

The AsMA Global Connection Story via Our Annual Scientific Meeting

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Dear readers, members and friends of AsMA,

In this issue of your Journal (as usual in March) you will find the abstracts of our upcoming congress at Las Vegas. The annual meeting is one of our most important activities during the year and is an essential part of our mission as a scientific association! We are pleased to say that from a global perspective our meeting is the biggest event worldwide for our aerospace medicine community, in terms of both the number of presentations and posters and the opportunity for contacts and interactions with colleagues from all over the world! I wanted to highlight this global context in my congress theme “aerospace medicine *sans frontières*,” because we really connect with the world here.



Aerospace Medicine *sans frontières*

Las Vegas will be the host city, and from my contacts I hear that this city incites quite a range of different feelings, and certainly, she IS different from usual cities! What I would say as a European is that one should visit this place at least once in a lifetime, so this is a good occasion. Moreover, from my previous visits I would urge you, especially those coming from far away, to hire a car and discover the surrounding area. You will be overwhelmed by the beauty and variety of nature: the national parks of Death Valley, Zion, Yosemite, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Monument Valley, and the Grand Canyon, just to mention the most famous sites. They are spectacular and I promised myself to visit them again because during one trip it is impossible to capture all this beauty in your mind.

The Rio All Suites Hotel is located on the other side from the highway as the strip, although close to Caesar's Palace and the other hotels. Therefore, one has a magnificent view on the whole strip from the VooDoo lounge on the 51st floor, especially during the evening when helicopters circle over the city like mosquitoes. For the brave ones there is also the VooDoo Zipline flying over the swimming pools from the top of one hotel building to the other... The congress area is refurbished, enormous and happily completely separated from the usual Vegas entertainment. We also chose this hotel because we got a very special financial offer, which will help AsMA to recover the cost of our meeting.

I would like to thank my friend Walt Dalitsch and his team for leading the Scientific Program Committee meeting in Alexandria at the end November and producing an excellent scientific

programme, with speakers from all over the world. In the meantime, I am very happy to announce that I was able to book three important European speakers for the keynote lectures. Jan Wörner, Director General of the European Space Agency, will give the Bauer lecture on “Human Exploration... And its Consequences” just before our special NASA panel about the first Moon landing 50 years ago. This will be a very special space-centric Monday morning! On Tuesday, Prof. Floris Wuyts, who works at the Faculty of Sciences of AUREA (Antwerp University Research institute for Equilibrium and Aerospace – in my town of birth!) will give the Reinartz lecture on “The Impact of Microgravity and Hypergravity on the Human Brain Studied with Advanced MRI Methods.” And on Thursday Adriaan Heerbaart, senior Director of EUROCONTROL, the air traffic management organisation where I work, will give the Armstrong lecture on “Navigating the European Skies: Money Makes the World Fly Safer!”

This issue of the Journal also gives me an opportunity to say a few words about my work at this “European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation”. EUROCONTROL is an inter-governmental organisation with 41 Member and two Comprehensive Agreement States. The EUROCONTROL Convention was signed in 1960 and ratified in 1963. We are committed to building, together with our partners, a Single European Sky that will deliver the air traffic management (ATM) performance required for the twenty-first century and beyond. Over 1,900 highly qualified professionals spread over 4 European countries work at EUROCONTROL, deploying their expertise to address ATM challenges.

Our expertise covers both operational and technical fields, advising on both civil and military aspects of ATM and we have experience in bringing States with different needs together to achieve a common goal:



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- The **Network Manager** has extended the role of the former Central Flow Management Unit and now proactively manages the entire European ATM Network (with nearly 10 million flights every year) in close liaison with the air navigation service providers, airspace users, the military and airports.
- The **Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre** provides an air traffic control service for the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and northern Germany.
- The **Central Route Charges Office** handles the billing, collection, and redistribution of aviation charges.
- We **support the European Commission, EASA, and National Supervisory Authorities** in their **regulatory activities**.
- We are actively involved in **research, development, and validation, and make a substantial contribution to the SESAR** (Single European Sky ATM Research Joint Undertaking). Our aim is to deliver tangible results, which will improve the ATM system's performance in the medium- and long-term.
- We have a unique platform for **civil-military aviation coordination** in Europe.

We currently have four sites: Headquarters, Network Management and Route Charges at Brussels (BE), Maastricht (NL) as an international operational ATC Center, Luxembourg (LUX) for (re)training and e-learning of experienced ATCOs, and Brétigny-Paris as an Experimental Centre (research, simulation exercises for new air traffic control systems).

At each centre there are medical doctors responsible for occupational medicine, aviation medicine for our ATCOs and air traffic management operators, but also for specific social insurance and medical claims issues. Since EUROCONTROL is an intergovernmental organisation, we are separated from all national legislation and social insurance systems, so we manage our own sickness and invalidity cases and staff rights based on our own service regulations. On top of that, we play a role in prevention and first aid, so the medical service I lead has a very broad spectrum of activities.

I hope to see many of you at our great Scientific Meeting at Las Vegas, broadening the global impact of aerospace medicine and human performance with the support of our association, AsMA!
Amicaliter, Roland