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February 2026

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Colleagues and Friends.

I was reading an article recently which contained an observation I found quite interesting. The author, a travel writer, was saying that there was something about travelling in a long, metal tube at 37,000 feet above the ground that's conducive to reflection.

Perhaps it's the melancholy of leaving family and friends; maybe the excitement and anticipation of new experiences; or even fear of the unknown.

So as I sit here in seat 40F, en-route from Brisbane to Los Angeles, the first of three legs that will end with a two-month stay in Montreal for the ICAO Air Navigation Commission (ANC), it is a good time to reflect on a few things.

The Executive Board held its first meeting of 2026 in Singapore from the 11th to the 14th of February where, amongst other things, we formally welcomed the incoming EVP Europe, Benjamin Fichtner. Many of you already know Benny and will agree with me that he's going to make a wonderful contribution to IFATCA.



Of course, that also means that Frédéric Deleau, will be stepping down. I've known Frédéric for the best part of ten years now, but it's only over the last couple of years that I've truly come to appreciate what a fearless and tireless advocate Fred is for his European colleagues, and IFATCA generally. We'll miss your passion mate.

This being the last EB meeting before conference in Bucharest, extensive discussions were held regarding the preparations. The survey so many of you responded to at last year's conference was invaluable and will inform significant changes to the format of this year's conference. Stand by for more information!

The Professional and Legal Committee (PLC) and the Technical and Operations Committee (TOC) also held a joint meeting in Manila, The Philippines in January. Once again, the breadth of topics being considered by these committees continues to impress including papers on Ambient Room Recordings, ATFM and Autonomous Aircraft Functions. Of particular interest to me, and I'm sure to a number of you, will be a paper on ATCOs working in Conflict Zones. This has a very real impact on a significant number of our MAs and we will all benefit from more information on the applicable international law.

Finally, as I mentioned above, I'm currently en-route to Montreal for first of three two-month sessions of the Air Navigation Commission in 2026. It has been a busy time in the Commission with several significant amendments being proposed to Annex 11 and Doc 4444 (PANS-ATM) on Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) and Cold Temperature Correction. IFATCA representatives have been at the forefront of these changes and we will continue to influence their development through the State Letter process and final review stages in the Commission.

Until next time, take care everybody.

David Perks
IFATCA ICAO LO

TOC/PLC



IFATCA Technical & Operational Committee (TOC) and Professional/Legal Committee (PLC) had their in person meeting in the Philippines to finalise the working papers for the annual conference.

The first day of the TOC meeting set the tone for a productive week, with focused discussions on overhauling the ATS section of the TPM, exploring uncontrolled airspace airports, continuing the review of ADME 2.6, and examining high altitude operations. The PLC meeting dove into some truly important topics: accident and incident investigation guidance material, simulator and operational duties, outsourced initial training, and CO₂ and non-CO₂ trajectory optimisation.

Joint PLC/TOC combined for excellent joint papers on Use of Recorded Data: ambient workplace recording (AWR), ATM Considerations for Aircraft Autonomous Emergency Systems, GNSS Spoofing and Jamming and a review of ATFM policy. Following the separate meetings of the TOC and PLC, committee members were given the opportunity to visit the Philippine Air Traffic Management Center (ATMC) at the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP). The delegation was warmly welcomed by CAAP Director General Raul del Rosario, Deputy Director General for Operations Rozzano Briguez, and the Air Traffic Services team. led by Marlene Singson, joined by Jessica Jamero, Anna Joy Papag, Joselito Mamuad, and Mary Grace Dalumpines.

Local controllers from the Philippines Air Traffic Controllers Association (PATCA) took time to answer questions from the group which helped to foster understanding of other ATCO's experiences. The group also had the chance to observe, from the catwalk above, how the controllers there work . A big thank you to PATCA for hosting and organizing such a fantastic meeting! 🙌🌟



IFATCA Professional and Legal Committee (PLC)



IFATCA EB In Singapore



IFATCA's Executive Board met in Singapore from the 11th to the 14th of February.

The Board meets in person twice each year, in addition to holding bi-monthly virtual meetings, to oversee the Federation's day-to-day activities and to plan major events, including the upcoming Annual Conference as well as various seminars and symposiums attended by IFATCA.

This meeting focused primarily on preparations for the Annual Conference, which will take place in Bucharest, Romania, from 20–24 April.

Our sincere thanks go to Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and the Singapore Member Association for their generous hospitality.

Look out for a full report in the March edition.

New Training Task Force (TTF)



**CHAIR OF TRAINING
TASK FORCE**

RENZ BULSECO
PATCA - Philippines

IFATCA

Renz Bulseco is a rated tower, non-radar, and radar surveillance approach controller based in Manila, Philippines. He has been with the service since 2013. He serves as the Chair of the Public Relations (PR) Committee for the Philippine Air Traffic Controllers' Association (PATCA). In operations, he acts as the facility's Lead Safety Officer, Shift Supervisor, and trainer for the surveillance approach.

He is also active with some of IFATCA's (International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Association) committees. He is one of the communications coordinators for the Asia Pacific Region, managing social media accounts, monthly circulars, and The Controller magazine of IFATCA. He also a facilitator in the Speak English Program (SEP). Currently, he is one of the Elected Members of the Technical & Operational Committee (TOC), the Regional Training Chair of Asia Pacific Region, and the newly appointed Chair of the Training Task Force.

