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New Comet  
building at  
**MUAC**



**LATE** Winter 15



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The EGATS board thanks the staff from the MUAC Reproduction Workshop for their assistance with this magazine!

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## EDITORIAL



Dear colleagues,  
Another year has come and gone. A year in which you had to face an unexpected increase of traffic, with the Brussels Sectors topping all charts in complexity and traffic volumes. To make things tight, staffing matters have been misjudged and as it turned out, the Brussels Sectors need more ATCO's. Obviously, and rather unfortunately, things can't be fixed from one day to another, therefore it is a fair assessment to say that the Brussels Sectors will experience one more busy summer in 2015.  
Luckily, steps have been taken. In the summer, AoD's should be limited to the strict minimum, while there will be 8 ATCO's undergoing cross training. Airspace improvements are being studied, such as the third layer concept. And while ATCO's will undergo SIM training for this new concept, they will have the chance to be briefed and eventually simulate scenarios as well. We all agree that things were not as clear as they could and should have been, but it seems like we heading in the right direction.

New tools are also being developed. When the sRAT (Supervisor Role Allocation Tool) will be introduced, it will bring a lot of added value in managing the room. The N-VCS will be also introduced, after the summer, and should smooth out a lot of rough corners especially in the opening and collapse sectors situations, for ATCO's, while for the supervisory staff it's a new tool with a lot of question marks still. Also the iFMP is a tool presently with some issues but hopefully with a lot of potential. At the moment, as you might have read on the intranet, it is undergoing trial in the Ops Room. It is not clear when it can be RSup ready, as it was designed by flow and ENG

only. But, as I said, the potential is there and hopefully it will be ready to give us extra help next summer.

One more issue that has been brought up by EGATS is the minimum amount of leave allocation during summer periods. It has become increasingly clearer that the two weeks minimum holiday is no longer suitable. Staff should be guaranteed a minimum of three weeks (more would be even better, but we live in reality), given the huge efforts exercised during summer. Rest is necessary and paramount to maintain safety and as well as your own wellbeing. Of course we all know that if staffing doesn't allow for such changes, there is little that can be done for 2015. But considering the incoming improvements mentioned above, EGATS will remind management and the other social partners on a regular basis about this issue.

So, there might be some light at the end of the tunnel.

On a brighter note, the Just Culture policy has been signed by Eurocontrol's DG last 24 September in MUAC. It goes without saying that it was a milestone achievement for the whole agency. And for EGATS as well, since we introduced this concept almost 20 years ago to management. It took a while, we were most probably precursors on this, but we eventually managed. Finally the importance of Just Culture is starting to set its roots.

What this means is that honest mistakes will not be punished and they should and will be used to identify problems and improve our working methods to prevent bigger problems further down the line. We should all be proud of having such policy in our working environment. It's an achievement that still too few can rely on, and we are one of those few. The disclaimer here is that, having signed the policy, it's only the first baby step in the right direction. We have to make sure now that such policy is duly integrated throughout the

agency and followed as it should. However, Just Culture doesn't mean we have impunity or we stand above the law and it also means that people behaving unprofessionally will not be tolerated and will not be covered by Just Culture.

The opening of the Comet building is also a big achievement for MUAC. Again EGATS has been involved since the early stages of space management with continuous changes due to needs, but again our perseverance paid off. Sure, there are things that could have been done differently, but in hindsight everything looks more obvious. The one problem that stands above all others is the location of the dormitories right next to the walking path and bridge that lead you from the lift to the ops room. But if everyone exercises a little silence while walking those 20 meters and helps closing the doors rather than letting them bang, we should be fine. We appreciate silence when it's us resting, so do our colleagues when it's them. In the mean time we are looking into more permanent solutions.

Other than that, we do have a great R-building and this will positively affect our (break) times at work. More and more groups are popping up, following a little the example of HQ in Brussels where they organize many classes and events, which is ultimately improving cross division interactions and our mood in a general, positive manner.

Looking back, EGATS has seen its years of effort come to fruition on a different array of important projects and we should all be proud of this. Whether you are part of the EGATS Board that works on projects or you make things work while performing your duties, we are all a TEAM. And that's why, for as incredible as it might seem that a small association was able to work on and achieve a Just Culture Policy, INREP, the new Facility

Building, CISM and TRM, working together always brings improvements. And big ones too, obviously. It may take time, depending on the scope of the projects, but with everyone's dedication at every level we can continue to work hard and achieve. And so, we look for the next challenges.

And as 2014 drew to an end, so did the the photo competition. You can expect one in 2015 as well, and the subject will be announced shortly. Congratulations to the 2014 winners. Nice work!

While I want to wish you all a Happy and Safe 2015, I also would like to thank the EGATS Board members who dedicated a lot of their free time to follow meetings and projects, all our reps who continuously represent our best interests within MUAC as well as internationally, the other social partners with whom we have common understanding and great cooperation and management that, although driven by more objectives than we are, always welcomes our feed back and supports us in our work.

Finally, a big thanks to all our colleagues and friends that make things work despite the obvious flaws. Remain as professional as you can be because, although you might make mistakes at times, no one can doubt your integrity.

Raf Vigorita

EGATS President

#### Contributions by:

- Philippe Domogala
- Patrik Peters
- Philip Marien
- Paul Hooper
- Ive van Weddingen
- Vincent Poty
- Gabriel Bangiu
- The EGATS Board

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# Update on EGATS work and involvement.

Raf Vigorita

Update on EGATS work and involvement  
By Raf Vigorita

Allow me to bring you up to speed with the involvement of EGATS over the last few months.

One of the focal projects at the moment is the Lippe integration. After asking for a joint meeting on the subject with management and other social partners, we received a comprehensive briefing. It is indeed an unprecedented task and it will last over well over 5 years till the date of complete integration. Many aspects (HR, financial) have to be dealt by other bodies, but EGATS will be involved in the discussions for cross training, in both directions. As MUAC ATCO's we'll receive a very basic training on handling military transport aircraft and with time, we'll dive deeper into handling more specific and complex military situations. But this will be communicated as it develops, as many details still remain to be decided. Anyway, the target date is 1-1-2016. Eventually D-Mil will also co-locate in LVNL later into this decade leaving MUAC handling military traffic above FL245. But if Lippe's integration is not defined yet, D-Mil colocation still seems light years away. Step by step we'll try to take all the right decisions to make these transition periods as smooth and as professional as possible. Remaining in the military side, EGATS has

been vocal for a while now about the need for procedures for handling formation flights. It has been finally decided that procedures and training will be integrated into Lippe's training for MUAC ATCO's and it will be delivered after summer 2015. Not ideal, as we wished to have had this in place already, but at least we are getting there.

The effort of EGATS into the new structure of the training section and OJTI concept is constant and ongoing. Cross training also sees us involved in the definition for best course of actions during training.

Other areas where we focus our efforts are the development and validation of the vDFL in the DECO sectors, the third layer in the Brussels Sectors, Direction Finder, N-VCS and SRAT.

As you'll extensively read in this OUTPUT, Just Culture (JUCU) is always an ongoing project and we'll keep being involved in it. We participate in PBC and RISK, we take part in the Roster Revision Team (RRT) and the fair share (points) distribution. We also manage INREP bottom up, and plan on keep doing that.

And this is only at local level. There is more going on at international level. As you can see, we have our plate full and we do try our best to find the time for every important project in MUAC. Hope you'll keep supporting us for this!

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR EGATS MEMBERSHIP

Dear EGATS member,

As you all know, the world of Air Traffic Control is an ever changing and challenging one. So it is with the banking world currently, and EGATS does not remain unaffected. First there was the forced change of banking institutions for our accounts, where we moved from Deutsche Bank back to our former partner ABN AMRO, unfortunately with a resulting change of account numbers. Then came the full implementation of IBAN and BIC banking, bringing with it a new set of rules and formats for the Automatic Incasso contracts we had with a majority of our members. This was the direct debit system that was implemented by my predecessor just about a decade ago, whereby most of you had authorized EGATS to withdraw the money directly from your accounts, thereby saving you the trouble of remembering to do it yourself and us of having to remind you. However, due to massive changes in the European banking system, this procedure has now to be abandoned. The legal and technical requirements, not to mention the cost to EGATS, of using the new SEPA (Single Euro Payments Area) Incasso agreements is just too burdensome.

