



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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Press Release

Air Traffic Control warnings about ASECNA airspace

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), representing over fifty thousand air traffic controllers around the world, has become aware that twelve Air Traffic Controllers' Associations have called for a forty-eight-hour "silent radio" exercise in the airspace over the seventeen African countries managed by ASECNA (*Agence pour la Sécurité de la Navigation Aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar*). The ATC associations believe this exercise, to start at the end of July, is necessary due to ASECNA managements blatant disregard of contractual agreements approved by all the governments of these countries, and France, through ministerial decisions over the past six years.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation, ICAO required all Member States (which includes all seventeen countries covered by ASECNA) to have trained their staff to a minimum standard (level 4) of English Language Proficiency by March 2008.

"By unduly delaying the English language training program for Air Traffic Controllers, which is an internationally agreed requirement, by mismanaging the introduction of the ICAO Air Traffic Controller License, by disregarding of agreed level of qualifications to enter the profession, by not substantially improving the ATM infrastructure and by maintaining sub-standard working conditions for Air Traffic Controllers in ASECNA managed airspace and airports, ASECNA not only jeopardizes the safety of the traveling public but adds a huge financial burden to airlines at a time when they are facing significant structural problems", indicates Marc Baumgartner, President of IFATCA.

IFATCA believes it is unacceptable that the management of ASECNA is disregarding decisions made by the member states ministries (detailed in the protocol of agreement signed in 2006 between ASECNA and its employees) relating to the level of qualification to enter the profession. "This is not only causing hardship to a highly skilled Air Traffic Controller workforce, but seriously jeopardizes air safety of the traveling public", continues the president of IFATCA.

"ASECNA spends a lot of the money earned by its prime activity, which is air traffic control, into other domains – such as maintaining expensive offices in Paris and overhead expenditure in its Dakar headquarters – while there is very little investment in improving the basic ATM infrastructure and the development of human resources; this includes lack of safety training and legal aid for of Air Traffic Controllers. There is a significant shortage of Air Traffic Controllers in these countries due to ASECNA's mismanagement of training and recruiting.

"It is indeed sad that Air Traffic Controllers have to continue to raise the alarm in this manner because ASECNA is slow to implement internationally accepted standards of aviation management. ASECNA seems ignorant of the fact that they are not just making industrial relations decisions, but they are degrading the safety of international civil aviation".

"IFATCA strongly urges ASECNA management to abide by the contractual agreements approved by the governments of the ASECNA countries and to engage in honest and meaningful consultation with the ATC Associations, and to desist from politically motivated action against the Associations. The safety and integrity of international civil aviation is seriously compromised by such actions", said Mr. Baumgartner.

IFATCA is the worldwide organization representing more than fifty thousand air traffic controllers in 133 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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