

CTIF Commission “Rescue and Fire Fighting at Airports” held annual meeting 2023 in Balsthal, Switzerland

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**The CTIF Commission “Rescue and Fire Fighting at Airports” held their annual meeting in Balsthal, Switzerland, 22th – 24th May 2023.**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING**

### **Participants:**

- Manfred Sommerer, Chairman
- Ole J. Hansen, Board member
- Veli-Matti Sääskilahti, Board member
- Florian Monthoux, Board member
- Alvydas Bezykornov
- Andreas Lochmeier
- Antonios Panagiotakis
- Hans Schmid
- Igors Čavkins
- Kostas Papakonstantinou
- Niclas Tongring
- Simo Ekman
- Ulrich Bergkvist
- Valentin Gangur
- Vasileios Stefanioros (online)
- Trond Joranger (online)
- Emilio Belotti (associated member)
- Jörg Winkler (associated member)
- Kim Olsen (associated member)
- Martin Gorski (associated member)
- Philipp Platzl (associated member)

- Sarah Wouterse (associated member)
- Scot Young (associated member)
- Wolfgang Voraberger (associated member)

## **Welcome**

The Chairman Manfred Sommerer welcomed everybody to the meeting.

He explained the aim of the commission and the way to share information between the participants. In principle, each participant has other working groups in his country and he can bring information from the national working groups to this commission and vice versa. Manfred shows an example of how RFF working groups are organised in Austria.

Each participant introduces himself or herself briefly so that everyone can get to know each other.

## **News from CTIF**

Due to the war in Ukraine, cooperation with Russia and Belarus was suspended. Fire-fighting equipment and fire vehicles have been sent to Ukraine.

The next Delegates Assembly will take place in Vienna on 14 and 15 June 2023. Manfred will present our commission on this occasion.

Cooperation between CTIF associate members and CTIF members needs to be improved and CTIF is working on this.

## **Approval of the minutes of 2022 Hamburg (hybrid) and virtual meetings**

The minutes of the last two meetings are approved by the commission without comment.

## **New members/regrets**

Last year, the board tried to recruit new members for the commission. It thus invited a few people and received positive responses from several countries. Unfortunately, few new participants were able to attend the Balsthal meeting in person.

The new members present in Balsthal are:

- From Sweden: Niclas Tongring (Head of fire rescue, Swedavia)
- From Norway: Ulrich Bergkvist (Head of fire rescue, Avinor As)
- From Lithuania: Alvydas Bezykornov (Head of fire rescue, Vilnius Airport)
- From Latvia: Igors Čavkins (Head of fire rescue, Riga Airport)

Other persons from France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands agreed to take part in the commission, but were unable to attend the meeting in Balsthal.

## **News from member countries**

Each country (Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Greece) presents the latest developments in its country since the last meeting. Some of the main areas of concern are:

- The development of the TRA (*Task and Resource Analysis*) and the large differences in the number of firefighters for each RFF category between airports.
- The transition to Fluorine-free extinguishing foam.
- The improvement of response time.
- The complexity of ensuring the 3-minute response time when the firefighters are also airport employees in charge of other tasks.
- The differences between national regulations and EASA regulations.

## **EASA News**

The representative of EASA informs the Commission about the changes in regulation.

In order to increase the availability of aerodromes for NCC, NCO, and SPO operators, these operators can assess, using a risk-based approach, whether an aerodrome is acceptable in terms of the adequacy of the RFFS made available.

In other words, aerodromes are no longer required to provide RFFS all the time and can reduce the category or no longer provide an RFF category at all for a certain period if the traffic consists only of non-commercial operations and/or specialized operations. The aeronautical publication must indicate these reduced RFF category periods.

Following numerous questions, EASA has decided to set up a group of RFF experts to clarify certain requirements. This group will be set up shortly. The goal is to improve the understanding of certain RFF requirements and to achieve a uniform interpretation between countries.

The tasks assigned to this group were defined in the Terms of Reference and validated by the Aerodromes Technical Body (ADR TeB) of EASA.

## **Accident LIMA/PERU**

On 18 November 2022, two airport firefighters died in Lima. Their fire truck was hit violently by a taking-off aircraft during an alarm test (so-called 3-minute test). The official investigation report is not yet ready, but the commission discussed the possible causes of the accident in order to be able to improve the situation and prevent a similar accident from happening at another airport. It is still too early to define the exact causes, but some elements probably contributed to the accident. In particular, it appears that a daily briefing to communicate specificities (construction sites, missing markings, closed area, ...) is very important. The 3-minute response time tests are a good thing, but you have to be careful not to lose sight of the overall objective, which is to fight fires and save lives.

The commission's idea might be to make recommendations, but it is too early to do that, as the investigation report has yet to be finalized and the commission does not want to issue recommendations without being sure of the exact circumstances of the accident and its causes.

When the investigation report will be published, it will be interesting to come back on this subject in order to examine the causes and share as widely as possible the possible recommendations of the report or of the commission.

### **Fluorine Free Foam Transition**

Perfluoroalkylated substances (PFAS) are used in many products, such as sun cream, non-stick frying pans, shampoo and fire-fighting foam (Aqueous Film Forming Foam [AFFF]).

The big problem with these substances is that they do not biodegrade in the environment and their concentration in water and food increases over time, posing long-term health problems. A ban in several steps has therefore been decided at European level. Extinguishing foams containing PFAS (AFFF) must therefore be replaced by PFAS-free or fluorine-free (PFAS-free) foams.

There are already several fluorine-free foams on the market that meet ICAO certification requirements. You might think that it is therefore easy to make the transition, but in reality, this raises a number of questions.

Each type of foam has its own properties and will require more or less water and air to work properly. In principle, fluorine-free foams require more air, which is not always technically feasible with older vehicles. It is therefore sometimes necessary to adapt fire-fighting vehicles or acquire more modern ones.

The new proportion of the foam mixture (foam, water and air) could call into question the quantities of water required for each RFF category (Table 9-2 of ICAO Annex 14, Vol. ICAO or Table 1 of AMC4 ADR.OPS.B.010(a)(2) in Regulation (EU) No 139/2014). Indeed, it would be necessary to check how these quantities were determined but certainly on the basis of a foam with fluorine (AFFF).

As PFAS does not degrade in the environment, it is important to deep clean fire-fighting vehicles before using fluorine-free foam. If this is not done properly, the fluorine-free foam may become contaminated with PFAS.

In terms of firefighter training, adaptation is obviously necessary, as the behaviour of fluorine-free foam is different from that of fluorinated foam (AFFF).

All these issues represent a significant cost for RFF services, which tends to slow down the transition.

In Europe, some countries, particularly in Northern Europe, have already been switching to fluorine-free foam for several years, which shows that the transition is not impossible. However, it is important to share experiences among the participants of the commission.

This issue will continue to occupy our Commission in the coming years.

### **News from companies**

Each associated member (WinTecCon, Rosenbauer, Magirus, ARFF-Services, Dr. Sthamer and Strategic Fire Solution) presented its areas of activity and the latest developments since the last meeting.

A discussion took place about fire simulators. Although simulators offer significant advantages in terms of cost and availability, they are not suitable for the entire training programme. Indeed, they cannot entirely replace fire-fighting vehicles during training. Simulators are therefore a complement to training.

### **Conclusion and date of the next meeting**

The next face-to-face meeting will take place in 2024 in Norway. The commission thanks the Norwegian participants for their proposal. The exact dates and location of the meeting will be communicated in due course.