



IFATSEA - Press Release

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"THE MISSING LINK IN AVIATION SAFETY"

Today, the international organization representing Air Traffic Safety Electronics Associations (IFATSEA) respond to the final reports of the tragic air accidents at Ueberlingen (mid-air collision 1 July 2002) and Linate airport (runway incursion 8 Oct 2001) by calling for world-wide licensing for Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEP); and for a harmonised system of Certification for air traffic management systems across the world.

The final investigation reports are now published: Ueberlingen released 19 May 2004 and Linate released 20 January 2004. IFATSEA pointed out that Safety always covers 3 elements of the ATM system, namely People, Procedures and Equipment. The final investigation reports of both accidents point to the lack of investment in technical tools developed for the enhancement of Safety and for the assistance of ATCOs. Ground Radar for Linate, and Radar Short Term Conflict detection (STCA) (S-Surveillance) in both cases were unavailable due to maintenance and other reasons. To add to them Ground Communication lines between Germany and Switzerland were also unavailable (C-Communication).

Yet the Communication Navigation and Surveillance – CNS, enablers for ATM (CNS/ATM for ICAO or ATM/CNS for Eurocontrol) take up only a few lines in the above-mentioned Incident and Accident Reporting schemes. If viewed together with the Guam accident in 1997 where ILS (Navigation) contribution was identified, it is evident that Communication Navigation and Surveillance - (CNS) have acted – by being unavailable - as Accident contributory factors.

IFATSEA has voiced its concern of the implications of increased Automation without any Certification or standards on Safety. No significant emphasis is placed upon on ATSEP licensing (the People element) and the drawbacks of cutbacks or outsourcing in maintenance of safety critical systems.

In April 2000 in Brussels, IFATSEA underlined “that technical staff (ATSEP) installing, maintaining and supervising Air Traffic Management / Communications Navigation and Surveillance systems perform safety critical tasks which if not attended properly can lead directly or indirectly to accidents”.

In October 2001 in Bratislava in its press release after the accident in Linate, Italy, IFATSEA stated “Although we realise the difficulties Air Navigation Service Providers and Regulators are facing (due to 11/09), there can be no financial cutbacks that put the travelling public at risk” “No compromise on safety.”

In July 2002 after the mid-air collision in Ueberlingen, IFATSEA in a communication outlined again that evidence of Technical Contributory factors in the accident requested a focus on systems (availability and outsourcing to non-safety sensitive, on profit basis vendors) and the professionals (ATSEP) who attend them. In order to enhance aviation safety need for a licensing scheme for ATSEP was more obvious than ever.

Realizing the importance and in order to speed up the process of harmonization and strict regulation of Technical Personnel involved in Safety critical Tasks through a Licensing scheme and the Certification of Ground systems while being the last unregulated link in the Safety chain proceeded since 2000 to the following steps.

At its general assembly in Montreal, (Oct 2000) IFATSEA presented a draft amendment of ICAO Annex 1 Chapter 4 for ATSEP. As there was no common training guidelines available, ICAO HQ recommended that initially a training manual would be prepared jointly with ICAO. This task was finalised by an IFATSEA/ICAO/Eurocontrol common working group in October 2003. The Training Manual was officially handed over to ICAO at the IFATSEA General assembly in Zagreb (2003) and will soon be publicly released by ICAO.

In Europe, ESARR5 Ver 2.0, is still awaiting incorporation in European SES legislation (currently dealing only with ATCO Licensing) and should be expanded, augmented and coordinated with a CNS/ATM Certification scheme for the present and future systems as minimum safety and quality enabler.

It must not be forgotten that ATM doesn't exist yet and the enabler is the overlooked, possibly with grave consequences, ground systems contribution. We are only to wait for more reliance on Technology, digital communications instead of voice, delegation of responsibility pilots, Cooperative ATM and Airborne Safe Separation Assurance (ASAS) equipage, satellite utilization for Navigation (GNSS), the list never ends.

Is the aviation community in the era of the Single European Sky, the implementation of multinational Upper Area Control Centres (eg CEATS) and in view of the above accident findings, with ever increasing demand for capacity (5% annually) accept that selectively no Licensing only for ATSEP and no Certification only for CNS Safety critical systems will exist/prevail? .

Pilots, Air Traffic Controllers (ATCO), Aircraft engineers, and Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEP) strive for optimum safety in aviation. And yet the missing link in aviation safety remains: - **There is still no licensing regulation of ATSEP, nor Harmonized Certification scheme for CNS/ATM systems.** Both are important requirements for the aviation safety chain.

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