



# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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19 October 2010

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## Press Release

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### 20 October - International Day of the Air Traffic Controller

#### **Integrating operational experience and expertise in air traffic systems design, evaluation and implementation since 1961**

Today the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) celebrates the International Day of the Air Traffic Controller and starts its celebrations for 50 years of existence since its beginnings in 1961.

IFATCA was founded through an abiding passion for air traffic control and flight safety that continues to exist in the hearts and minds of all air traffic controllers. The response to the idea of a federation was immediate and universal. From its founding on 20 October 1961 IFATCA has grown to 134 member associations representing more than 50,000 air traffic controllers worldwide.

Aviation, as the backbone of society, has become an integral part of many peoples lives but the profession of air traffic control is often still unknown, misunderstood, underestimated or unfairly linked with the consequences of accidents, delays and industrial actions resulting in mostly negative press and a wrong perception in the public. Seldom enough do the air traffic controllers receive the deserved attention for the many flight safely handled, for the thousands of passengers expeditiously guided through busy skies and the challenges we live with in times of increased economic and social pressure. For decades our profession has developed from - at many places still used - pen and paper (strips) to highly automated complex electronic networks. This evolution would not have been possible without the structured, motivated and continuous input of the professionals we are.

When we celebrate 20th of October each year, we celebrate the vision of our founding members, and we celebrate the countless volunteers who work to achieve the aims of our Federation. But most of all we celebrate the individual air traffic controller, wherever he works or under whatever conditions she works, who strives each minute to give the utmost in service to the flying public, to bring you safely and efficiently to your destination. Challenged with an exposure to the media that was never bigger and more critical to our profession, often fuelled by wrong economical interpretations, air traffic controllers worldwide hold on to the highest aims of our Federation, Safety & Efficiency!

Today we recognise our efforts, salute our accomplishments, and renew our mission of service through an industry that is at the heart of a global community.

To all air traffic controllers, be proud and celebrate your profession today!

*The ATCO day flyer 2010 is available for download from the IFATCA website at [www.ifatca.org](http://www.ifatca.org)*

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