



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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PRESS RELEASE

20 October - International Day of the Air Traffic Controller

50 years IFATCA – One Sky – One Voice since 1961

Today the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) celebrates the International Day of the Air Traffic Controller and 50 years of existence since its beginnings in 1961. IFATCA was founded through an abiding passion for air traffic control and flight safety when passenger transport began to play a prominent role in aviation. This spirit more than ever before exists in the hearts and minds of all air traffic controllers. The response to the idea of a federation was immediate and universal. From its founding on 20 October 1961 IFATCA has grown to 137 member associations representing more than 50,000 air traffic controllers worldwide.

Aviation, as the backbone of society, has become an integral part of many people's lives but the profession of air traffic control is often still unknown, misunderstood, underestimated or unfairly linked with the consequences of accidents, delays and industrial actions resulting in mostly negative press and a wrong perception in the public. Seldom enough do the air traffic controllers receive the deserved attention for the many flight safely handled, for the thousands of passengers expeditiously guided through busy skies and the challenges we live with in times of increased economic and social pressure.

For decades our profession has developed from pen and paper (still used in many places) to highly automated complex electronic networks. This evolution would not have been possible without the structured, motivated and continuous input of the professionals we are.

When we celebrate 20th of October this year, we reach out to our colleagues, to the individual air traffic controller who strives minute-by-minute to provide the best service to bring you safely and efficiently to your destination - all too often under circumstances which are far from ideal. Working conditions and work environment, training and remuneration, equipment and automation need to reflect the complexity of the profession and assist the air traffic controller in their challenging task.

Despite an increasingly critical media exposure, often fuelled by wrong economical interpretations, air traffic controllers worldwide hold on to the highest aims of our Federation, Safety & Efficiency!

Today we recognise our efforts, salute our accomplishments, and renew our mission of service through an industry that is at the heart of a global community.

To all air traffic controllers, be proud and celebrate your profession today!

One Sky, One Voice, One Future.

The ATCO day flyer 2011 is available for download from the IFATCA website at www.ifatca.org

- 50 Years of Professional Involvement -

IFATCA has been representing air traffic controllers since 1961, with more than 50.000 members in over 130 countries. Amongst its goals are the promotion of safety, efficiency and regularity in international air navigation and the protection and safeguarding of the interests of the air traffic control profession.

www.ifatca.org