



AEI Annual Congress 2014

I was honored to attend the 42nd annual AEI congress in Le Bourget France. I was accompanied by our own AMFA National Director Louie Key. The Congress was graciously hosted by our friends at SNMSAC, our French affiliate and attended by 14 countries and 16 organizations. Here is a breakdown and synopsis of this year's Congress.

Mr. Ahamed Mohamed AEI Secretary of Europe/Africa (SNMSAC France) opened the meeting by welcoming all of the attendees to France. He then introduced Jean-Luc Jean George, SNMSAC President who gave a brief opening speech. He stated that it is his goal to better the relationship between his organization and DGAC (the French equivalent of the FAA). He then gave a brief history of Le Bourget, stating that it was the first airport in Paris and was built during the 1st World War. He went on to recognize the contributions that AEI has made to air safety having 38 worldwide members in 34 countries, and a lifelong obligation to uphold the Aviation Safety for passengers and crew.

Mr. Robert Alway AEI President (ALAE UK) then gave an opening speech. After exchanging pleasantries, he recognized French contributions to Aviation, recognized French aviation pioneer Guillaume de La Landelle, who is credited with coining the term aviation, then discussed the increasing use of safety statistics and how deceiving they can be. These statistics have been used as political lobbying tools to relax regulatory oversight, and to justify the use of safety, risk, and performance based oversight systems which he compared to the world's financial institutions prior to the global financial crisis. He discussed the need for a robust non-punitive occurrence reporting system to accurately track accidents and incidents. At the end of the day safety in the air is dependent upon qualified Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers performing a quality job on the ground.

Mr. Gilbert Guicheney of DGAC gave a presentation to the congress. He stated that quality and safety are in the hands of the engineers and mechanics performing the aircraft maintenance, and that DGAC supports better regulation through human factors and SMS. He went on to talk about performance and risk based systems stating that with these systems in place authorities should be able to focus on the identified weak points. He cautioned that these systems need to be well thought out to avoid risk. He ended by thanking AEI for the opportunity to speak at the congress and extended a hand of mutual support.

Mr. Yannick Malinge of Airbus gave a presentation on safety from a global perspective. He shared data detailing the development of aviation from its inception, and showing the steady increase in safety, and that now we have 1 major accident per 10 million flights. Interestingly, his data showed that the 3 major causes of accidents over the last 15 years have been loss of control, controlled flight into terrain, runway excursion. He then stated how difficult it is to increase the level of safety beyond what we have achieved. He spoke about a new system which has been incorporated into the A380 called Runway Overrun Prevention System (ROPS). This system computes minimum realistic in-flight landing and on-ground stopping distances in real time. It utilizes data on weather, runway conditions and topography, the aircraft weight, and configuration. He went on to say that the system has already averted 2 potentially disastrous incidents. He ended by stating how important the sharing of information is to increasing the overall level of air safety as we must learn from our experiences.

The Congress began with an introduction of the AEI Executive Board, election of a minutes Secretary, Congress Tellers, the adoption of the minutes for the previous year's congress, and other general organizational business.

Mr. Fred Bruggemen AEI Secretary General (AEI Holland) gave an update of the last year's progress, victories, and setbacks. He opened with the statement that AEI is in a desperate search to find a competent aviation authority. He went on to state "We cannot find a single aviation authority around the world of which AEI and its many members can truthfully say, this one is trustworthy and properly is in control and is powerful and willing enough to counter the industry continuous pressure to remove the license engineer from the aviation maintenance scene and ensure organization to properly comply with the strict aviation regulations", I must concur as it seems regulatory agencies are more concerned about aiding company's in cutting costs than insuring safety.

This was followed by reports from each of the AEI Executive Board Members:

I was asked to speak first as the Secretary Americas. I opened by thanking our host, and then moved on to an update on our status in the US. I gave a brief overview of the 2014 FAA/EASA Conference that I was able to attend on behalf of AEI. I discussed our concerns with the move toward Safety Management Systems (SMS), and our continued efforts to emphasize safety.

Secretary Asia-Pacific, Mr. Paul Cousins from ALAEA then presented to the Congress. He gave an update on issues at Qantas and the current political situation. He mentioned how many of his members pulled together, made individual sacrifices, and were able to retain 70 positions that would have otherwise been eliminated. He went on to discuss changing people's perception of our positions. He ended with a classic Australian saying; "you can teach a monkey to ride a bike, but you can't teach him to put the chain back on."

Secretary Europe-Africa, Mr. Ahmed Mohamed from SNMSAC then presented to the Congress. He gave an update on current issues in Europe, and the continuing battle over freedom of information requests. He went on to thank the many people within his organization that assisted with the logistics related to the Congress. He ended by thanking the many representatives of AEI for their selfless dedication to our industry.