What do we propose instead? Well, we have managed to agree with Eurocontrol that the annual membership fees, currently still 55 €, for those who wish, can be deducted directly from your monthly salary, and transferred to us. This would normally be done together with the January salary. For the year 2015, however, because of the timing of the change, this will most likely only be achieved with the March salary.

If you wish to make use of this system, then please send me an email at [treasurer@egats.org](mailto:treasurer@egats.org) and I will mail the required form for you to complete. Please return this form to me as soon as you can, as follows...

Members outside MUAC can mail the form to either:

<b>EGATS</b> Steven Pelsmaekers (locker 100) Horsterweg 11, NL-6199 AC Maastricht Airport NETHERLANDS	<b>EGATS</b> Steven Pelsmaekers Droogbroekstraat 30, 3730 Hoeselt BELGIUM
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If you prefer to pay your membership fee yourself, then please do take note of the current EGATS account number : **BIC: ABNANL2A** and **IBAN: NL66ABNA0440804523** . Ideally, we would like for you to pay your fee during the month of January each year.

**If you have any questions, always feel free to contact me at [treasurer@egats.org](mailto:treasurer@egats.org) .**

Best regards,  
Steven



# JUST CULTURE

## How it was implemented in Maastricht

by Philippe Domogala

We in EGATS learned more about Just Culture in the 2005 IFATCA Melbourne Conference where Bert Ruitenberg, the IFATCA human factors specialist, showed us a video of Sydney Dekker explaining what it was all about. This started the awareness and, for me a Centre Supervisor at the time with "Safety and Human factors" as an additional task (we all been given one at that stage) I started to push the idea into our own OPS, which were until then, and like everywhere else in the world, still kind of "blame orientated". Until the middle 1990s, you had a loss of separation, you got to have a nice talk with head of Ops, and if you were to "blame" for it, sanctions could occur, like a team change, or office work for a few months, to taking away a step in your salary or even taken off the promotion list (it was not automatic at the beginning). Things were slowly improving but now they move at fast pace, and depended very much as who was the person in charge of OPS at the time. A person's reaction rather than a system in place. Ironically Eurocontrol (the Agency that is) was the forerunner of Just Culture, it started with the GAIN group chaired by Peter Stasny of HQ, and this group even issued a booklet called "A road map to a Just Culture" in 2004. Needless to say it never made it to our Ops Division in Maastricht (or the one that saw it kept it very secure in a drawer in his office).

Everyone today believes that the term "just culture" was invented by Sidney Dekker, but in fact it was invented by James Reason (the man behind the famous Swiss cheese model) in 1997. Reason explains just culture as "an atmosphere of trust" between management and employees (controllers in our case) in reporting and dealing with incidents and accidents.

So back in 2005, we brought back the idea from the IFATCA Conference, EGATS supported it strongly and I brought up this in one of the OPS meetings in Maastricht. Like any new idea, you get a lot of positive comments, but there are always other priorities, and it was shoved aside. You can try again, but someone politely says: great idea, but ... and there are always "buts". Lack of time, resources, no-one really

was interested as there were more important things on the agenda at the time, new FDPS, new simulator, change in training section, etc...

Anyway in 2007 Sidney Dekker published a small book on Just Culture (see box). I got one free from the publisher (Ashgate) to make a review in The Controller Magazine, and read it cover to cover. The book was (still is) fascinating to read, as it clearly explains what it is all about but most importantly what are the advantages of such culture, not only to the end users (the controllers in our case) but also for management. I managed to convince Ralf Hoelscher, who was new in charge of Safety and Quality in OPS, to order 20 copies for each Director and OPS manager in the centre. Keith Cartmale, the Safety Manager, supported the idea and this started the ball rolling. We had a few meetings on this subject, also with the other divisions and human resources, and although some were skeptic at the beginning, they slowly warmed up to the idea.

This was also the time that EGATS and I were pushing the voluntary incident reporting scheme, which we named INREP, and we said INREP would be the first visible layer of Just Culture.

This collaboration with EGATS permitted INREP to be accepted, as we were using EGATS board members as Trustees (we still do). We were not too bad in Maastricht as were the third body after the USA (Call-back) and the UK (CHIRP) to have such system fully operational.

But beyond INREP, the other aspects of Just Culture were slow to be implemented and accepted. As James Reason said just culture is an atmosphere of trust, and it takes time. We had to convince everyone that we were not looking from immunity or impunity. It is more about fair treatment of controllers that made what I call "Honest mistakes". We want controllers to report mistakes they make so that we can learn from them and try to make sure others do not make the same ones again.

Then finally, why did it take so long to implement? Well a quote from Lord Mountbatten that I modified a little explains it all:

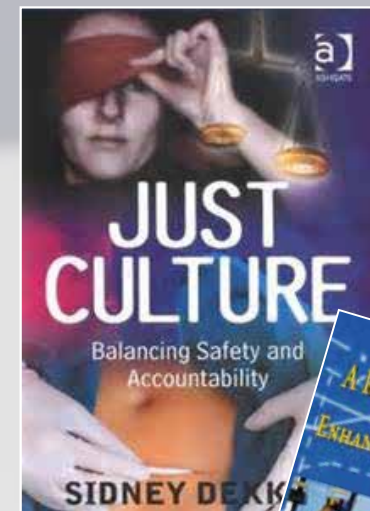
"To change an ATC procedure you need 2 weeks, to change a culture you need 20 years."  
Well, there is "culture" in Just culture. And it takes time to change a culture.

It took exactly 10 years for our Top management, through our DG, to come to Maastricht to sign officially the Just culture policy. I hope it takes a little shorter than the next 10 years to have it fully implemented and accepted by everyone as it is described in Sidney Dekker book. But it is something EGATS can be proud of having initiated and pushed forward over the years.

### Philippe Domogala

Former President EGATS

Former centre Supervisor (in charge of Safety and Human factors).



### Illustrations:

The Sidney Dekker Book of 2007, copies should still be available in the OPS library.

Cover GAIN report of 2004, downloadable from Euro-control Skybrary.





# "PRACTISING WHAT WE PREACH"

## EUROCONTROL Agency Adopts Just Culture Policy



by Philip Marien, Editor

The EUROCONTROL Agency has just adopted a new Just Culture Policy. The policy was developed and agreed by both management and staff, including significant input from EGATS, IFATCA's Member Association which represents operational staff working for the Agency. EUROCONTROL's Director General Frank Brenner signed the policy during a special Safety Day, held at the Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre on 23 September 2014.

Addressing staff, Mr. Brenner explained: "When we talk about Just Culture, we think about the legal system and prosecution judiciary taking a rigid and narrow view of safety – seeking to pin blame on an individual or several individuals and, as a result, punishing the individuals for wrong doing. We have concentrated our efforts on changing the approach of the judiciary, so making it easier for people to report problems before an incident or accident occurs without fear of prosecution."

"Operational staff – in fact, all staff – need to feel free to report on safety issues without being worried about any repercussions – not just legal ones. This is one of the themes of a new White Paper that EU-

ROCONTROL has published. It is called 'Systems Thinking for Safety - Ten Principles', it contains a lot of very interesting ideas, very much focusing on how safety happens in practice, rather than in theory."

"20 years ago already," observed Joe Sultana, Director Network Manager, "there was political pressure, both national and international, to address Just Culture issues. It is apparent that there is a need to obtain reliable safety data to help us circumvent accidents in the future. And there is a distinct need to protect both that data and those who provide it."

"The EUROCONTROL Just Culture Policy will form an integral part of the constitutional provisions of our organisation," pointed out Jac Jansen, Director of the Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre. "For an operational centre like ours, this is a very important and long overdue building block, where the sharing of good quality information is essential to help us learn and constantly improve."



→ Jac Jansen, Director of Maastricht UAC looks as EUROCONTROL Director General Brenner signs the Just Culture Policy.

Source: EUROCONTROL

"Not only is it important that all of us – managers, engineers, operational and support staff – are able to humbly and honestly admit a mistake, but it is also of capital importance to have the legal framework that allows us to do so without fear of terrible consequences for the good of the whole community."

