

Report on the Deputy President

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SUMMARY

This paper summarizes the key points of the work of the Deputy President (DP) since the last Conference in April 2025. The paper provides an overview of the work conducted regarding the Annual Conference in Bucharest (Romania), an update on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (EDI TF), the Information Handbook, (IHB), the Website Task Force (WTF), and the IFATCA Administrative Manual (IAM) overhaul, as well as other tasks falling under the responsibility of the DP.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. For this second report as Deputy President, I am delighted to report I have achieved the objectives set last year during the Conference in Abu Dhabi. In summary, the work of the EDI TF is continuing, with the legendary dedication of our co-chairs Sverre Ivar Elsbak (Norway) and Betsy Beaumont (United States). The IHB is entering its second year with the new set of metrics that were rolled out in 2023 and there is progress towards the transition to an online version only. The WTF has made significant advancements (despite a few hurdles) on the new website. And last but not least, a project I have cherished for years, the overhaul of our most important document, the IAM, is finally being presented to the Directors this year. Once again, this year, the DP role brought a number of challenges in terms of time management, managing uncertainty, unforeseen circumstances, highly variable workload, and more. But this is what makes this position so interesting!
- 1.2. Before proceeding with details, I wish to thank very special people. First, our President and CEO Helena Sjöström, with whom it is extremely pleasant to work. Helena is an amazing leader, and her support and wise advice is next to none. The Executive Board (EB) as a whole is also an immense source of support, always ready for new challenges and aiding whenever I seek help. And of course, our Office Manager (OM), Tatiana Iavorskaia, who is without a doubt one of the most important pillars of our Federation. We are an amazing team; I could not have wished for better people to work with!

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. Conference 2026 – Bucharest, Romania

- 2.1.1. It is not a secret for anyone, Cristian Radu has been to many, many IFATCA Conferences, and it shows. From the beginning, Cristian and his team have proved to us that they know what they are doing, they know what needs to be done and they know how to solve problems as they present along the way. Just to give you an example, the registration website and associated links to book hotels worked without a single glitch from the moment it was launched.
- 2.1.2. Even when things go well, the entire process of organising an IFATCA Annual Conference is stressful and anxiogenic for our Conference Coordinator, Jez Pigden, for our Communications Coordinator, Nicola Ni Riada, for myself, and needless to say, for the Organising Committee. However, having a team like we do this year in Romania definitely helps. I would like to sincerely thank them all for their patience, their hard work, being online and answering messages and emails and doing Zoom calls at almost any time of day and night. The amount of work they put is simply immense.
- 2.1.3. In general, the organization of the venue, the rooms, and the logistics (at the time of writing this report) seem to be on track. Jez is keeping track of every detail and is doing all the coordination – and there's a lot of it – with the OC. There is of course the occasional hurdle, however generally speaking, the communication is fluid and things are progressing well.
- 2.1.4. Following the daily surveys conducted throughout the Conference last year, a few opinions emerged rather strongly from those who responded. First, the time allocated to formalities at the beginning of the week could be reduced to make more room for actual work. Second, the Committees need more time to be able to finish their agenda. Third, the opening Plenary should take place earlier in the week, otherwise there is this impression that the Conference “has not yet started”. And finally, scheduling workshops after regular work hours is simply too much; while no one discussed the value of what they provided, people need some down time and some already have additional washup meetings after hours with their own association.
- 2.1.5. These comments are all valuable and I'm pleased to say we have listened to those who took the time to provide feedback and made changes to the schedule to address them. This year, the opening ceremony and opening plenary have been condensed into Monday morning only. The afternoon is dedicated to panels and workshops. This way, the need to reconfigure rooms is minimized. The entire Tuesday morning will be dedicated to Regional Meetings. The remainder of the week will be for Committees, with combined Committees B+C back to where they were originally (before separate B and C), on recommendation of some of the Chairs and Co-chairs. In comparison to last year, this configuration allows for an extra half a day for committees, which should help greatly in fishing the business in time.
- 2.1.6. Extracurricular activities after hours have been removed, apart from the optional IFATCA Basics, for newcomers. The gala dinner will be back to Friday evening this year. Hopefully these changes will have a positive impact on attendees and on the fluidity and efficiency of the proceedings.

