

Report of the Executive Vice President Technical

Presented by Benjamin van der Sanden, VNLG

SUMMARY

This report covers the activities of EVPT since the 63rd conference in Singapore.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. At the end of this conference, I will have completed my first 2-year term as EVPT. It has been challenging, more work than I could have anticipated, but also a pleasure and a privilege. I chose to nominate for a renewed term and am hopeful that conference will accept my candidacy and confirm my tenure for the next two years.
- 1.2. The current trends in the industry towards greater digitalisation, the push to make the ATC workforce more flexible and ATM concepts based on unproven backbones and frameworks throw up challenges that the Federation must continue to monitor closely.
- 1.3. This report will cover my activities over the last year, since the conference in Singapore in April 2024.

2. DISCUSSION**2.1. Technical and Operations Committee (TOC)**

2.1.1 The TOC working programme this year consisted of:

- ADME 2.6 Policy Review
- ATS 3.8 Radar Monitoring
- Pressure Setting Monitoring (renamed from Baro VNAV approaches)
- Communication Failure Policy Review
- Deactivation of Safety Nets Policy Review (combined with PLC)
- ATS 3.20 Environmental Issues in ATM Policy Review (combined with PLC)
- GNSS Radio Frequency Interference (RFI)
- Interval Management

- Low Capacity and Other Restricted Endorsement Concepts (combined with PLC)
- Remote Tower Provisional Policy Review (in conjunction with the Remote Tower Task Force)
- Sustainable Ground Movement
- System Based License Policy Review (combined with PLC)
- Trajectory Based Operations (TBO)
- ATM Systems Interoperability (combined with PLC)

A busy working programme, which pushed the committee to deliver a lot of content in what is always a limited amount of time, being volunteers. Unfortunately the paper on the policy review ATS 3.8 Radar Monitoring could not be delivered due to unforeseen circumstances.

2.1.2 TOC consisted of 9 elected member associations this cycle: Canada (Fred Cosgrove), EGATS (Jaakko Rissanen), Germany (Frank Sasse), Ghana (Benjamin Assare-Mokwah), Hong Kong (Alex Leung), Italy (Mauro Barduani), Philippines (Renz Bulseco), Singapore (Jeyapala Machap) and USA (Betsy Beaumont). These 9 representatives of elected MAs were supported by IFATCA representatives to ICAO Panels (Rick Taylor, Lim de Wei, Ignacio Baca, Oliviero Barsanti and Eugenio Diotalevi), as well as corresponding members from Angola, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Mexico, Romania and Senegal . We also welcomed the new ICAO ANC Representative, David Perks, to our meetings. His experience as former PLC Chair proved invaluable in producing the best work possible for the consideration of the Directors.

2.1.3 TOC's first meeting of the 24-25 cycle took place in Madrid, Spain in September. This was planned so that our meeting would coincide with that of IFALPA's ATS committee. Our joint sessions provided the opportunity to really dig into issues that affected both communities. In particular, our papers on GNSS RFI, TBO and Sustainable Ground Movement profited from the input of our sister organisation's representatives. It was agreed that there should be more efforts made to facilitate a joint meeting of IFATCA and IFALPA representatives, as the discussions were found to be very productive and informative.

The meeting also resulted in a joint statement on the issue of GNSS RFI, which cemented our strong position on this issue. As has been mentioned before, our partnership with IFALPA should be considered as one of our most important strategic alliances. I will endeavour to maintain this strong link between our Federations. It is at this point that I want to take the opportunity to thank Kolja Bollhorst, IFALPA representative to TOC, for his contributions to our discussions. Without his input, our work would be far less valuable.

Thanks go to Kimmo Koivula, IFATCA representative to the IFALPA ATS, Ignacio Baca, Ignacio's MA USCA and our industry partners Indra for helping to facilitate this successful meeting.

- 2.1.4 TOC's second meeting took place in Mexico City, jointly with PLC. Meeting space was secured there from both the ICAO regional office, and our host MA, COCTAM. We were joined by representatives from IFALPA again as well, providing valuable insights from the pilot's perspective. The second meeting was used to provide final direction on the course the papers were taking. As always, a lot of work was put in by those who volunteer to work for the betterment of our profession through their member associations and this resulted in the papers TOC submitted for the Directors' consideration.
- 2.1.5 TOC conducted its meetings within the budget set by the Directors at conference in Singapore. My prediction that it would be hard to keep costs low has proven to be false in the face of excellent recruitment of sponsorship and searching for value for money in accommodation and meals by TOC Chair Jaymi Steinberg. My recommendation to Directors remains to keep the budget level, anticipating price rises. Both Madrid and Mexico City were relatively cheap destinations. Destinations for the next cycle are not yet set, but we must keep enough room in the budget to allow for slightly higher hotel and food costs.
- 2.1.6 Collaboration with the Task Forces under the Tech umbrella was less pronounced this year, as there were no topics on the TOC working programme that required the input of the RPAS TF. Coordination with the Remote Tower Task Force continued to a significant degree though, as they provided feedback on the policy review on Digital Towers.
- 2.1.7 My thanks go to Jaymi Steinberg, whose endless dedication and work-ethic are inspiring. As mentioned above, her ability to recruit sponsorship from industry partners and our other friends, allow TOC to conduct its business at a relatively low cost to the Federation. This, combined with the quality of the work, moves me to express my sincerest gratitude to her for her work.
- 2.1.8 Thanks also go to our ICAO panel representatives, some of whom attended physically, but all of whom provided crucial feedback to the committee's work.