Raffaele Vigorita, EGATS President, pointed out that it took nearly twenty years for the idea of Just Culture to ripen within the Maastricht Centre and the Agency. At the time, the idea that controller error could be avoided by punishing individuals was well engrained in the Maastricht Centre at the time. It was EGATS who tabled a non-punitive policy in the mid-1990s, based on experiences of other Member Associations within IFATCA. He continued saying that the adoption of this policy is a tribute to all those who refused to give up on the idea during all those years.

Head of the Agency's Safety Unit, Tony Licu, added: "Just Culture can be applied to any services we provide; not only operational people or engineers. We can all make mistakes. We are human beings. I like to think we come to work to do a great job and that our errors are just 'honest mistakes'. We shouldn't discipline people for making honest mistakes." ☺

editor@ifatca.org

### The Policy

- \* EUROCONTROL strives to be a learning organisation. In order to maintain and improve safety levels, lessons learnt from the identification of potential risks, mishaps and real safety events are essential to prevent recurrence.
- \* Humans are an essential part of the ATM system as they provide the necessary flexibility and resilience to adjust to unforeseen circumstances. We will make every effort to create a system as resilient as possible in order to minimize the impact of any unforeseen event, including dealing fairly and justly with cases of human error.
- \* We take responsibility as an International Organisation for the full application of the Just Culture principles.
- \* We will engage with the judiciary authorities and inform through all relevant channels, including the media, national governments, international organisations and the general public that a just and fair culture that respects the Rule of Law is a fundamental principle of a civilised society and the only acceptable way to effectively maintain and further improve our safety levels.







*"[air navigation control, [...] is a task involving the exercise of public authority and is not of an economic nature, since that activity constitutes a service in the public interest which is intended to protect both the users of air transport and the populations affected by aircraft flying over them".*  
(Extract of decision C.364/92 of the European Court of Justice).

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Press Release

The Air Traffic Controllers European Unions’ Coordination (ATCEUC) strongly condemns the "criminalisation" of aviation accidents or incidents. ATCEUC expresses concerns regarding the public pressures that accompany any crash or serious incident with the associated "search" for a guilty party.

For ATCEUC, criminal authorities that hold jurisdiction should first have to assess the actions leading to the accident/incident. Air Traffic Controllers’ behaviour shall be first analysed: was it a mistake, made by a qualified professional acting in a responsible manner or was it a clear case of wilful misconduct or was there, quoting EU Regulation N°376/2014, Art. 16, §10, “a manifest, severe and serious disregard of an obvious risk and profound failure of professional responsibility to take such care as is evidently required in the circumstances, causing foreseeable damage to a person or property, or which seriously compromises the level of aviation safety”?

ATCEUC supports "A Culture where front line operators are not punished for actions, omissions or decisions taken by them that are commensurate with their experience and training, but where gross negligence, wilful violations and destructive acts are not tolerated”.

Following the accident of October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at Moscow's Vnukovo airport, the Russian prosecutors’ first decision was to charge air traffic controllers with *“causing multiple deaths through negligence by breaching air safety rules”*.

*“Today, an Air Traffic Controller has been charged with violation of safety regulations and rules of aircraft operation that caused the death of two or more people by inadvertence (article 263, part 3 of the Russian Penal Code). The Air Traffic Controller has been questioned as the accused. At the moment, he is in custody”* said Russian Investigation Committee spokesperson, Vladimir Markin. The same decision was also taken for the trainee Air Traffic Controller.

As the accident is still under investigation, with no formal conclusions at this stage, ATCEUC condemns the decision to publicly identify and already charge the Air Traffic Controllers with criminal offense.

As the MAK (Russian Interstate Aviation Committee) report indicates that there was no suggestion of intent to do wrong from the Air Traffic Controllers, the decision to prosecute at this time is not consistent with, nor respecting the commitment that Russia made in 2010 to ICAO to create “Just Culture” in aviation.

By doing so, prosecutors are putting in danger the establishment of equilibrium between two equally relevant goals: aviation safety and the administration of justice. What is also at stake is the future improvement of aviation safety in Russia!

At European Level, ATCEUC reiterates the importance of a "Just Culture" and the need for more action to ensure that all Member States really implement Just Culture in a harmonized way. ATCEUC will keep a critical eye on future developments regarding "Just Culture" in Europe and will continue to work hard for its appropriate implementation.

The Air Traffic Controllers European Unions’ Coordination (ATCEUC) represents 28 unions and is the voice of 14’000 Air Traffic Controllers across Europe.

Aix-en-Provence November 5th, 2014

Secretariat : ATCEUC/CRNA SUD-EST - 1, rue Vinent Auriol - 13617 Aix-en-Provence Cedex 1 (France)

ACV TRANSCOM / CSC TRANSCOM (Belgium) – ATCU (Serbia & Montenegro) – ATC Branch of IMPACT (Ireland) – ATSR (Romania) – ATM-PP (Italy) – BATCU (Bulgaria) – BHATCU (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – BGATC (Belgium) – CATCU (Croatia) – CYATCU (Cyprus) – DATCA (Denmark) – GATCA (Greece) – GdF (Germany) – GLCCA (Luxembourg) – ICEATCA (Iceland) – ITUATC (Serbia) – MATCA (Malta) – MATCU (FYR of Macedonia) – NATCA (Norway) – NGATC (The Netherlands) – SKYCONTROL (Switzerland) – SINCTA (Portugal) – SNCTA (France) – SPKTA (Albania) – SSKL (Slovenia) – TUEM (EUROCONTROL) – USCA (Spain) – ZZKRL (Poland)



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31 October

PRESS RELEASE

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers’ Associations (IFATCA) strongly condemns the Russian prosecutors’ decision to charge air traffic controllers with “causing multiple deaths through negligence by breaching air safety rules”, following the accident of October 20 at Moscow's Vnukovo airport and before the official investigation on the causes of this tragic event.

This decision does not respect the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) requirement for accident investigation to establish factual causes, with the aim to prevent future occurrences. As the accident is still under investigation with no formal conclusions at this stage, it is shocking to see controllers publicly identified and already being charged with criminal offense. In a factual statement issued by the Interstate Aviation Committee (MAK) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October the sequence of events described do not indicate any form of criminal negligence by the Air Traffic Control staff on duty.

ICAO requires that Russia, along with all States, establish a blame free reporting system as part of its overall aviation safety management. This can only be effective in conjunction with the concept of a “Just Culture” that promotes a reporting culture whereby pilots and controllers can give details of events, accidents and incidents, knowing that the sole purpose of these reports is to enhance and complete safety information and that these details will not be used for retribution or punishment.

At the 37th Assembly of ICAO in 2010, Russia was one of 170 Nations that resolved to create “Just Culture” in aviation. As the MAK reports indicates that there was no suggestion of intent to do wrong, the decision to prosecute at this time is not consistent with, nor respecting the commitment that Russia made to ICAO.

Further, publicly releasing the names of the persons involved is to be strongly condemned as this exposure is not only unproductive, but it can lead to serious unwarranted discrimination or bias throughout the investigation process.

This situation may create for air traffic controllers a climate of fear as they are working, being afraid that any incident or accident may result in a criminal prosecution. By doing so, prosecutors are impeding an environment that encourages the full disclosure of facts and investigation of critical aviation safety incidents, thus having a detrimental affect on future aviation safety in Russia.

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers (IFATCA) represents more than 50.000 Air Traffic Controllers in 131 countries. We enjoy a worldwide reputation amongst all partners in Air Traffic Management with representation in many areas including ICAO and Eurocontrol. Promoting safety and efficiency in international air navigation is of paramount importance to us.

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



# NEW COMET BUILDING AT MUAC

On 21 November 2014 I attended the official opening party for the new recreational building at MUAC. After almost 2 years of construction work, we are finally seeing the end results of a project that started close to 15 years ago. I must say I'm pretty impressed, and I'm sure the small issues that people have complained about in the first few weeks of use will be worked out over the coming weeks or months.