Conference 2026 Schedule – 20-24 April 2026, Bucharest, Romania

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
MORNING	8:00-8:30 Registration	8:00-8:30 Registration			
AM	09:00-10:00 Opening Ceremony (tech exhibition) 10:00-12:30 Opening Plenary	8:30-12:30 Regional Meetings	8:30-12:30 Committees A, B+C	8:30-12:30 Committees A, B, C	8:30-12:30 Committees A, B, C
LUNCH	12:30-14:00 Lunch	12:30-13:30 Lunch	12:30-13:30 Lunch	12:30-13:30 Lunch	12:30-14:00 Lunch
PM	14:00-15:30 Panel (attract/recruit, train, retain) + IFATCA 2030+ 16:00-17:00 ICAO	13:30-17:00 Committees A, B+C	13:30-17:00 Committees A, B, C	13:30-17:00 Committees A, B, C	14:00-17:00 Closing Plenary
EVENING	17:00 IFATCA Basics 19:30 Welcome Function	19:30 Industry Partners Function			19:30 Farewell Function

Figure 1. – Proposed Conference Schedule

2.1.7. What remains to be done? A lot. But we are getting there. Industry Partners are being set up and booths, sponsorships, etc. are on the way to be finalized. The speakers for the Panel on Monday are finalized, and preparations with them are already ongoing. Registrations are well under way, with so far 293 participants from 68 Member Associations who have registered and paid. IFATCA-paid registrations are all done, hotel rooms have been booked and paid for, chairs and co-chairs confirmed. ICAO attendees are confirmed. We are now fixing smaller logistic problems as they come.

2.2. EDI TF

2.2.1. Again, this year, Betsy Beaumont (USA) and Sverre Ivar Elsbak (Norway) have joined forces to manage the EDI TF. I am extremely lucky, both Co-chairs are perfectly autonomous, the work gets done, a call is arranged when needed to discuss the game plan and the way forward, or simply to report on progress made.

2.2.2. A tender was put for a new initiative named SOFIA Aviation4All project. Similar to existing SESAR programmes, IFATCA would have been reimbursed for expenses incurred. The tender was through a consortium on which IFATCA is part, Deepblue, an Italian research and innovation company).

2.2.3. One of the objectives of SOFIA is to develop a gender-responsive framework to ensure future ATM systems are inclusive, trustworthy and ergonomically designed, addressing both physical and cognitive aspects. The advisory board of this project would meet up to four times a year virtually. On this project, which will span over 30 months, four women from the European region (Natasha Mijat Krstevska (North Macedonia), Katarina Anzel Kruh (Slovenia), Iulia Iordan (Romania), and Maria Serrano (Spain), were nominated to work together on this. More details will be provided in the EDI TF report, but quite regrettably, the results from the selection process came out negative. While SOFIA obtained a good score, it was not selected but the jury.

- 2.2.4. Once again, this year, just like for CAC, FIC, PLC and TOC, it will be possible to submit a Job Card (JC) directly to the EDI TF and propose work programme items for the group, directly on the IFATCA Conference web app. It is of course possible to approach anyone from the EDI TF directly, but this additional feature allows for submissions in a discreet and confidential manner.
- 2.2.5. Following the success from last year, the EDI TF will again have a table at Conference to discuss with attendees, socialize the JC, etc.
- 2.2.6. To make sure it is made available as widely as possible, the code of conduct will be posted on the webapp and a message to the effect that all attendees are bound by it will be delivered by the EB at the beginning of the Conference.
- 2.2.7. Finally, I cannot miss the opportunity to say thank you to both Sverre and Betsy. They are extraordinary people, extremely professionals, they know where they want to go and they make sure what is promised is delivered. And to top it off, it's always, always a pleasure to work with both! I sincerely hope we get many more years of pleasant collaboration together. Thank you for investing yourselves in the betterment of the Federation, and in progressing EDI-related topics in air traffic control and aviation in general.

2.3. IHB

- 2.3.1. Since the launch of the new questionnaire, two years ago, 53 responses have been received from our MAs (of which 44 received in the first year), an excellent number. These responses started to provide a rich portrait of our MAs with respect to the 88 metrics (KPIs) contained in the questionnaire. Last year, the Directors approved the creation of the Purple Book, a document that present a holistic view of those metrics.
- 2.3.2. Last year, I mentioned my plan was to consult with PLC chair and EVPP to find a potential successor (or ideally two) within PLC to continue in this role. At present, I am the single person who knows how to process the entries, and we need to avoid single points of failure. While my plan is still to avoid those, I chose to hold on to it for now, since the new website is in the making and we are looking at different options to automate some of these processes. It would be a loss of time to train people (who are already busy with other things) on a system that will change within the next year or two. Once the new website progresses a bit further, I will have a clearer idea of where we are going with this.

