of the announcement** imposed on staff. These cuts shall not undergo the efforts put in place at network level to ensure continuity of services with the highest level of safety we all envisage and account for.

Each and every piece of the European and Intercontinental network must play a role and remain in place to assist a smooth and efficient recovery when it comes.

Therefore, IFATCA is asking Iceland and ISAVIA ANS to consider the following:

1. Recognise that the provision of air navigation services is a critical infrastructure, which plays a key role in the resolution of crisis situations.
2. Ensure that the provision of air navigation services is financially supported and stable to overcome this crisis, supporting the ICAO Agreement.
3. Ensure that sufficient essential qualified staff is available when commercial air traffic returns.
4. Ensure that essential qualified staff is safe, healthy and secured working environment, with a sufficient level of subsistence in order to guarantee its well-being. Financial stability is a vital aspect required for the provision of a safe, orderly and continuous flow of air traffic.

IFATCA is offering its help to put the experience of its members to develop and support sound solutions to ensure the sustainability of the safety, continuity and orderly flow of the ATC services in Iceland.

While waiting for your reply, please accept our kindest regards,



Duncan Auld
President and CEO
IFATCA



Frédéric Deleau
Acting Executive Vice President Europe
IFATCA