The party was planned to start at 15.00 and so at 14.45 an announcement was made over the PA system inviting everybody to come to the multi-purpose room. When people arrived there, they were offered a drink, music was playing and soon the room was filling up nicely. Unfortunately, as is too often the case for events like this, the ops room was very underrepresented. On the other hand, all but one of the former Directors of MUAC (Mr. Vandebroecke was excused), were in attendance. After a few minutes Mr Jac Jansen took the stage for the official part. In his speech he gave a short history of the project and thanked all those who contributed to this building. He especially mentioned EGATS and the Staff Committee, for their relentless efforts to improve the facilities for staff at MUAC, and after he finished both Frederic Deleau and myself had the opportunity to say a few words.





# The journey to the Comet building

By Vince Poty

Following the first document on the “Quick Wins” proposals, at the beginning of the years 2000s we working on a deeper improvement of the space management at our centre.

As we all know, the available space at Maastricht UAC has always been very limited. Therefore, the plan produced in this document could only be implemented when more space would become available.

The new building extension, which was due to be finished by the end of 2005, could have finally given us that opportunity. After the different moves of location of some sections, everyone was confident that by the end of 2006 or early 2007, we could count on sufficient space to group most of the different rest and recreational areas within the same location. A large part of the first floor of the operations room building was planned to be made available for that purpose.

The reason of grouping the different rest and recreational areas was not only to facilitate a proper rest of the ops room staff during their breaks but as well to create a nice atmosphere for the entire Maastricht staff to meet, relax and socialise. Our centre, historically divided in several sections, had a great opportunity for staff to meet personnel from other sections. This was identified as an enabler for better communication and for enhanced social atmosphere of our centre. In the plans, it would have allowed all of us to know each other in a better way then just reading their name at the end of a letter or an e-mail.

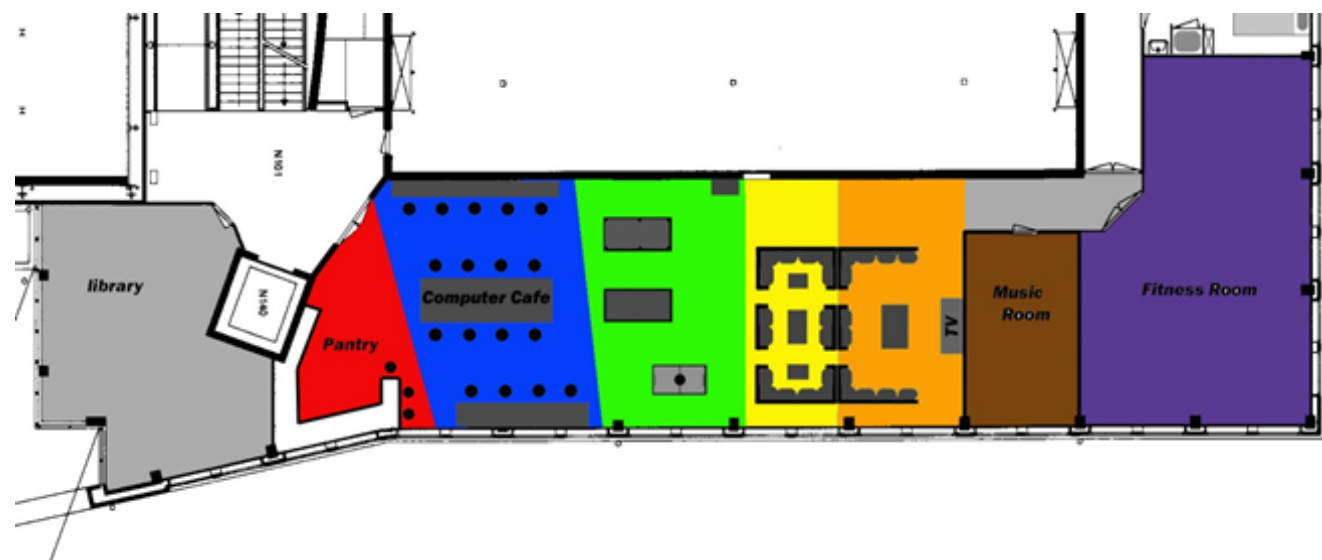
Another primary advantage of this project was to free the corridors from the kiosk PC's which were very annoying for office staff.

As in all big projects, some compromises had to be made. At that time, for example, was not possible to find a location with a window for all dormitories. But, in the opinion of the majority of staff, the creation of a large rest and recreational area was of greater importance and impacted more staff.

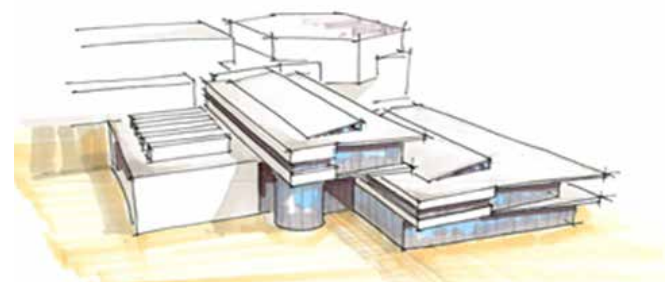
Taking into account that all professions in our Centre and especially within the Operation Division were becoming more and more demanding and that the stress of our professions will keep on growing within the coming years, we strongly believed that this project was to be given a high priority.

The area was divided in several well-defined parts: the library, the lounge, the music room and the fitness room. It was to be located in a very bright area surrounded by windows. Apart from the fact that this place would encourage relaxation and thus needed a view to the outside, the presence of windows would compensate for the windowless environment in which operational staff works. There were no partition walls foreseen in the lounge; the different areas were envisioned to be separated by plants.

**This is how we saw the future of our rest and recreational area at the time:**



However, for operational staff, rest times are incorporated during the working hours and special attention was given to the quality and the comfort of the rest facilities to ensure that they could rest properly and thus enable them to provide the best service in the best centre. The above proposals incorporated suggestions on how the quality of life can be improved at Maastricht UAC not only for operational staff, but for Maastricht UAC personnel in general. This project was meant to benefit every member of Maastricht UAC staff. It was seen as an enabler to improve the motivation of staff and therefore the quality of the service.



This extract is taken from a Space Management Proposal document that was presented by EGATS to management in 2004!

This project didn't lead to the desired result at the time since the promised space was suddenly needed for offices... again. And most of the

arguments could still be used today 8 years later, in 2012.

The actual work of EGATS on space management started in the early 2000's but the available space at the time was not sufficient for a satisfactory result.







Quite some water has passed below the bridge since my beginning in MUAC in the early 90's. The only rest area was basically the canteen with a 'Drie Banden' billiard table and a TV room as well used as smoking room. The only possibilities for a rest during night shifts were offices. Rest facilities have always been given a very low priority at MUAC. This is demonstrated by what can be called the travelling pool table syndrome. From its first days at MUAC in the restaurant this poor table has moved obediently from one room to another, from one floor to another, passing through the basement and the containers as every time its location was requested for another purpose.

We can't really say that the dormitories were treated much better through MUAC's history.

But slowly with the help of the facility and the engineer division we managed to improve step by step the rest facilities. The penthouse, the fitness room, the TV room, the table-tennis, the computer area are a few examples of this slow process.

The first drawing of the new building was a mere miracle in our eyes the first time it was presented to us.

But today there it is. After years of work, EGATS finally saw its vision come true to an extent that we could not have imagined 15 years ago.

The soon to be named Comet building was born.

Now the time has come to enjoy these new facilities. You can now practice sports, watch TV, play pool, enjoy a nice meal, chat with colleagues or just rest in a nice environment!

We sincerely hope that you all will make the best out of this new tool for many years to come by respecting all facilities and its users.

A special thank you to Johan DE ROOVER for many years of support and collaboration on this project!

**Enjoy!!!!**





# IFATCA ERM 2014 ZADAR

## 10-12/10/2014

by Alessandro Mercati

**As Announced during the ERM in Sarajevo, the 31st IFATCA regional Meeting should have taken place in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, but due to the political instability of the region the Executive Board decided to move it to Zadar, the largest city of North Dalmatia... in Croatia, once again!**

In this issue of the OUTPUT, you will find the report of Gabriel Bangiu who joined Fred Deleau and myself for this event as lucky winner of our ballot intended to give a chance to our members to see what EGATS does within IFATCA.

