

**58th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

*Dhaka, Bangladesh
15 to 19 October 2023*

AGENDA ITEM 1: THEME TOPIC

**PROMOTING ICAO GENDER EQUALITY
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION –
GENDER EQUALITY INITIATIVE**

[Presented by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)]

INFORMATION PAPER

SUMMARY

This Information Paper presents the EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Gender Balance Initiatives, conducted in alignment with the European Commission's policies and best practices.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) – GENDER EQUALITY INITIATIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Promoting and supporting diversity in the workplace is an important aspect of sound people management. It is about valuing everyone in an organization. It is vital to have an inclusive environment where everyone feels able to participate and realize their potential.

1.2 The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has set for itself the values of Respect, Unity, Integrity, Transparency, and Innovation. These values should form the organizational culture on which the promotion of gender equality, diversity and inclusion are built.

1.3 Aviation connects people and economies. The more diversity that EASA embraces, the more inclusive it will become, to the benefit of aviation and communities. A wider talent pool, different perspectives and enhanced performance are all benefits of diversity and inclusion.

2. DISCUSSION

EASA gender balance – Figures as of second quarter 2023

2.1 Women represent on average 32% of the EASA workforce with 19% representation in lead and coordination roles, 14% in technical delivery roles, and 64% in support job roles. This is similar to the global pattern in the aviation sector. EASA provides professional opportunities with a focus on talent, competence and merit while also considering diversity and offering lifelong career, development, learning and promotion opportunities.

2.2 EASA consistently analyses data on the distribution by nationality and gender of career advancements to ensure the fairness of the implementation of its career development and promotion policies. In 2022 e.g., the share of women being promoted to the next higher pay grade was 39% while women represent 32% of all EASA staff. These statistical analyses are published.

2.3 Since 2018 the representation of women in managerial positions, from Section Manager to Director, has increased significantly from 16.9% to 24.4% in 2022. Three out of the five EASA Directors are female.

2.4 In 2022, the general distribution of the use of learning opportunities in EASA was:

- In-house training opportunities used by staff in managerial positions: of women 30%, of men 45%; and in non-managerial positions, of women 44%, of men 61%.
- External training opportunities used by staff in managerial positions: of women 10%, of men 9%; and in non-managerial positions, of women 26%; of men 27%.

2.5 The statistical analyses of the data on the uses of training opportunities show that women benefit as much as men from EASA's internal and external training offer, and this applies as much to women in managerial roles as to women in non-managerial roles.

2.6 EASA actively encourages female candidates by publishing its vacant positions in various forums and explicitly encouraging applications from female candidates. This includes drafting posts with information on flexible working conditions that contribute to work-life balance.

2.7 In addition, and to the extent possible, selection panels include members from both genders and balance by nationality. The average applicant and hiring trend has been ranging from 10-35% percent of applicants being female, depending on the competence area. However, for technical delivery jobs, the number of women candidates or new hires is usually smaller.

EASA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) actions

2.8 In November 2017, the European Commission (EC) set up the Women in Transport Platform, with the aim to strengthen women's employment and equal opportunities for women and men in the transport sector. EASA's Executive Director is a signatory to the EC 'Women in Transport' declaration. The Declaration promotes, among other aspects, involvement of women at all levels including representation, management and decision-taking. It calls upon all actors to address equality issues through appropriate measures.

2.9 EASA is also a sponsor of the UN Initiative "HeforShe" a global solidarity movement for gender equality, aimed at getting men supporting women as DEI allies.

2.10 EASA includes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) as essential pillars in its organization. In 2018, EASA launched its DEI initiative. The Agency appointed a gender balance "advocate" to identify best practices and propose actions to promote gender equality with the intention to attract more women and ensure true inclusion of all staff. This role has since evolved to a wider promotion of "Diversity and Inclusion", considering not only gender diversity, but also sexual identity, ethnicity, nationality, age and neurodiversity.

2.11 By sharing different perspectives and staff talents, the EASA DEI Gender Equality Initiative aims to make EASA a place where everyone feels welcome and valued, and fosters a culture where everyone feels respected and empowered.

2.12 As an equal opportunity employer, EASA has introduced a number of measures over the last years to address DEI, and in particular gender imbalance. Its actions include:

- **Raising awareness.** EASA pursues to raise awareness of unconscious bias and counter it with examples of female role models. Awareness Campaigns have taken place in the frame of DEI Initiatives, bringing the issue of gender balance on the table and promoting circles of debate within the Agency. An awareness campaign against sexism led to controversial debates within the EASA. This served as an eye-opener for many staff.
- **Training.** A competency-based training kit has been developed which raises awareness for different types of bias in EASA. For example, in selection processes, a video is used in the introduction meeting of the selection board explaining unconscious bias. This is achieved through regular Communications campaigns and events, and training.
- **Attracting people.** Gender balance is taken into account during selection procedures. EASA is systematically monitoring the gender distribution among applicants. While the data confirms that the specific technical labour market in which the Agency operates is dominated by male candidates, EASA actively reaches out for female candidates, by publishing positions in the right forums, explicitly encouraging applications from female candidates, and drafting positions with precise information on how it may affect work-life balance. In addition, and to the extent possible, selection panels include members from both genders.
- **Creating favorable working conditions.** EASA promotes and enables various social and integration activities for staff, also in collaboration with local authorities, to actively support its non-local staff to adapt to the local working and living environment. EASA enables parent groups for peer support, offering a forum for exchange amongst parents of children attending international schools. Various options are in place to enable staff to achieve an appropriate work-life-balance such as maternity and parental leave, part-time working regimes, special arrangements for breast feeding, flexi-leave and teleworking. EASA has also established a group of confidential counsellors that staff can turn to for help.

