

Serious about Safety



I am delighted to be given the opportunity to provide my perspective, as Chief Operating Officer of the Directorate of Network Management of EUROCONTROL, on how we view safety. **Simply put, our position is that we take safety very seriously because it is a cornerstone of our business.**

Joe Sultana is Chief Operating Officer of the Network Management Directorate. He graduated with an Engineering Degree from the University of Malta in 1975 and joined the Air Traffic Services Unit in Malta in the same year. He obtained ATCO Licences in Aerodrome, Radar and Area Control and was a Watch Supervisor for four years. In 1982, he was appointed Head of Air Traffic Services in the Maltese Department of Civil Aviation.

The Network Manager function is a key component of the Single European Sky. But what is the Network? It is the European ATM system working as one coherent function providing a safe and expeditious service to civil and military airspace users across the airspace of the 39 EUROCONTROL Member States. We are living in a world where information flows instantly from one part of the world to the other and where people and organisations are more closely linked, better connected and able to influence each other. Safety has to be addressed at local, European and global level and we have to learn and constantly support each other.

The following questions drive our common safety approach: Is the Network safe? Where are the safety threats in the Network? Where are the safety opportunities? What should be done to keep the Network safe and improve? Who do we tell to make it effective?

Keeping the Network safe is not a task of the Network Manager in isolation. Our role is twofold. On the one hand we support the various Network actors to improve their safety man-

agement. But our work does not stop there. We are also actively and directly involved in operational safety, in the identification and management of operational safety hazards across the Network. Our overview of European ATM operations and good channels of coordination with controllers and pilots give us a unique view of possible risks and safety threats.

I am confident that the Directorate of Network Management of EUROCONTROL can answer these questions and that we are up to the challenges they pose for us on a daily basis. We will leave no stone unturned in our task of constantly improving Network safety. **I believe safety is not a cost but a business done well.** Having a high safety standard for ATM is the best way to be more efficient and effective in managing the higher volumes of traffic. Take the example of adverse weather avoidance. The better we are prepared and the more efficiently we share and adopt good practices for ATCOs and ATC supervisors in situations of weather avoidance, the more we can improve not only safety but also overall local and Network perfor-

mance. The new performance-based ATM world we are now in is a fact of life.

I mention performance only in passing and do not want to dwell on it too much. But safety and performance are things which we deliver every day together: controllers, pilots, ANSPs, aircraft operators, airports and the Network Manager. As a network, we are as strong but also as weak as the component parts. Working together to deliver both is the *raison d'être* of the Network Manager.

HindSight is an important tool for sharing what we in the industry collectively know about safety threats and the ways of managing them. It is primarily aimed at the people on the front end – air traffic controllers – and it is read by thousands worldwide. The content of this issue is a very good example of how we facilitate the collection of the best pieces of information on a subject, carefully balancing different opinions and assembling it in a contemporary form. We are doing this not only to discharge our formal responsibilities but also to do all we can to have peace of mind and soul when we look at the contrails of aircraft in the sky or the steady stream of inbounds at a busy airport.

Take the journey with us, read the articles, think how this relates to your work, discuss things with colleagues and help us spread the knowledge. 