This time I have left to Gabriel the pleasure to describe you what hap-

pened during the first day of the Regional Meeting, the day dedicated to the workshop on the agenda in all 4 regional meetings across the world; here is my report about the 2nd and 3rd day.

### DAY 2 – EUROPEAN DAY

Despite the interesting topic of the workshop, many Member Associations decided to join the meeting only from the second day where the EVP President Zeljko Oreski opened the conference with a special thought to the victims of the flight MH17 reminding us that: “all problems that we have to face pale in comparison to the tragic loss of lives on board of Malaysia Airlines MH17. The overwhelming feeling of helplessness prevails when all efforts to improve air 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”.

At this meeting there were some major MA's missing like Greece and Ukraine due to economic difficulties, but also two regulars such as Turkey and The Netherlands, while the newest member of the European region, Jordan, was present with his smiley and friendly delegation of 4 members; after the roll call 34 associations were present out of 44 thus the quorum was met as usual.

The President of IFATCA, our colleague Patrik Peters, addressed the audience with his message for the ATCO day on October 20th saying

that IFATCA is there to remind everyone about the professionalism and commitment of Air Traffic Controllers who have to deal everyday with issues like conflicts and altered traffic paths while meeting tremendous traffic increase, and in certain parts of the world without the support of a flow management unit. We should therefore be proud of being part of the safest means of transportation and make the general public know more about us.

This conference was the first ERM ever broadcasted live on the internet, thanks to the initiative of a former Italian colleague and president of ATCEUC, Gianfranco Sacchetti; the meeting was followed by an average of 1000 people at any given time, with a records hits **OF COURSE** awarded to our Fred and his presentation about a journey through SES and FAB's to MOSAIC.

By showing a video of Bugs Bunny, he managed as usual to pass his vision on the RP2 targets, if you search for “Bugs Bunny Leopold” on YouTube, you will certainly be able to identify yourself as the poor singer pushed to perform more and more under the demanding orchestra director (the European commission); **we**, the human factor, are the **5th** pillar of the SES2 project, but often performance is the only thing the ANSP's look at, sometimes at the expense of safety.

If only the MOSAIC principles had been listened to in 2008 when the project started, probably now most of the European airspace would have been delivering a better performance, managed by a single ANSP from ground to unlimited and under the direct states supervision, with a fair share of route charges, enhanced civil military cooperation but with “**SAFETY FIRST**” as non-negotiable principle.

Even the director NM, Joe Sultana, had to admit that the Single European Sky is a big failure; although some FAB's are meeting all the requirements (DK-SE, BALTIC and NEFAB) the project did not deliver the expected results, as the vision of the NM is to optimize our network above FL 310/330 with free routes airspace, but if national interests are not put aside this will never be achievable, as the MOSAIC project already said 6 years ago!

Moving back to the beginning of day 2, the PCX reported about the EB activities during the last year, many teleconferences took place to keep costs down, Facebook and Twitter accounts are constantly up to date to ensure transparency and inform about IFATCA activities, some task forces were needed after the accident of MH17 or about the conflicts in Ukraine or Syria and Iraq.

Next topic on the agenda was again a strategic discussion on RP2 tar-

gets, the traffic increase throughout Europe in 2014 is estimated to be about 2% compared to the year before but still below the highest amount reached in 2011. This year, in Europe, we will reach the same numbers we had in 2007 meaning that we have lost 7 years of growth! The European delay target of 0.5 minute per flight will not be met this year (we will have 0.7 min per flight instead) and to my surprise MUAC will be in the list of the TOP contributors to this delay (together with Marseille, Warsaw, Nicosia, Brest, Reims and Karlsruhe).

Obviously this target of 0.5 minutes will include ANY possible factor (lack of staffing, weather and special circumstances), after the closure of Simferopol FIR in Crimea, traffic was re-routed on short notice (Bulgaria +70% that day) and some sectors needed to be open longer at night to accommodate the demand; that was only possible thanks to the commitment of ATCO's of the concerned ANSP's. By the end of this year NATO will stop providing ATC service over Afghanistan and, if no ANSP will pick up this duty, 200 flights per day will have to re-route somewhere else: all this shows how tight the RP2 targets are with all the variability that can always impact our performance.

The last part of the workshop, Philippe Domogala made a presentation on “**communication techniques**” and how to deal with the media using the **MOSTAR** checklist (Message, Object, Strategy, Tactics, Audience and Results) but first of all we shall check with our ANSP whether or not we are allowed to talk to the press at all (**at MUAC we are not** and we shall always defer to the management).

Very briefly:

- **M** for **Message**: the first thing you should do is to prepare for the media, have your message written down to avoid misunderstanding,
- **O** for **Objective**, think about what you want to achieve with your message (sympathy? Sharing responsibility? Educate people on ATCO challenges?) make a short list of max 3 items,
- **S** for **Strategy**, you can call a press conference, ask for an interview or stay passive, AND choose the content (aggressive, apologetic... you name it),
- **T** for **Tactics**, humanize, give facts (preparing a fact card), you are part of the process but not the only one, defer to the experts (incident investigators) and do not speak on behalf of the others
- **A** for **Audience**, be aware of cultural differences, in some countries they expect an apology before anything else.
- **R** for **Results**, review what you have achieved, was the message received in a different way? Correct and explain if needed.





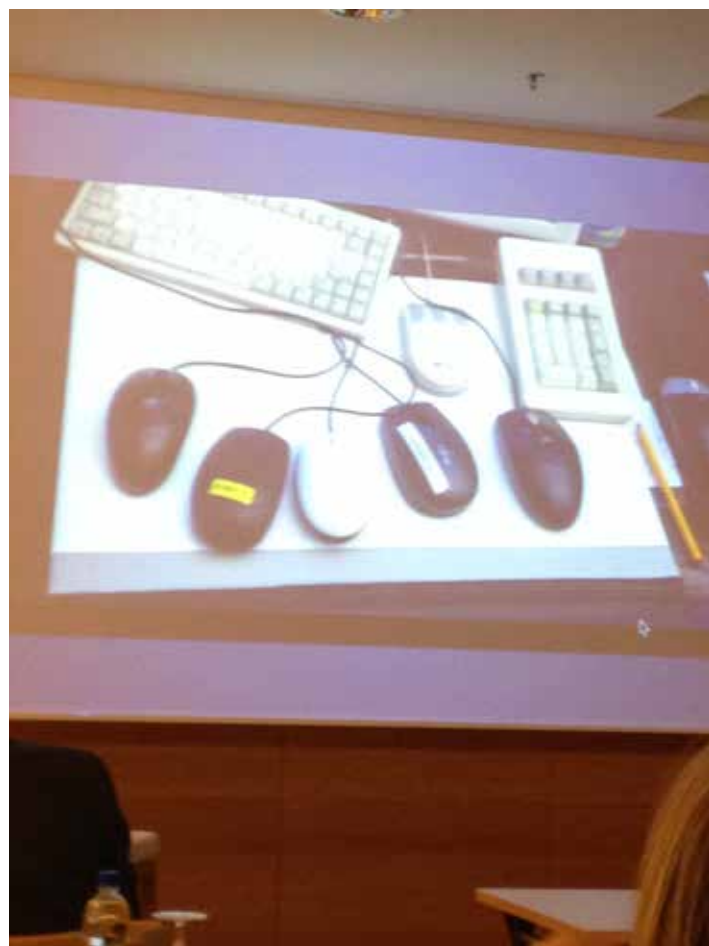
### DAY 3 – MA'S DAY

The last day of the conference was as always dedicated to the reports of the members associations, due to the nature of the discussions the session was closed to observers, nothing was broadcasted to the net and no minutes were taken (the EB took only notes to tackle any problem the MA's might have had).

The common issues in Europe were similar to last year: traffic increase, staff shortage, lack of Just culture, CISM or refreshing training, cost cutting measures and retirement age (in Israel is 67 for men and 64 for women!) but each and every MA had their own issues which were covered in depth.

**Norway**, always the first ones in submitting their report, is busy with setting up a sort of "new FAB" called BOREALIS ALLIANCE ([www.borealis.aero](http://www.borealis.aero)) together with many partners from Scandinavia and UK/ Ireland and in the meantime they are solving they staff shortage problems with ab-initio training courses done at the aviation university of North Dakota.