2.4. WTF

- 2.4.1. The WTF has made significant progress on the new website this year, despite a few, but significant, hurdles. One of the most prolific members was injured significantly and had to pause its contribution for several months. An update to the PHP caused a number of pages, that were ready, to disappear, causing the lost of several hours (if not days) of work. While this is all disappointing, it didn't stop or discourage the group.
- 2.4.2. I would like to reiterate that the membership of the WTF only includes five members. It is a small group, but the "quality" of the candidates makes up for it. However, not everyone is contributing equally, for a variety of reasons, the main one being time available.
- 2.4.3. Since the last Conference, the temporary domain on which the new website is hosted has been created, using WordPress and Elementor as the platform to host it. Approximately 20 pages have been completed (or are on the way of being completed). At the time of writing, it is not 100% sure if a sneak peek would be ready to be presented during Conference, but the chances are good.

- 2.4.4. Our next steps as a team are to complete the remaining pages, design and organize the menus and top bar, find a solution for the IHB that would allow individual input directly on the website, create user permissions and accesses, and potentially double factor authentication.
- 2.4.5. Recently, I have been able to find a freelance web designer, based in Canada, with specific expertise on Wordpress and Elementor. I met already with the candidate, and he is willing to assist for those specific portions of the website we would not be able to complete ourselves. When I mentioned the potential issues we are facing, he did not seem worried at all and already proposed some solutions. A verbal update will be made at Conference as appropriate. At the moment, the budget of 20,000.00\$USD remains untouched, but some of it will be required, should we decide to go ahead and use the services of the freelancer. I would also like to use some of it for a token of appreciation to those who contributed significantly to the creation of the website. While we cannot pay them a salary, they invested significant amount of personal time on this project, and I humbly believe it deserves recognition.
- 2.4.6. I will conclude this section of my report by sincerely thanking the WTF team for the time and efforts invested. I am not a programmer or a web designer but being surrounded by such capable and knowledgeable people makes this project extremely interesting to manage. Whenever someone has a question, surely someone in the group has an answer. If not, we find it together. This is truly a fun experience, and I very much look forward to the day we will be able to finally roll out our new website!

2.5. Web App

- 2.5.1. As per previous years, I am taking care of the webapp for the Conference. At the time of writing, the platform is already in place, and all pages are ready, with a few minor details to adjust. It is not a difficult task to accomplish; it just requires time. At present, only the schedule and the agenda are in, working papers will be uploaded as they become available. A communications campaign similar to the one from last year is also planned to socialize the web app.

2.6. IAM Overhaul

- 2.6.1. A project I have wanted to do for many years, a complete overhaul of the IAM, is now coming to fruition, should the Directors welcome favourably the changes proposed. The IAM contains all our financial and administrative policies, yet it has never (to my knowledge) been completely reviewed. Over time, policies have been added, modified, removed, creating inconsistencies, duplications, and as a result, a manual in which it is difficult to find information, because the flow is not logical, nor natural.
- 2.6.2. The IAM overhaul attempts to address these problems. Committee A will have the pleasure of hearing me present 11 working papers this year. But let's not be impressed by the number, they are arranged in a very logical manner to try to simplify as much as possible the modifications needed. I cannot count the number of hours I invested in this project, and I sincerely hope the result will be up to the expectations, and our "new" manual will serve our needs better. A special thanks to CAC, and in particular to Rob Mason, for his extremely wise advice. Whenever I have a complex problem, Rob always has a simple solution. When Rob proposes something, my reaction almost always is: "why didn't I think of this??" Thank you, Rob and thank you CAC!

2.7. AMA Regional Meeting – 30 Sept. – 2 Oct. 2025, Oranjestad, Aruba

2.7.1. I had the pleasure this year to attend the AMA Regional Meeting, the first that was organized by Andrew LeBovidge, our new EVP Americas. I think I can speak for the entire region when I say Andrew knows how to organize a meeting. Very much like his predecessor, Trish Gilbert, he has some experience, and it shows. Needless to say, the event was extremely well prepared, and all went according to plans. I wish to thank our MA in Aruba for hosting this RM, they had very little time to prepare, and yet they managed to pull something fabulous. I also wish to thank our Industry Partners who showed up and took the time in their busy agenda to come meet us. Your presence is always appreciated.

