



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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IFATCA European Regional Meeting PRESS RELEASE

The European Regional Meeting of IFATCA, the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations, was held 19th – 21st October in Belgrade, Serbia. The meeting was attended by 36 of the 42 member associations representing most States from all over Europe with more than 150 participants, showing the continued dedication of Air Traffic Controllers in Europe.

Stringent cutbacks in personnel, recruitment and investments by Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) have an unfiltered impact on a number of European member associations. The investment in people – the air traffic controller – remains a vital issue in this highly complex and technical environment. Just culture and the protection of air traffic controllers in the execution of their profession require more attention than ever before. Legal protection for controllers remains a top priority for IFATCA.

“We are appalled at the extreme measures taken by several European ANSPs' against aviation safety professionals throughout the region who have had the courage to speak out about safety related problems associated with staffing, training, and other serious conditions of employment,” said Zeljko Oreski, IFATCA's Executive Vice-President for the European region.

IFATCA strongly supports the Norwegian Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) in their struggle to secure appropriate controller staffing levels to ensure the safety of the flying public. AVINOR, the Norwegian ANSP has sued NATCA when the Association refused to remove one of their representatives who sounded the alarm for safety. A trial has convened and a ruling from the court is forthcoming.

In Greece, the Government's unwillingness to invest in the aviation system and its professional work force is beginning to have a negative impact on safety. IFATCA strongly believes that controller working conditions have a direct impact on the safety of the operation. Revenue generated solely from system users should be distributed to reward the quality of service and the achievement of performance targets. The Government is disregarding its legal obligation to reinvest user fees back into the aviation system and continues to compromise the safety of the traveling public by using money for other purposes.

IFATCA expresses its concerns about the liberalization process for Air Traffic Control Towers in Spain. In an effort to save money, the Government and AENA are collaborating to completely replace the existing staff with new controllers, whose selection and training standards have been significantly degraded, introducing what could become the de facto “low-cost” (“low-safety”) Air Navigation Service. Safety is apparently not the main priority for either AENA or the Spanish authorities.

“Pragmatic and sustainable change is only possible in Europe with true collaboration among all stakeholders, including air traffic controllers. Granting Air Traffic Control Associations a voice at the decision making level would demonstrate true commitment on the part of European governments in providing the public with the standard of air travel they deserve,” Mr. Oreski concluded at this 29th IFATCA European Regional Meeting.

- 50 Years of Professional Involvement -

IFATCA has been representing air traffic controllers since 1961, with more than 50.000 members in over 130 countries. Amongst its goals are the promotion of safety, efficiency and regularity in international air navigation and the protection and safeguarding of the interests of the air traffic control profession.

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