In **Poland** there are some serious issues following the implementation of the new system and if you look at the picture with 5 mice on their new CWP you can see why, but just to cut a long story short, the ATCO's did not receive ANY training before the implementation, the transition



plan was to keep traffic low but they ended up working always DOUBLE traffic compared to the one foreseen, the new display resulted to be extremely cluttered and the first airmiss occurred only a few hours after starting operating the new system, and what happens to the president of their trade union for raising the concern? It gets in trouble with the local management and even suspended from his duties! A prime example of where safety and just culture are still far from being priorities.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** there was a traffic increase by 12,5% due to the reopening of the Kosovo airspace and in November, they finally managed to take over their lower airspace from Croatia Control while the airspace above FL325 will be still operated by Zagreb and Belgrade ACC till October 2015.

The situation of our **Latvian** colleague and president of one union, Ausra Straume, is still far from being solved. For those not remembering her story, she was unlawfully suspended from her ATCO duties after having sent a letter to LGS (the Latvian ANSP) on behalf and in agreement with the trade union she was the president of, concerning the safety and quality of provision of ATC service and training in her country. LGS claimed that according to the rules of the union, the Chairperson of the board did not have the authority to sign and send a letter **unless** the General Meeting had specifically discussed and approved it. In the absence of such it was decided that the sending of such letter was a personal act done exclusively in her personal capacity as an employee. The court referred to some ATCO witnesses who had dissociated themselves from the letter; one of them was invited by Ausra to the court hearing where she testified being threatened by LGS that either she dissociated herself from the trade union letter, or she would be suspended from her work too. But the court made no mention of that during the ruling.

The court did not find any violation done by Ausra at work but still decided that she had to be dismissed from her company **for being loyal to her ATCO profession but disloyal to LGS**; the case is now at the European Court of Human rights where IFATCA will join as third party to try to avoid that no ATCO will ever be suspended again for being loyal to our profession!

Moving on to **Denmark** where they have some rostering issues with the so called "tactical staffing" and the use of more stand-by duties to cut costs on overtime or with their retirement age, which at the moment is up to 67 at controllers discretion! Management is looking for a solution to stimulate controllers to leave at the age of 60 in order to better plan their manpower for the coming years.

Something "odd" is happening in **Finland** where many units suffer from

staff shortage but on the other end there are 45 unemployed ATCO's and another 20 working on fixed term contracts which are fearing discontinuation, while they get paid per duty, basically spending their life on hot standby. In practice none of the new ATCO's graduated from 2011 has got a secure job.

The best examples of lack of CISM happened in **Croatia and Romania**. On July 30th, a major incident occurred during the afternoon shift in Zagreb ACC. Due to a flood, they had lost all systems including radar picture, frequencies and most of the telephone lines. Their management showed great incompetence and did nothing to take care of the people working in the OPS when the incident occurred.

In Romania the trial regarding the Otopeni accident, occurred on December 30th 2007, ended and one TWR controller was found guilty and sentenced to one year of jail but the execution of the sentence was suspended. In the meantime he died and his family asked RATCA to help them sue the ANSP at the European Court of Justice. On 20th January 2014 a small aircraft carrying a medical team on a hospital flight for organs transplant, crashed in the mountains.

There was a snowstorm at that time and 2 of the 7 passengers died; the pilot had asked to fly VFR to avoid icing but he crashed in an area with forests on top of a mountain. ROMATSA was blamed for the delay of the rescue team that arrived only 5 hours after the crash occurred most probably causing the death of those two passengers. The media publically lynched the ATCO's and the Prime Minister dismissed the CEO and the H-OPS; this would probably have been avoided if the ATCO's had the chance speak to the press, but according their national law they we not allowed to do so during an investigation.

Nothing new in **Cyprus**, where the lack of direct communication line with the neighbouring Ankara FIR is a critical deficiency since coordination procedures are undertaken by pilots. Despite all the efforts made by Eurocontrol and ICAO to convince Turkey to open a direct line with Nicosia ACC, there was no response. As a consequence, many incidents are reported every year at the common boundary between the two ACC's

Last but certainly not least, we focused on the situation in **Ukraine**

where the political instability had a huge impact on their figures. From March, when the conflict started, to mid-July, almost all flights usually routing over the Black Sea have moved to the territory of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania reducing their usual income by 20%. After the tragedy of July 17th, the number of controlled flights reduced by 80%! By the end of the year they expect an overall decrease of 50% in comparison with 2013, and that was an optimistic value.

Next ERM in 2015 will take place in Tallinn (Estonia) from the 9th till 11th October and, as you might have read in the e-link EGATS already sent you, there will be a chance for another new comer to join our delegation; all you have to do is to send an email to "[board@egats.org](mailto:board@egats.org)" showing your interest, I am sure that Gabriel's report in this issue will inspire you.

The last item on the agenda of this loooooong meeting was the selection of the host of ERM 2016; elections were necessary between the two candidates, Iceland and Macedonia, and to everyone's surprise, for the first time EVER, there was an 18-18 tie in voting! The IFATCA EB took the responsibility to award the meeting to Iceland with the reason of discontinuing the trend that took us already to the Balkan region 6 times in a short period of time.

The last thoughts of my report have to go to my fellow board members who shares with me all their time for workshops, projects and meetings where EGATS inputs are required and to the Maastricht Management team for their continuous support to EGATS that allows us to attend these events.





# IFATCA ERM 2014 - ZADAR

by Gabriel Bangiu

This year's IFATCA 31st ERM took place in the beginning of October. The initial venue was Kiev, but, due to political unrest in that area, had to be changed. So, the new venue was chosen in Zadar, Croatia. Located on the Adriatic Sea, Zadar is an ancient historical center of the northern Dalmatian region, with a population of around 80.000 inhabitants. The actual place where the ERM was scheduled was situated about 20 km away from Zadar, in a modern touristic resort, Punta Skala, in the Falkensteiner Hotel.

As the lucky winner of the EGATS draw, this year I had the opportunity to join Alessandro Mercati and Fred Deleau on this trip and to discover a new perspective over different subjects and issues related to air traffic controllers around Europe (...and not only...). Before starting a brief description of the first day, I would like to thank the EGATS board for giving me the chance to attend such an interesting event.

So, here we are in Zadar, at the beginning of October 2014. After a rather uncomfortable flight in a Croatia Airlines Dash8-Q400 (nothing to do with the aircraft or the airline, it was only the size of the passenger which was not suitable for that seat configuration...), with registration 9A-CQE (not that anyone cares, but I felt like mentioning it...), upon touching down on RWY32 of Zadar Airport (a formerly military aerodrome) we were greeted by a sunny, summer-like weather with 25-26 C. After completing the accommodation formalities, we went to our rooms to get some rest and to prepare for what was planned to be a 3-day conference.

On the next morning, Friday, the 10th of October, the 2014 European Regional Meeting kicked-off with the welcome speeches from the organizers and the IFATCA board members. The following part of the meeting was dedicated to the roll call and the acceptance of the agenda for the meeting.

Next, there was the speech of the actual president of IFATCA, Mr. Patrik Peters, who, among other things, welcomed Jordan as the newest member of the IFATCA European Region. After that, a presentation about Centralized Services and RP2(Reference Period 2) followed. This presentation was held by Mr. Joe Sultana, from Eurocontrol.

The Centralized Services project was initiated for cost reduction reasons and to boost the Single European Sky implementation. The implementation of Centralized Services(CS) will be made gradually, at different levels.

First, it will be implemented at local level (ANSP level).

The next phase is adopting the CS concept at regional level and that is within the Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs).

The last phase proposed by EUROCONTROL is adopting the CS concept at a central and pan-European level, to speed up the process of SESAR project implementation.

The CS project is designed as an air navigation support service which will enable ANSPs to work together in order to provide improved services outside national boundaries.

But what are the benefits of the Centralized Services projects?

According to Eurocontrol, it will support a quicker and smoother implementation of the SESAR project. It also supports the unbundling of some ATM support services around Europe.

But because this concept was designed around the cost saving idea, the main benefit of the CS project will be its contribution to achieving the Performance Targets of the member states set by EC.