Mr. Musafa Colak Bucan (AEI Treasurer Turkey) presented the financial report. AEI Auditor Mr. Norbert Beuing presented the auditor's report. The 2015 budget was proposed, seconded, and approved. A proposal was made to expand the Executive Board with additional members, this was discussed and approved by the Congress.

Mr. Trevor Woods EASA Flight Standards Director gave a presentation to the congress. He stated that passion is the word that comes to mind when he meets with AEI officers. He explained that recent changes in EASA are aimed at more strategic directions, that the strategy and priorities are now in the hands of a separate division of EASA, and that this is an attempt to solve problems and speed up actions. He then commented on how EASA has reacted to AEI's comments on many issues, and considers the input invaluable. He went on to discuss EASA's move to risk and performance based oversight and expressed concern that we take care when implementing the new systems. He spoke about AEI's efforts to establish better defined responsibilities for B1/B2 engineers. He then answered a number of questions from the congress with topics focusing on AEI's input and concern over changes in safety oversight.

Jon Harris (ALAE UK) commented that the deaths per million flights are good, and that we know the engineering issues, and there is no collation to the graphs in Mr. Woods presentation. He used the analogy that its like viewing an iceberg from above water, there is much more below the surface than above. Mr. Harris continued by stating that we need to focus on the contributed factors to see where possible incidents may occur. Mr. Woods responded that EASA has projects underway to address these issues, that information on the engineering issues is available, and that we need carefully chart the available data to ensure safety levels are maintained.

Ola Blomqvist (SFF Sweden) commented that we are in agreement on the issues that we see, and that he looks forward to the performance based oversight systems. He expressed concerns about some National Aviation Authorities ability to properly implement a statistical based system.

Fred Bruggeman (AEI Holland) commented on the pocket write up issue, and stated that some companies are operating with 98% of their defects being reported on return flights into staffed maintenance stations. Mr. Woods agreed this is a likely indicator, and that he would like to have some follow-up discussions on this issue.

Paul Cousins (ALAEA Australia) commented that it appears EASA is not properly funded for the tasks they have. Mr. Woods responded that they would certainly like more funding, that they have two sources of income, one from industry, and one from EU government.

John Camilleri (AAE Malta) commented on EASA acceptance of online courses for qualification. He expressed concern that the courses don't provide the necessary knowledge, but are being heavily relied upon. Mr. Woods responded that he would like to look into in further.

Oyvind Storm (NHF Norway) stated that the safety statistic shown in the presentation excluded the Helicopter industry where the safety statistics are drastically different.

Thomas Vlasak (NHF Norway) stated that they had met in Stockholm about the NAA cross border policies, and that they have serious problems with foreign operators in Norway. Mr. Woods responded that he is aware of the issues and that in the EU they have to rely on other EU authorities.

Pieter Doyer (AEI Norway) commented that the People working in EASA are passionate about their work but we feel like EASA is a paper tiger. He then asked If EASA became an Authority, would that improve the

standardization? Mr. Woods responded that it would not make much difference, as the Agency already has legal power.

Louis Key (AMFA USA) commented that under the FAA system we have a non-punitive reporting system known as ASAP, that the FAA and the stake holders meet regularly to improve the system. Mr. Woods responded that he foresees more integration in the current system and implementing a similar system in near future. He further commented that this type of system is difficult due to the structure of EASA and the EU but that it's a valuable system.

This concluded our time with Mr. Woods, he thanked the congress for giving him the opportunity to speak and he thanked AEI for their efforts.

Mr. Fred Bruggeman (AEI Holland) gave a presentation on the logbook inspection investigation. He stated that there is overwhelming evidence that pocket write-ups are a serious problem plaguing the industry. He then requested that the investigation continue in order to build a larger database.

Mr. Ola Blomqvist (SFF Sweden) gave a presentation of Performance based oversight, he discussed Safety Performance Indicators (SPI) and how it's proposed they be utilized. There is a great deal of concern over the use of these statistical based systems. This is particularly concerning without the availability of non-punitive reporting systems which greatly limits the number of reports.

Mr. Paul Cousins (ALAEA Australia) gave a presentation on time pressure called The Clock is Ticking, Perception, Reality and Control. This was an inspiring presentation, it clearly laid out the reality of our jobs, that we are engineers and have an inherent desire to get the job done with or without the proper resources whether we have the time or not. The presentation really emphasized our condition and how we need to change the way we look at our day to day activity in order to properly handle the intense responsibility of our jobs.

Mr. Tommy Olsen (NHF Norway) gave a presentation on the AEI approach to Occurrence reporting system and how AEI would like to make the system available to all its members and visitor of the AEI website. Mr. Olsen showed us the system he's been developing. He emphasized that we should use our companies system or national system if at all possible.