He aims to leverage his leadership skills to open new horizons for air traffic control, incorporating the latest technologies, innovations, and safety practices. This will empower all generations of air traffic controllers to adapt to the ever-changing demands of the profession.

He has a dog named Ragnar that he loves very much.

65th Annual IFATCA Conference Bucharest, Romania



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The smartphone screen displays the website <https://ifatca.org/ifatca2026/>. The page features the IFATCA 65th Annual Conference 2026 logo and navigation links for Committee A, Committee B, Committee C, Agenda, Schedule, and Documents, each with a 'View Q' button.

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Welcome New IP NACO



We are excited to welcome NACO Airport Consultants as one of the newest IFATCA industry partners.

With over 75 years of experience in airport planning and development worldwide, NACO brings a rich legacy of shaping the future of aviation.

We see this partnership as an opportunity to strengthen the connection between the many facets of the aviation industry, across airports, airspace, and our fellow IFATCA members. [NACO International Aviation Consultancy](#)

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**IFATCA @ ICAO
Africa**

**ICAO APAC &
EUR/NAT CMAC/FUA
Workshop in Bangkok**



Addressing ATCO Shortage in the AFI Region – A Strategic Imperative

At the First Meeting of the Africa–Indian Ocean ASP Group (AASPG/1), IFATCA highlighted the growing shortage of Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) across the AFI region.

Key challenges identified include:

- Demographic shifts and retirements
- Limited training capacity and ageing infrastructure
- Brain drain and high attrition rates
- Restrictive entry requirements and low public awareness

With forecasts indicating the need for over 2,000 additional ATCOs within the next decade, IFATCA called for a coordinated, data-driven and sustainable workforce strategy focused on:

- ✓ Recruitment and public awareness
 - ✓ Modernised and harmonised training frameworks
 - ✓ Retention through fair conditions, wellbeing and career progression
 - ✓ Regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing platforms
- A resilient ATM system begins with investing in people. The time to act is now!



The workshop brought together regulators, military personnel, ANSPs, and international organizations to discuss civil–military coordination, flexible use of airspace, and practical implementation aspects. IFATCA was represented by Umi Muthiah Syahirah (Indonesia)



It was also a valuable opportunity to engage with fellow international organizations present, including Jeppesen (represented by John Vince), IATA (Arthur Wong), and ICCAIA (Chuck Taylor), which further strengthened the collaborative dialogue between industry and operational stakeholders.

The discussions were very constructive, and brought back several key takeaways and recommendations that will be useful for IFATCA’s ongoing work in this area.

ICAO Mental Health Working Group Meeting

On February 12, the IFATCA Mental Wellbeing Task Force participated in the ICAO Mental Health Working Group Meeting, presenting: "ATCO Healthcare Avoidance: A Safety and Wellbeing Challenge."

The presentation was delivered by Task Force Chair Marija Savikj (North Macedonia) and Marco Méndez (Mexico). They shared the results of the 2025 study initiated during the IFATCA Annual Conference in Abu Dhabi.

The presentation highlighted a critical issue within our profession: healthcare avoidance among air traffic controllers and its direct implications for both operational safety and individual wellbeing.

A key message from the discussion was the urgent need to implement trustworthy, properly structured Peer Support and CISM Programs; not as a regulatory formality, but as meaningful, accessible, and confidential systems that controllers can genuinely rely on.

Breaking the stigma surrounding mental health remains essential. No ATCO should feel compelled to face psychological challenges alone. Seeking professional support is not a weakness; it is a responsible step toward safeguarding both personal health and aviation safety.



IFATCA Spotlight Podcast

The **IFATCA Spotlight** Podcast is made by ATCOs for ATCOs and provides insight into different challenges and solutions ATCOS face worldwide.

In the latest episode of IFATCA Spotlight, host Thorsten Raue engages with Ryunosuke and Hana, representatives from the Japanese Federation of Air Traffic Controllers (JFATC).

They discuss the unique aspects of air traffic control (ATC) in Japan, including rigorous training, challenges in managing both civil and military air traffic, and cultural nuances that shape the work environment. Ryunosuke shares his journey into ATC, inspired by a Japanese TV drama, while Hana recounts her high school encounter with an ATC that sparked her interest in the field. The conversation also touches on the JFATC's role in promoting the profession and the importance of mental health support for controllers through peer programs.



Check out all episodes via podcast.ifatca.org or in your favourite podcast app.

THE CONTROLLER

Journal of Air Traffic Control

-=>The Controller Archive <=-

The Controller magazine's archive is now available on the IFATCA website. The archive contains all issues from the past six decades. In addition, we have started working on a searchable index of all articles ever published. As you can imagine, this is a massive task: the index currently holds just over 3,000 entries. Clicking on the page number takes you directly to the article. For the moment, the index can be found [here](#). There is no link yet in the website menus as we are still tweaking this feature. Some information (e.g. on who authored an article) is also missing at the moment.

Feedback, including any mistakes or missing articles, is welcome via webmaster@ifatca.org.

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