



Aircraft Engineers International

Engineering excellence to keep them flying safely

To: AMFA Locals and Members
Re: Secretary of the Americas Quarterly Report: Q4 – 2016
Date: November 1, 2016

Dear Members:

October 11-14, 2016, Aircraft Maintenance Technicians/Engineers from around the world gathered to attend the 44th Annual Congress of the Aircraft Engineers International (AEI) in Reykjavik, Iceland. Approximately 40 delegates from four continents, 13 countries, and 14 affiliate organizations attended the Congress to address the business of AEI: amending the AEI Constitution; electing members of the Executive Board; attending plenary sessions on an array of relevant topics and gaining genuine insight into the challenges that we, and our peers, face as we uphold the demanding safety standards required for ensuring the airworthiness of the aircraft we maintain.

Former Secretary of the Americas, Mr. Tim Cullen and I attended the Congress on behalf of AMFA. Mr. Cullen gave a presentation on International Trade Agreements and their potential impact on global labor standards. He also volunteered to serve AEI as an Extended Executive Board member.

The keynote speaker at this year's Congress was Mr. Julian Hall, Head of the Maintenance and Production Department of the Flight Standards Directorate for the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the European equivalent of the United States' FAA. Mr. Hall holds both an EASA Engineer License as well as an FAA A&P License; it is clear he is a strong advocate for our craft and has a passion for aircraft maintenance and safety. Mr. Hall has been instrumental in providing a voice for AEI and guaranteeing a seat at the table for our representatives in EASA regulatory proceedings. Mr. Hall has assured that we have AEI members seated on the various EASA working groups as they contemplate modifications to EASA regulations. EASA, in response to proposals from airlines, has been exploring options in regards to easing the licensing requirements for Technicians/Engineers. If realized this has potential to diminish the requirement for a government issued license and opens the door for a company issued license (similar to an FAA Repairman Certificate). AEI strongly opposes this change as it would undermine safety due to the fact that the Technician would primarily be under employer pressures while performing his job.

Another extremely interesting and gripping presentation came from Mr. Tommy Olsen, Head of Technical Affairs for our Norwegian affiliate, the Norwegian Helicopter Federation (NHF). On April 29, 2016, in perfect conditions, one of the helicopters NHF members maintain suffered a catastrophic failure at altitude while returning from the oil drilling platforms in the North Atlantic Ocean. Two crew members and eleven passengers were lost just minutes from base. Eye witnesses recorded the main rotor separated and spinning away from the aircraft. Early in the investigation Airbus Helicopters made comments implying that the cause was a maintenance failure. Later, after part recovery and analysis, it was clear that the actual cause was metal fatigue failure of the main gearbox planetary gears and had nothing to do with how the aircraft was maintained. This is an extremely unfortunate illustration of just how important it is for our AMFA members to support our Accident/Incident Investigation Teams.

Attendance at the Annual Congress of AEI was once again insightful and an invaluable opportunity for our Association to be part of global airline safety. Remember AMFA's motto: "Safety in the air begins with quality maintenance on the ground."

Sincerely,

Louie Key
AEI Secretary of the Americas
AMFA National Director, 2008-2016