

Report of the Liaison Officer to the International Labour Organisation

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SUMMARY

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is part of the United Nations, it promotes decent and productive work with freedom, equity, security and dignity. The Executive Board identified a requirement to renew IFATCA's relationship with the ILO. This report explains the role of the ILO and how the Federation aims to achieve increased cooperation with it.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Together with the Executive Board (EB), EVPP identified a need to renew and strengthen IFATCA's relationship with the International Labour Office (ILO).
- 1.2. The ILO is based in Geneva, Switzerland and as such, the EB found it advantageous, both financially and logistically, that the Swiss Member Association (MA), HelvetiCA should represent IFATCA.
- 1.3. After initial email contact, an online meeting was organised between a representative of the transport sector of the ILO, EVPP and me as the Swiss representative, to introduce one another and discuss how we can work together.
- 1.4. Following this meeting, the ILO transport specialist and the Head of the Transport and Maritime Unit were invited to visit the ATC facilities in Geneva (03.03.2026). This was a great opportunity to introduce them to the ATM environment and its challenges. Likewise, a visit to the ILO offices will take place after the deadline for this report. I hope to be able to conduct an interview the ILO representative.
- 1.5. It is hoped that, through coordination within the IFATCA professional leadership team, subjects can be discussed directly with the ILO. These could range from individual MA concerns to broader professional topics. This framework remains to be defined.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1. The ILO is part of the United Nations and was founded in 1919 to promote decent and productive work with freedom, equity, security and dignity. It serves as a

partnership of governments, employers and workers, shaping labour standards and policies with an equal voice.

- 2.2. Their work encompasses all aspects of labour markets and regulation around the world, from agricultural worker's rights in India to fishery worker's labour conditions in Peru. Industries such as civil aviation have representation in a much larger, 'transport' sector. They promote training (Global Social Partners Academy), social justice and cooperation via social dialogue. Developing 'International Labour Standards' is also a major part of their work. These standards are made up of conventions and protocols which are legally binding and recommendations which are not.
- 2.3. The executive body of the ILO is the secretariat, and it meets three times a year. Its key responsibilities are to make decisions on ILO policy, set the agenda for the international labour conference, adopt a draft work programme and budget and elects the Director General who holds the position for a five-year term (currently Gilbert F. Houngbo, Togo.).
- 2.4. The international labour conference is held annually in Geneva and is also known as the 'international parliament of labour'. It sets the ILO standards and serves as a forum for discussion on key social and labour issues.
- 2.5. The standards are created through a legislative process that includes governments, employers and workers worldwide. They are intended to reflect basic principles and rights at work. The meetings are held several times a year also in Geneva. They tend to focus on emerging issues, trends and challenges in specific sectors.
- 2.6. IFATCA does not have a permanent position within the ILO as it is a professional organisation and not an international trade union body. It relies, however, on its relationship with the International Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) to participate in transport sectoral meetings. It does, nevertheless, have the possibility to develop communication channels with the aviation sector.
- 2.7. From our perspective, a relationship with the ILO will help promote IFATCA's professional policies at a very high level. We could imagine that headline policies such as 'Just Culture', CISM, fatigue and training standards be amongst those topics discussed with the ILO that could benefit all air traffic controllers globally, not just those that are members of IFATCA.
- 2.8. Topics that the ILO endorse actively include:
 - Violence and harassment at work ([Convention 190](#)).
 - *"The term "violence and harassment" in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment."...ILO convention 190*
 - ILO fundamental principles and rights at work ([link](#))

- freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
- the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour
- the effective abolition of child labour
- the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation
- a safe and healthy working environment

2.9. In November 2021, the ILO and ICAO signed a cooperative agreement ([link](#)). This provides us with a unique opportunity to connect the work between the two agencies and our own Federation's interests. Subjects that the ILO wish to discuss with ICAO include, women in aviation, the future of decent and sustainable work , data collection on staff numbers and the ILO review on recruitment and retention of staff.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1. Topics highlighted by individual IFATCA MAs when ratified by the EVPP and broader professional topics identified by the professional leadership team could be amongst the points that we bring to the ILO. The ILO could also provide considerable weight and information to the Federation and MAs in return.

3.2. It is hoped that we can, over the next years, strengthen dialogue with the ILO and the ITF, be invited by them to contribute to the ILO aviation sector meetings to promote a better working environment, especially for those ATCOs that do not yet enjoy the essential things that others take for granted.