



Air Traffic Safety Engineering Professionals Belgium

As a professional organization of Air Traffic Safety Engineering Professionals (ATSEP), ATSEP Belgium is strongly opposed against privatisation and the introduction of competition in the air safety sector.

Privatisation and the introduction of competition will gradually replace the “safety first” rule by a mentality based on making profits.

Airspace users and SES decision makers must be made aware that air safety is also a matter of engineers and technicians responsible for the installation, certification and maintenance of aeronautical safety systems on the ground.

For instance:

- Navigation systems such as Instrument Landing Systems (ILS) guiding aircraft safely to the ground under low visibility conditions.
- Controller assistance tools, such as airport movement systems, multilateration and conflict prediction and detection tools to alert the controller to possible conflicts and mitigating actions (Short Term Conflict Alert).
- Datalink communication, which is a means for ATC to communicate with pilots and aircraft systems using pre-defined messages, reducing the need for voice communication.
- Airborne Separation Assistance Systems which are based on a type of datalink known as ‘Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast’ (ADS-B).

The above examples show the tendency of increasing delegation of responsibility to technical systems. These systems are certified and maintained by ATSEP!

ATSEP should be legally protected by a licensing system as proposed by Belgocontrol, the Belgian Air Navigation Service Provider, to the regulator. Despite the rules laid down in Belgian law, where civil servant is the rule and contractual recruitment is the exception, technical staff are currently only being recruited on a contractual basis in Belgium.

This policy encourages the continuous change of technical employees - which is common in the private sector - but disastrous in a safety sector where experience is crucial.

Once privatisation and outsourcing becomes common practice, the safety of technical systems will only deteriorate.

Safety is a government affair and must be run by government officials!

This conviction is promoted by the MOSAIC project and this is the main reason why ATSEP Belgium joined MOSAIC.

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