Overall, between 2014 and 2030, covering the end of the RP1, the whole RP2 and the remaining reference periods, it is thought that the CS project will deliver net savings totaling 1,6 bn Euros.

That was the presentation about the Centralized Services.

Next there was a short briefing about RP2 (Reference Period 2), which was also held by Mr. Joe Sultana.

The RP2 starts in 2015 and it will end in 2019. Its main aim is cost saving and performance improvement. Its main goal is that by 2020 the European ATM system should be able to handle 3 times more traffic than 2001 levels, in the same time increasing the safety by 10 times and at 50% less costs compared to 2001.

There was also a short discussion about the European ATM system before RP2 but this subject was more detailed on the next day of the ERM, on Saturday.

After the lunch break, the day continued with the IFATCA Voluntary Workshop. For this year, the subject chosen was "Stress Release Techniques usable to ATCO; prevention and correction measures" As the title says, the presentation focused on studying the stress factors, the stress phases ( from phase 1, the alarm reaction, when the body resources are mobilized, to phase 2, the resistance, and how to cope with the stress factor...) and the stress management. Also, there were presented different ways to release stress used across Europe. This interesting presentation was held by Prof. Boris Blazinic

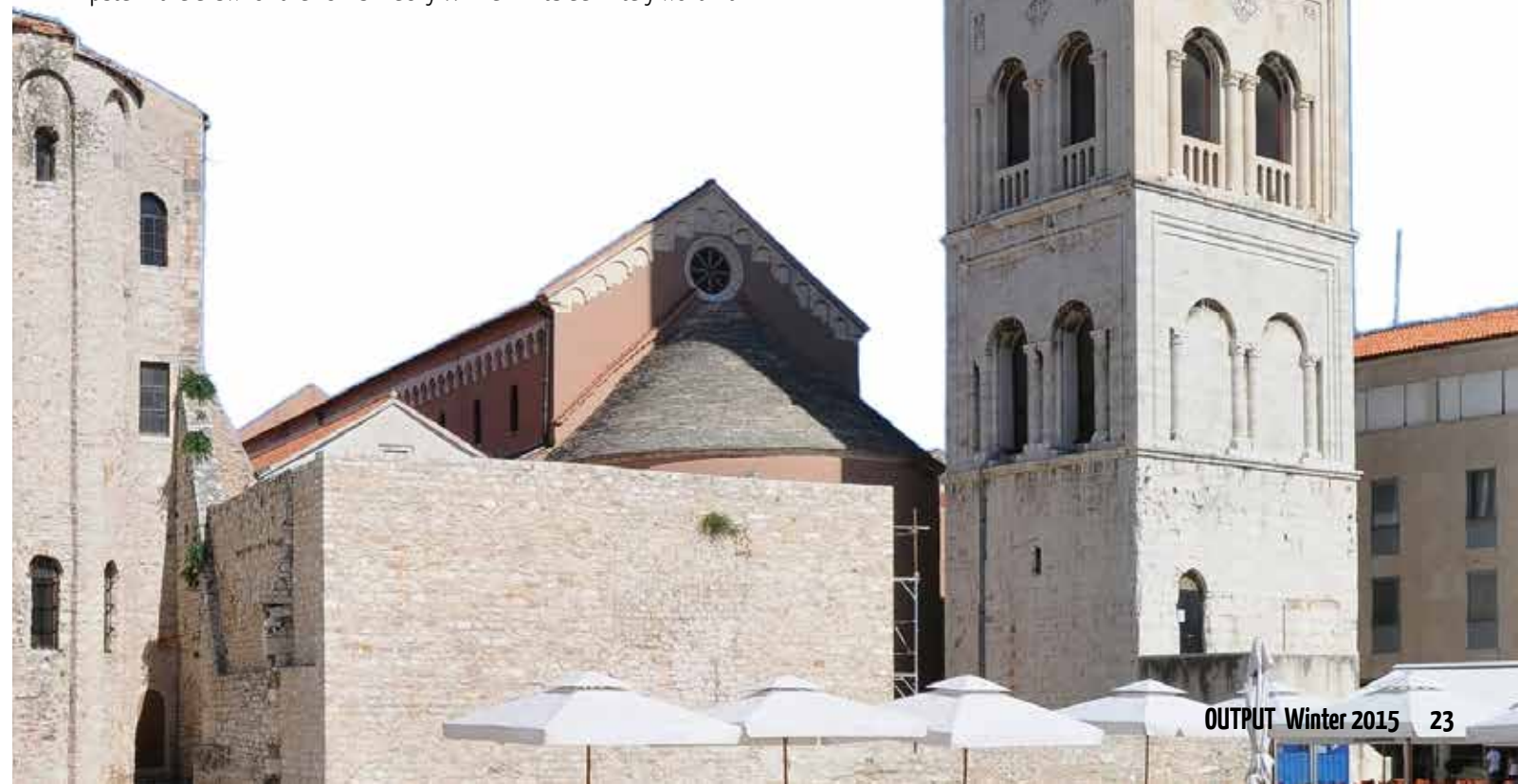
Towards the end of the day, there was also a CISM presentation done by Mr. Patrik Peters, in which it was explained what CISM is all about and how is it used in Eurocontrol. This concluded the first day of the 2014 ERM, with many interesting subjects on the agenda.

Many more followed the next days, but for that I'll leave it up to my friend and colleague Alessandro to inform you about.

All in all, from the observer point of view, it was a nice and useful experience during which I had a deeper and clearer perspective over IFATCA and its activities to protect the interests of Air Traffic Controllers around the world.

Once again, many thanks to EGATS for offering me the chance to be part of this yearly event and congratulations to our Croatian colleagues who managed to put up a flawless organization of the ERM, in such a very short time.

Next year's ERM will take place in Tallinn (EST) and be sure that EGATS will keep you informed about that. In the mean time, you should participate in the draw for the EGATS "Lucky Winner"... It's definitely worth it...





# EGATS Photo Competition 2014

The subject for this year's competition was "red" which meant that a certain amount of thought had to go into not only selecting the subject matter but composing it also. In the eleven years that the competition has been running thinking about the subject has

always, apparently, been a deterrent and thus in those years that a limited subject has been chosen the number of entries has always been less, just 29 this year compared to the normal 60-80. Nevertheless, it is always interesting to see how the entrants inter-

pret the subject, and I always find it exciting as the deadline approaches and the entries come rolling in!

Over the years I have tried to vary the judging process having used children, teenagers, colleagues and professionals in order to get contrasting viewpoints. This year I selected neighbours of mine who I knew had no interest in photography beyond taking their own holiday photos. Their enthusiasm for the task in hand was reflected in the notes that they wrote for each of the entered photographs.

Now the results:

**1st place goes to Yvan Vandenberghe – his third win!**

The judges commented, "Clearly the photo was taken to suit the theme. The image conjures up many questions and comments which make the photo exciting to look at"

**2nd place was taken by Robin James.**

The judges commented, "A photo that grabs your attention instantly"

**3rd place is claimed by Igor Jakimov.**

The judges commented, "A photo that is exciting and yet is almost a still life!"

The judges also selected a fourth photo entered by **Jan Vesters** which he calls "Basement Wax". They appreciated the color popping which, they felt, made the photo special. Many congratulations to our winners.

I would like to emphasise that the competition is open to all Eurocontrol staff and their direct family members and retired staff members. Brussels, Brétigny and Luxemburg probably did not receive advanced warning

this year and thus I shall see that is corrected next year!