Mr. Louis Key (AMFA USA) presented the AMFA National Safety initiative emphasizing compliance, safety reporting, and following the proper process and procedure regardless of time pressures. Safety in the Air starts with quality Maintenance on the ground. Mr. Key spoke about the increased work demand, reduced manpower, and the pressures of today's operational environment. It also emphasized the importance of documenting all work performed from both a compliance perspective as well as to accurately determine the necessary manpower for future operations. The presentation was very well received.

Mr. Olivier Deken (SNMSAC France) Wanted to inform the congress of the SNMSAC view on the process of work done in France. He stated that in order maintain your authorization you need to complete at least 100 sign offs in a given period of time. Many comments were made from the congress floor regarding how different this regulation is applied in each country. Robert Alway commented that AEI is leading efforts to ensure a more uniform application of this regulation and to prevent abuse of this regulation in the event of a work action.

Mr. Tommy Olsen (NHF Norway) gave a presentation on major changes in regulation for offshore Helicopter operation where it has been established that any operation above a certain latitude are now considered to be hostile environments. He then showed a Video of the real North Sea operation which clearly showed why these are clearly hostile environments.

Vangelis Demosthenous (AEI Human Factors Cyprus) gave a video presentative on values within a maintenance department. It emphasized communication, intelligence, compassion, courage, fairness, encouragement, honesty, appreciation, fair pay, mutual respect, positive attitude, pride, responsibility, understanding, safety, integrity, self-respect, good judgment, trust, and tolerance. He then discussed the AEI Code of Professionalism, and stated that the basis of a good work place and good attitude is based on many of those Values. This was an excellent presentation that really summed up the many aspects of human factors and how it affects each of us.

The future of AEI

Mr. Paul Cousins (ALAEA Australia) brought forward a list of important issues that were discussed at the last congress in Melbourne. Some of the items discussed were unlicensed workers (cabin crew), performance based oversight, safety management systems, pocket write-ups, duty limits, additional officer positions, future funding.

Evangelos Demosthenous (AEI Cyprus) gave a report on Human Factors focused on fatigue, duty limitations, and the latest EU occurrence reporting system. The duty limit discussion is currently focused on establishing and enforcing a more uniform regulation. EASA is pushing for scientific research before establishing anything more specific. John Camilleri (AAE Malta) commented on their eleven hours rest period, there was concern that even this rest period could be unacceptable without more specific guidelines. As you can see, there are very different ideas about duty limits and fatigue management. Although these may seem to be opposing concepts, the principles of safety require that we analyze these ideas with an open mind.

Jon Harris (ALAE UK) presented for the AEI Technical Affairs Committee. The report focused on engineer and support staff responsibilities. He warned of the pressure company's apply to simply "rubber stamp" documents and how it's the engineer that will ultimately be responsible. There were several comments and questions regarding the EU system of type certification and the push to the individuals to work on aircraft deemed "similar technology". Mr. Harris warned that this is only supposed to be used a one off exceptions and absolutely not on a regular basis. We mentioned our own ASAP program throughout the congress and were reminded time and again that there is currently no such system in the EU. Several countries within the EU are trying to put a similar system in place, but many have issues with conflicting local laws.

Tord Holen (NFO Norway) Gave a presentation on the results of our efforts with EASA. He stated that there is more attention to the Pilots not reporting discrepancies, one off approval limits are now being better enforced, open standardization findings, EASA audit findings, SAFA inspection findings, B1/B2 licensing, and CAMO 145 responsibilities to name just a few. He ended by stating that we have made positive strides though not as fast as we would like.

Robert Alway (ALAE UK) gave the PR committee report. He reviewed possible updates to the website, discussed press releases, the faq page, AEI promotional film, and the use of social media.

Election of officers

The following positions were up for election:

President, Treasurer, Secretary Americas, Secretary Asia-Pacific region, ATAC chairman, Public Relations, Committee Chairman, Trustee B, and Auditor. Refer to the AEI website

AEI Congress 2015

At the conclusion of the Congress, Louie Key and I were asked to consider hosting next years Congress. It's with great pride that I can now announce that for the first time in AEI's history, the Congress will be held in the United States, and with even more pride I can announce that it will be held in my home town of Seattle WA. USA.

Robert Always, President of AEI (ALAE UK) closed the 2014 Congress with a brief speech asking everyone to be active in occurrence reporting and encouraging the use of AEI's system. He warned of the trend toward performance based oversight stating that it's not a healthy system and is likely to simply hide the truth. He offered an open invitation to AEI's board meetings, and mentioned the contributions of the officers. He ended by extending thanks to our hosts, SNMSAC and our Secretary Europe/Africa Mr. Ahmed Mohamed.

This report is an accurate representation of the business of the AEI Congress. For those who will read it with interest there's good information. For those less patient or disinterested, I hope that you will at least realize the amount of work and dedication that the officers and representatives have put forward on your behalf.

In Solidarity

Timothy Cullen
AEI, Secretary Americas