2.8. ASP Regional Meeting – 20-22 October 2025, Macau

2.8.1. Following the AMA RM, I was invited to attend the ASP Regional Meeting, brilliantly organized by Cheryl Chen, our EVP Asia Pacific. I do not want to start a contest, but Cheryl also knows how to organize a meeting. The agenda was ambitious, and the days were filled with many topics to discuss. Among the many things on that agenda, I was delighted to moderate a pilot/controller panel, which I found extremely refreshing and interesting. I would like to take the opportunity to thank our MA in Macau for hosting this impeccable meeting. The association in Macau doesn't have 5000 members, in fact they don't even have 50. But they managed to put together a fantastic event.

2.9. CBTA Workshop – 23-24 October 2025 (Hong Kong)

2.9.1. Following the RM in Macau, Cheryl had arranged a Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) Workshop in Hong Kong, just a few kilometres away from Macau, graciously hosted jointly by our MA in Hong Kong (HKATCA) and the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy (HKIAA). The workshop was attended by more than 30 participants from the region.

2.9.2. I would like to sincerely thank the HKIAA for graciously providing well equipped facilities, tea breaks and lunches, and for supporting HKATCA in the organization of this event. They have gone far beyond any possible expectations. Special thanks to Alex Leung and Caesar Chan for an impeccable organisation, and to Renz Bulseco for helping to facilitate the event.

2.10. CBTA Workshop –17-18 November 2025 (Santo Domingo, DR)

2.10.1. Another CBTA Workshop was held in Dominican Republic, organized by the local MA, ADCA. Under the leadership of Eudy Abreu and El Kadur Acosta, the workshop attracted more than 30 participants. I would like to sincerely thank ADCA for graciously providing flights and accommodation, well equipped facilities, tea breaks and lunches, and for supporting IFATCA in the organization of this event. The workshop generated great interest from the participants and will undoubtedly motivate the MA to push the ANSP to move towards a competency-based environment for air traffic controllers training and assessment. Special thanks to Eudy and Andrew LeBovidge for their assistance, but also for accepting to be co-facilitators for the event.

2.11. CAC & FIC Meeting – 1-2 December 2025, Brisbane, Australia

2.11.1. CAC and FIC met at the beginning of December to review working papers that will be presented at Conference this year. All members worked diligently before the meeting and all working papers were ready, or very close to be, in time for the meeting, which facilitated the work. The IAM overhaul occupied a decent

portion of the meeting, but less than I anticipated. For the most part, members were content with the proposed changes, and the potential issues I had highlighted beforehand for the meeting to review were resolved. Both committees are working very efficiently, despite being very small in numbers. Under the great leadership of our Chairs, Rob Mason (Australia) and Daniel Nartey (Ghana), as well as our EVP Finance, Tom McRobert, all items on the work programme were completed and papers have been submitted in due time, without any major or contentious issues foreseen at the Conference. I would like to thank our Industry Partner Frequentis, who graciously hosted us at their Asia Pacific Headquarters in Brisbane. We were treated like VIPs in their state-of-the-art facilities.

2.12. Next Steps

- 2.12.1. Until the Conference at the end of April, my focus will be on making sure we have everything in place for our week in Romania. Namely, making sure everything works with the webapp, finalizing our panel speakers and moderator, finalizing the agenda and the schedule, etc. I will also continue to work with the WTF to try as much as possible to have something to present to the Director during that week. Work continues closely with our Conference Coordinator, Jez Pigden (UK), Nicola Ni Riada (Ireland), and the entire OC in Romania, under the leadership of Cristian Radu. I look forward to being in Bucharest, for what I am sure will be another great IFATCA Conference.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. To conclude, I cannot find the words to say how happy (and lucky) I am to have the privilege to work in this position, to have the honour to represent our amazing Federation and the best profession in the world. We have a well-functioning and well performing Executive Board, led by an outstanding woman which of course makes everything easier and more pleasant. I really think we can and should be proud of who we are, what we do, and what we have accomplished this year.
- 3.2. While things are going well, we did, and will, face challenges. Some predictable, some unforeseen. And we shall refrain from becoming complacent. On the contrary, we must use the current period of relative stability to keep on strengthening our processes, our positions, our financial strategy and our medium to long term plans to make sure we remain strong, agile and ready for what the future brings us.
- 3.3. I like to conclude my reports by adding special mentions to some of the fantastic people I am surrounded by and who makes this journey even more enjoyable than it already is. Among these people, there is CATCA, my association for more than twenty years now. And my employer, Nav Canada. In both cases, I can only be grateful to be supported by such understanding, flexible, and caring people. And above all, people who believe in what I do. Very sincerely, a huge and heartfelt thank you, the profession, our Federation, are lucky to have you.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. It is recommended that this report is accepted as information.

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