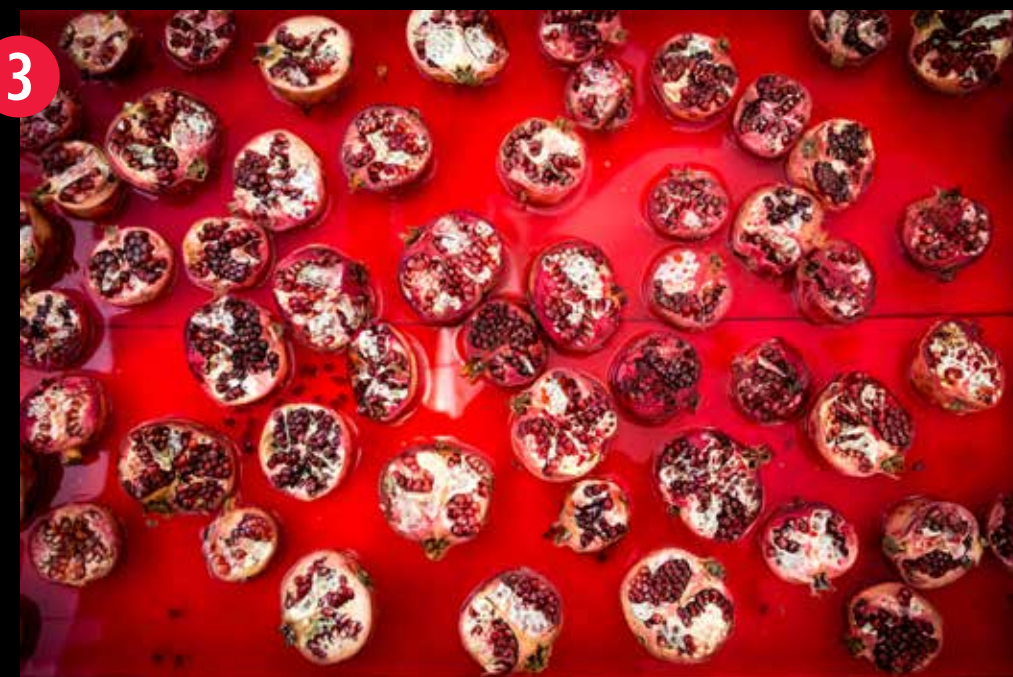
One final point. Before entering the competition please ensure that you get a copy of the rules! They have been devised so as to ensure that all entries conform to the same criteria, for the sake of fairness. I hate having to remove photos that have not complied with the rules, but it does happen on occasions.

Happy clicking!

**Paul Hooper.**



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# International day of the controller

By Raf Vigorita

Very little remains to be said about the day that celebrates our profession as ATCO's.

And, as it has become a nice habit, EGATS has organized a chair massage available throughout the day in the Penthouse for those who wanted to be spoiled a little during their break.

Special thanks go out to everyone involved in making this happen, with a mention to the two lovely girls Johanna and Sandra for their high professionalism, hard work and kindness (despite the long day!) and thanks to our colleague Ektal who approached EGATS bringing them to our attention. Also thanks for the positive feedback that some of you took the time to send to us.

Hopefully we'll manage to repeat this year's success also in 2015!



## INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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### 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 The international day of the Air Traffic Controller

In a few days on October 20<sup>th</sup>, controllers from all across the globe are getting ready to celebrate the Day of The Controller. The profession of Air Traffic Control – surely one of the more obscure jobs in the world, at least to the general public. As the media generally ignores the profession, the public is somewhat ignorant towards our profession. That is, until something negative happens: when controllers stand up for their profession and working conditions, or when something goes wrong, then everybody suddenly has an opinion and this is usually not favourable for the controller...

This is also the time of the year that IFATCA holds its Regional Meetings: these meetings are arguably as important as the Annual Conference. During the Regional Meetings, Member Associations have a hands-on opportunity to discuss issues that affect them the most – from operational issues between two neighboring facilities to the challenges ahead at a regional level.

In Asia, the traffic explosion in the region presents its own unique challenges. Judging by several recent gigantic orders from aircraft manufacturers, the trend is set to continue and one of the questions that needs an answer is whether and how ATC in the region will be able to cope.

The Americas are divided into a part that is trying to cope with moving from a predominantly military system to one that concentrates on providing a service to civil aviation and the Northern part of the region has its own challenges to make NextGen work under increasing budgetary constraints.

In Africa and the Middle East, growth is clearly restricted by the lack of investment in people and infrastructure. Oddly enough, some countries appear to be happy to invest in equipment, only to ignore that well trained and motivated staff are needed to make it work. In other cases, the focus is on income rather than on security - and controllers are reduced to administrators who have to make sure that airlines can be billed for a service they didn't get.

- 50 Years of Professional Involvement -  
IFATCA has been representing air traffic controllers since 1961,  
and has more than 50.000 members in over 135 countries





Call for fair competition:

# Lift Europe's aviation up

Brussels, 2 December 2014

**On the eve of the European Transport Ministers' Council meeting in Brussels pilots from across Europe raise a red flag about practices which distort competition in aviation and threaten to diminish the industry in Europe. If not addressed urgently, the aviation industry in Europe – as we know it today – could disappear.**

Harmful business practices and employment models are among the many market distorting elements spelled out in a **new publication**, issued by ECA today. More and more airlines are seeking competitive advantage through reducing their labour costs, taxes and social charges: fake self-employment of crews, social dumping and 'regulatory shopping' are spreading quickly, with some companies seeking to benefit from light regulation and favourable taxation regimes in countries that serve them as a 'flag of convenience'.

"It is worrying to see how some airlines are redefining the landscape," says ECA President Dirk Polloczek. "It might be tempting to cut costs by basing your air crews on a different continent, registering your aircraft in a 'tax haven' or asking young pilots to pay for flying your company's aircraft. But this destroys jobs in Europe, carves out tax and social security payments in EU Member States, and forces other airlines to follow the example if they don't want to be wiped out of the market."

Distorted competition is equally acute when it comes to airlines from outside Europe. Economically booming air carriers from Asia and the Middle East are often statesponsored or state-owned, with access to cheap infrastructure, capital and fuel – and are mostly a tool in their governments' wider economic strategy. At the same time, they are subject to non-transparent account-

ing standards and sometimes less stringent regulations than their European counterparts. "Our carriers can neither match the Gulf carriers' resources, nor can they – or should they – rely on state aid or subsidies," says ECA Secretary General Philip von Schöppenthau. "Our airlines can only be profitable if their competitive environment is not distorted. This is why **pilots from across Europe** call upon Ministers, the new Commission and the newly elected Members of the European Parliament to put fair competition at the centre of the European aviation policy."

To stop the trend towards unfair competition, concrete actions are required: better coordinating and strengthening of the social regulations, eradicating abusive business models and social dumping, and ensuring a competitive level playing field vis-a-vis state-sponsored foreign carriers.



## A great celebration for the 100 years of the Belgian Air Force.

By Raf Vigorita

**Last 13-14 September, the Belgian Air Force had organized an air show to celebrate its 100 years. And what a celebration that was.**

Personally I experienced a few air shows throughout my life, but this one have to rank among the best. The amount of flying display, static display and variety was simply amazing and made it worth it having to negotiate with near freezing cold conditions for almost all morning.

The air show had to be modified slightly due to the relatively bad weather of the early morning, with a low cloud base that, among others, prevented the Frecce Tricolori from performing their full aerial display.

Other than that, it has been a huge success across the board. Old birds mix and matched with modern ones; the show was definitely stolen by modern fighter jets as they were present in large numbers but a good share of transport aircraft, AWACS, helicopters and turboprops completed an amazing show.

Apart from the obvious large presence of the hosts and the above mentioned Frecce, the modern highlights were the French two Rafales, two Mirages and their aerobatic team while the Dutch brought a couple

of F-16s and an Apache helicopter. Germany brought out one Eurofighter Typhoon while Greece, Portugal, Turkey and Denmark displayed their F-16s, the Czechs brought a Mi24 Hind helicopter with its impressive aerial display, Poland and Slovakia combined for 3 MiG-29s, Switzerland delighted the crowd with an F/A-18 and there were F-15s from the USA and a Saab Gripen from the Hungarian AF. And finally, UK's finest: the Red Arrows and the RAF Parachute Team.





It has been a day to remember, definitely one that exceeded my expectations. Obviously, coming from an Air Force background, all military aircraft are a special and different breed of birds to me. They never fail to impress and amaze. But even if your passion is not as deep, my suggestion is to try experiencing an air show and you'll probably be hooked for life. You really need to try it out as it is nearly impossible to describe the vibes that such an event can transmit you.

As for me, as it is obvious and undeniable that my whole adulthood has been revolving around the aviation world, I will just have to find different ways to satisfy my passion. Looking already forward to spring and the next air displays. But I doubt that a show will match any time soon what the Belgian Air Force was able to organize. Proficiat BAF!







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