



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS – GUIDANCE FOR MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

The world is once again facing a global economic crisis that is not sparing the aviation industry. Already we have seen a number of airlines cease operations and there has been a significant downturn in traffic numbers in most areas. IFATCA is already working with IATA to promote safe efficiency within the ATM system. This crisis will impact on each and every one of us in a number of ways. It is inevitable that every Member Association will face pressure to “contribute” to the effort of their ANSP to survive the current economic crisis.

Inevitably the same reactions to economic downturns by ANSPs that we have seen in the past will be suggested again in some areas. These have included a curtailment of recruitment and training and a reduction in overall staff numbers. But we are already in a situation of a global shortage of ATCOs and an over reliance on overtime to sustain normal operations. The coming edition of ‘The Controller’ magazine discusses this aspect in some detail.

So what can MAs do in this current situation? The following suggested actions are offered as ways MAs can contribute to, or even lead, the discussions in their countries. Of course, any measures taken need to be adapted to your local requirements and conditions.

- Be bold! Initiate the discussion; don't wait for actions or decisions by your ANSP to be imposed upon you. Ask your management what impact the economic crisis is having on them and what measures they are considering taking at a local and national level.
- Request that your association be included as a partner in these discussions and decisions. Point out that no matter what decisions are taken, it is your members who have to implement them and make them work.
- Work with your ANSP to develop cost containment measures that will not compromise the safety of operations, now or in the future.
- If it is acceptable to your members, negotiate changes to working conditions that have immediate cost savings, such as worked overtime being recompensed by extra leave or time off, or voluntary access to part time or unpaid leave.
- If any wage ‘freeze’ is suggested, ensure the deferred entitlements will be repaid at an agreed and documented future date.
- As always, encourage the development and adoption of efficient procedures to minimise airborne delays, without any compromise to safety.

- Actively suggest measures to ANSPs to safely contain or defer costs. Some examples could be:
 - More efficient training regimes
 - More efficient procedures, especially interface procedures with adjacent ATS units
 - Use the downturn in traffic to accomplish training requirements that have not been deferred in the past, such as refresher or emergency response training, advancement training, or new equipment training, i.e. a productivity increase for no net staff costs
- Suggest the early adoption of new technical equipment that may bring efficiency gains. Also suggest using the downturn to utilise staff on such project work with no net increase in staff costs that may otherwise be required.
- As always, safety is paramount. Analyse any proposed changes and the impact they might have on operations from both a technical and professional aspect, both in the short and long term.
- Any measures which are proposed which change the working procedures or technical environment should be supported by a safety case or assessment.
- Encourage ANSPs to plan for the recovery. Use the traffic downturn as an opportunity to utilise ATCO staff to accomplish the desperately needed “long lead time” ab initio training to help reduce the shortage of ATCOs and plan for the future.

In many cases, the actions that can be taken now may not immediately reduce the ANSP costs, but there is potential to accomplish more within the existing cost base that will significantly reduce future costs. Overreaction and drastic cost reductions will only INCREASE future costs and add to the already critical shortage of ATCOs that currently exists.

If any MA would like assistance in dealing with these matters, please do not hesitate to contact me at evpp@ifatca.org.

Sincerely,



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