- **Monitoring & Gender Balance Evolution.** To ensure a factual basis and to measure effectiveness of actions, there is continuous monitoring of both gender disaggregated statistics and the perception of inclusion.

2.13 EASA has indicated its commitment to sign an EU-wide Agency Charter on Diversity & Inclusion. EASA will dedicate efforts to implementing specific actions that will foster a more diverse and inclusive workplace and to support broader efforts to promote diversity and inclusion throughout the aviation sector.

2.14 The European Plan for Aviation Safety (EPAS) 2023-35 includes a safety promotion task (SPT) relevant to the future promotion of aviation and addressing its recruitment shortage issues. More concretely Safety Promotion Task (SPT.0107) covers the promotion of the full range of careers and opportunities in the European aviation industry for people seeking to attract, engage, and retain staff. DEI initiatives have the potential to support this action.

2.15 EASA supports some non-profit DEI organizations such as Aviation for All (AviAll). AviAll is a group of DEI practitioners across the aviation industry who share a common vision - an aviation industry that is diverse and inclusive to all. To help drive the DEI agenda, AviAll regularly organizes events, educational outreach programs for young people, development and mentoring, an annual Aviation for Girls event, and other conference and networking events.

2.16 EASA activities also include partnerships and common activities with other organizations. Since late 2022, EASA has been involved in a Task Force with EUROCONTROL, CANSO and the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF), focused on diversity in the ATM sector. The work of this Task Force has already led to the publication of a paper with recommendations to increase diversity and inclusion as a way to boost people sustainability, improve safety, and ensure sufficient qualified staff for aviation in the future.

2.17 EASA is also cochairing an EUROCAE working group inspired by ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals program (NGAP). Its work scope is two-fold: on one hand, it encourages information sharing between schools and training institutes and industry to create an understanding of the skills needed for aviation in the future; on the other hand, it offers mentoring to new and seasoned staff to develop aviation careers.

2.18 With such external partnerships, EASA intends to infuse and promote this debate within the wider aviation community. A comprehensive industry-wide approach is desirable to present aviation as a technologically advanced sector that aims to attract, involve and retain both, young individuals and its current workforce.

2.19 EASA was present at the ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summit 2023 from 5th to 7th July 2023 in Madrid, which brought together the global aviation community to promote gender equality and empowerment of women in aviation. At this, EASA highlighted the importance of promoting decent work practices in the aviation industry.

2.20 EASA also offers DEI actions in its international cooperation projects. An example in the Asia Pacific was the International Cooperation: EU-ASEAN Youth-Talk Show "Women in Aviation". This highlighted female leaders to inspire women in the ASEAN aviation industry.

Individual behavioral competencies

2.21 EASA deems key messages for women in aviation include:

- **Embrace it:** As a woman in aviation, take calculated career risks and make conscious careers jumps instead of playing it safe, since the latter is typical to female thinking pattern of being over-competent for the job. So go out there, learn the technical / other relevant professional skills well, and accept the job what is openly perceived to be the next difficult or even impossible assignment in your own professional domain. Then,

make your professional competence visible with it by doing a good job, and afterwards, make your aspiration to move forward clearly visible. Do this even when you are not sure you have absolutely everything what the job will require – since no one does – and since women are typically more self-critical, self-hesitant and risk averse compared to men.

- **Sponsor it:** As a woman, book your own sponsor in line management early and also, among more competent colleagues than yourself, to whom you demonstrate in action your competence, learning agility and your aspirations so that the trust you have created with them is what leverages you further. You will need people who see you and believe in you to be successful - typically much more than men - despite any diversity and inclusion efforts in your organization.
- **Differentiate it:** As a woman, use your personal leverage for your career and for the extra impact you can make by being allowed/expected to be different in your job since you will stand out from the crowd anyway by just being there. Use and create your space with it, and build ‘your own quality signature with it’ – “this is what she is known for” - and using this signature will open you more opportunities.
- **Compete it:** As a woman, train and lead yourself to become comfortable and calm in situations – and learn to enjoy those situations - when you will be challenged, tested and simply have to prove your competence level again and again, typically more often than men due to the prevailing perceptions in your reference groups. On case stories about this, many female professionals whether fixed wing / rotary wing civil/military pilots, lead technical experts, supervisors, business directors and so forth, have personal stories that remain a genuine inspiration. Also, learn to not to take any criticism or feedback, justified or unjustified, personally, or judge it through your own gender bias lens, but let your job and your ‘own professional signature’ speak with facts, impact and achievements instead.

Conclusions

2.22 The aviation sector is suffering from workforce shortages and a reputation of being insufficiently environmentally friendly, contributing to CO2 emissions and global warming. The next generation cares about the environment and climate change impact.

2.23 Maintaining aviation’s current and future workforce is key for economic development. Air travels remain the fastest, and sometimes only means of transportation. It connects people from around the world, enables them to see other countries and learn about different cultures. It also ensuring humanitarian actions, search and rescue, medical patient transportation, etc.

2.24 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is therefore an opportunity to call in and attract more workforce, and to enable solutions benefitting from diverse perspectives. This serves men and women, and boys’ and girls’ concerns, leaving a sector that connects countries and communities, promotes trade and tourism, and looks after its workforce.

3. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to note the information contained in this Paper.

— END —