

Dear all AOC delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here in GVA on the occasion of this first IATA/AOC/EFA joint conference.

We all really appreciate your time and efforts in joining us, knowing that being station manager, AOC chairman and engaging into EFA is a real challenge

I want to particularly welcome those AOCs from outside the European Union who are with us today, that is Istanbul in Turkey, Kiev in Ukraine, Oslo in Norway, and of course our Swiss host GVA AOC and ZRH AOC. Our European federation is open to the European Union countries plus those countries in EFTA and the broader region of the geographical Europe. If you take ACI Europe, for instance, they claim they represent some 400 airports in 46 European countries. On the other hand ACI international represent 1530 airports in 175 countries. Should' nt we EFA go worldwide?

What is EFA? It is a trade organization created in 2005, officially registered as a non profit association under French law in 2006, whose main purpose is to unify policies according to IATA guidelines and AOC needs, maintain and develop relations with other key organizations like IATA/AEA/European BARs etc., define common positions on all major subjects, participate with EU on policies through the consultation process and the accredited lobbyist and interest representatives schemes. We should be engaged in work on environment, airport capacity, safety and security, air passenger rights, airport charges, ground handling.

Since then, we organized a number of meetings and most recently the EFA meeting in AMS on the 21st of April, 2008, with guest speakers from IATA, the AEA, EU commission DG Tren, and a number of airport officials; then the visit of the EFA board members to the European Commission in BRU on September 23rd, 2008 where we met with Rodrigo Vila de Benavent who is head of Directorate F4 infrastructures and airports.

Back to the present state of AOCs, let me tell you it was very hard work to get an updated contact list for us and I only have a list for 50 AOCs, not yet complete. We seem to be very confidential organizations, it was really detective work to get you all in contacts. So far only 6 AOCs have a web site.

To really get going, EFA should enroll all AOCs, and have a significant budget, to maintain a minimal structure. This is why you have the membership fee claim in front of you. You will see the fee at this time is minimal and can be easily supported from your AOC budgets.

Now, we have a busy day ahead, with a number of very interesting and important presentations as you can see in the agenda. Then it is my pleasure to hand over to Colin for the real start of our conference.

Thank you very much.