

Presented by the Speak English Programme (SEP)

### SUMMARY

The Speak English Programme (SEP) offers participants the opportunity to engage, talk and think in English, so that their use of the language, outside of operational phraseology, can be improved.

This report covers the activities of the Speak English Programme (SEP) from the Conference in Abu Dhabi (2025) until the Conference in Romania (2026).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Speak English Programme (SEP) has seen another steady year of activity. The forum is a fantastic platform for conversation in the English language which allows L2 English speakers to practice listening and speaking English. It also provides an opportunity for both native speakers and second language speakers to develop wonderful friendships with fellow ATCOs and also pilots around the world.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1. History of the IFATCA Speak English Program

2.1.1. Established in 2019 in the Asia Pacific Region and was highly effective in keeping Aviation Professionals connected during the pandemic years.

2.1.2. Initially the opportunity to participate was limited to Controllers but was also opened to Airline Pilots Associations.

2.1.3 Soon afterwards, the program was opened to other IFATCA regions to participate.

2.2. The past year has seen many new nations join the programme.

2.2.1 We have seen an influx of nations from the Africa and Middle East region including Angola, Senegal, Sao Tome and Nigeria. Mozambique is hoping to join soon also.

2.2.2 We have had some issues with participants joining who have no MA point of contact so if anyone can volunteer for these nations the Secretariat would be very grateful as this role is really important to the smooth running of the programme. Thanks to Imene Ayedi (Tunisia) and Kwamena Halm (Ghana) for helping to encourage these nations into the SEP.

2.2.3 We have also had a few sporadic joining countries from other regions, e.g. Turkey and Panama.

2.3 Through the year we have been pleased to welcome 6 new facilitators into SEP.

2.3.1 Thank you very much to Wilfried from Germany, Kirsteen from Eurocontrol, Patricia from Portugal, Gale from St Lucia, Daniel from Ghana, Keisha from Bahamas and Sofia from Sweden. Your time and commitment are very greatly appreciated.

2.4 Under EVPP Trish Gilbert, who is a facilitator and member of the Secretariat, SEP has been recognised more formally as a programme which forms a vital part of global communication within the IFATCA family.

2.4.1 As such, new terms of reference have been agreed, and the programme is now represented within the Professional Leadership Group.

2.4.2 David Johnson (UK) and Aaron Mills (USA) share the responsibility as lead of the programme.

2.5 65 Facilitators are currently enrolled in the programme and able to provide sessions.

2.5.1 We ask that Facilitators provide at least one session per quarter and this results in an average of around 25-30 active facilitators per month, from up to 35 different countries.

2.5.2 Over the last few months, the number of participant session requests have been steadily increasing. In February just over 150 sessions were requested by participants (with reserve second options making this almost double). As a result, as often happens, additional sessions had to be requested from facilitators; as always they accommodate these requests with aplomb.

2.6 The Secretariat has remained strong with Aaron joining during the year. We are a little light in the APAC region while both Cheryl and Nainaa are busy with other duties, but we are generally coping well. Mehdi in Iran has also had difficulty with the political situation in the country but has worked hard to try to produce a digital method of session matching which is still under consideration by the Secretariat.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1. The Speak English Programme continues to demonstrate its value as a meaningful initiative within the global IFATCA community. Over the past year, the programme has grown steadily, welcoming new participating nations, expanding its facilitator base, and strengthening its organisational framework. This continued development highlights the strong interest among aviation professionals in improving communication and building international connections.

3.2 The programme not only provides an accessible and supportive environment for practicing listening and speaking English, but also fosters collaboration and friendship between air traffic controllers and pilots from many regions of the world. The dedication of facilitators, Secretariat members, and volunteers remains essential to the programme's success, and their contributions are greatly appreciated

3.3 If anyone is interested in getting involved in the programme, please see the website where resources are available or email [sep@ifatca.org](mailto:sep@ifatca.org).

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. This report is accepted as information.

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