2.2 Task Forces

2.2.1 Remote Tower Task Force (RTTF)

2.2.1.1 The Remote Tower Task Force has continued to meet regularly, both physically and online. RTTF is chaired by Katariina Syväys of Finland. It undertook two main tasks this year. It aided TOC in its review of the Digital Tower policy and in conjunction it is undertaking a rewrite of the Guidance Material. The current Guidance Material published on the IFATCA website is slightly outdated and does not consider all the facets of the current situation around the developments in digital towers.

2.2.1.2 In order to make good progress on the drafting of this guidance material, aside from coordinating online, the RTTF met in January in Brussels. I also attended in person, and some of those who were unable to travel joined virtually to contribute to the work.

2.2.1.3 The RTTF has pivoted to a slightly more constructive tone in its communications and policy statements regarding iterations of digital tower operations. The IFATCA position remains highly critical of conceptualisations of digital towers that involve multiple remote, sequential remote and other concepts with fundamentally change the way aerodrome controllers have to execute their duties.

2.2.1.4 Representation to the RTTF remains mostly an affair of MAs in the EUR region. My hope remains that we can find more representation from outside this region.

2.2.1.5 To reflect the changing terminology in this domain, it is proposed that the RTTF is renamed to Digital Aerodrome Air Traffic Services Task Force or DATS TF. Directors will note that one of the A's is missing from the DATS acronym. This is in line with ICAO terminology, and Katariina and I decided to stay aligned with this choice.

2.2.1.6 My thanks go to Katariina Syväys for her work in chairing the Task Force and her work in representing IFATCA at various levels regarding this topic. Thanks also to Marc Baumgartner, who despite not being an aerodrome controller, has shown great dedication and willingness to defend the interests of tower controllers everywhere.

2.2.2 RPA Task Force (RPA TF)

2.2.2.1 While there is still a lot of movement within the domain of RPAS, the chair of the Task Force Eugenio Diotalevi and I agreed that there are currently no specific tasks for the Task Force to undertake. Eugenio is the IFATCA representative to the ICAO RPAS panel and remains involved at other levels to monitor developments within the RPAS domain.

2.2.2.2 Activities related to UAS, AAM and UTM are still the main driver for research and innovation in this field. While the work of IFATCA regarding RPAS is far from done, for this year it was decided that a discrete budget for the RPAS TF is not required. The money reserved for the RPAS TF has been moved into the Tech General category, which means that the money can be more flexibly allocated.

If any activities for the RPAS TF emerge, which is very possible due to the dynamic nature of the subject matter, the money will be available through this line, and there is also the option to fund certain activities via SESAR, if applicable. The RPAS TF remains ready to perform tasks if requested by the Directors, MAs, standing committees etc.

2.2.2.3 Thanks go to Eugenio Diotalevi for his tireless efforts to support the Federation and to his MA, ANACNA for supporting him and others in aiding our work.

2.3 **Developments for the Future**

- 2.3.1 The review of the role of TPSec in the IAM has been delayed, to await the presentation of the results of the 2030+ Task Force. I hope that we will make serious inroads next year, as there are gaps in the workflow that could potentially be filled with a new definition of the duties and responsibilities of the person in that position.
- 2.3.2 IFATCA has been invited back to Fly AI in April hosted by Eurocontrol in Brussels. We were given the opportunity to moderate a panel on the societal and human aspects of incorporating AI into aviation. This will be a great chance to bring our concerns about this issue into the discussion in a room where a lot of industry representatives from Europe will be present.
- 2.3.3 While the visit of the EB to Airspace World in Geneva last year was useful, I do not intend to visit this year, due to time constraints. A delegation from the EB will be there to nurture relationships with existing and potential industry partners.
- 2.3.4 The Tech Talks have been on a hiatus. It is my intention to canvas for interesting topics over the summer and resume the Tech Talks in one form or another in the latter part of 2025.

Other important mentions

- 2.4 I was honoured to be invited to attend the EUR regional meeting in Skopje, North Macedonia, where I was able to meet many representatives from our MAs in the region. The organisation of the meeting was of a very high level and many educational reports and presentations were made. I was given the opportunity to present the working programme of TOC and the Task Forces in detail and it was good to be able to answer questions from our MAs directly.
- 2.5 I'd like to thank my MA, VNLG, for their continued support of me on the IFATCA Executive Board. They have graciously agreed to underwrite my re-nomination for the role of EVP Tech.
- 2.6 Thanks go as well to my employer, LVNL, for being as flexible as possible with their accommodation of my travel for this role. Thanks also to my colleagues who pick up the shifts I am unable to work due to spending time on the Federation's work.
- 2.7 Thanks to my colleagues on the EB, who after two years of working together and seeing a lot of, I am happy to also call my friends. It is a pleasure to be part of a constructive and effective team that endeavours to lift each other up.
- 2.8 Thanks to my family and my partner Caitriona, without whom I could not have done any of this.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1. This report comes at the conclusion of my first 2-year term as EVP Technical. It has been a lot of work, but I am privileged to have done it and it has been a pleasure.
- 3.2. TOC has performed admirably, within the constraints of the budget, and has delivered almost all the items on the working programme. Unforeseen circumstances prevented one policy review from being completed.
- 3.3. The Technical Task Forces remain active and will continue their activities. Due to a lack of specific tasks for the RPAS Task Force, the money reserved in that budget has been flexibly reallocated but remains available should it be necessary.
- 3.4. The Technical budget was sufficient this year, and it is proposed to keep it at the same level for the next year. Price rises continue and the budget last year afforded some wiggle room, which at some point we will need to continue delivering work for the Federation.
- 3.5. Thanks to my MA, employer, the EB and my family.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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