



Aircraft Engineers International

Engineering excellence to keep them flying safely

To: AMFA Locals and Members
Re: Secretary of the Americas 2018 AEI Annual Congress Report
Date: October 16, 2018

Dear Members:

Last month the Aircraft Engineers International (AEI) held their 46th Annual Congress in Stockholm, Sweden. Aircraft Maintenance Technicians/Engineers from around the world gathered to address the business of AEI, including: amending the AEI Constitution; electing members of the Executive Board; attending presentations on a variety of topics; and developing strategies for responding to the pressures being pushed onto our craft by air carriers looking to cut costs, government agencies inconsistently enforcing regulations and a growing trend of “atypical employment” in response to a shortage of qualified licensed personnel.

Our host this year was the Swedish Association of Licensed Aircraft Engineers. Approximately 45 delegates from six continents, 18 countries, and 17 affiliate organizations attended. We had two new affiliates join this year, one from India and one from Sri Lanka. Mr. Gene Painter, Assistant National Director, and I attended the Congress on behalf of AMFA. AMFA has been an affiliate organization of AEI for more than 10 years.

We were fortunate this year to have several distinguished guest speakers at the Congress. Notably they were Mr. Ralf Erckman, Head of Maintenance and Production from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is Europe’s FAA; Mr. Gunnar Ljungberg, the Director of Civil Aviation and Maritime Department from the Swedish Transport Agency; and Mr. Dirk Polloczek, President of the European Cockpit Association (ECA). Mr. Erckman and Mr. Ljungberg both presented from the perspective of the Regulator or aviation authority, and they explained their roles in ensuring proper and consistent enforcement of the regulations as EASA transitions to an enhanced and updated approach for continuous monitoring of member states. The new basic regulation changes went into force on September 11, 2018, and their presentations will be posted on the AMFA National website for your review.

Mr. Polloczek, as a commercial pilot and President of the ECA, presented from the perspective of labor and how current regulations have provided an opportunity for airlines to start a dangerous model of “atypical employment,” where an airline can lease aircraft, then hire employees (pilots, flight attendants, technicians, etc) from temporary work agencies or brokers and license their company in a country with very relaxed labor laws and standards under a “flag of convenience,” thus driving down wages, subverting collective bargaining for employees, and creating an atmosphere where each employee is essentially an independent contractor. As you move away from the major network to low-fare carriers, this practice increases significantly. Mr. Polloczek’s presentation will also be posted on our website.

I presented AMFA’s activities and explained how our labor laws helped set the stage for our current situation at Southwest Airlines as well as the merger issues at Alaska Airlines. Our participation is important and a pivotal opportunity for AMFA to be part of the global voice of the Aircraft Maintenance Technician and aviation safety.

Sincerely,

Louie Key
AEI Secretary of the Americas