

# Rationale to build an Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Culture in ATM

Think-paper, May 2023

## Introduction

### Executive Summary and Call for Action

Promoting and supporting diversity in the workplace is an important aspect of good people management - it's about valuing everyone in an organisation as an individual and therefore it's vital to have an inclusive environment where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their potential. While legislation – covering age, disability, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation among others – sets minimum standards, an effective diversity and inclusion strategy goes beyond legal compliance and seeks to add value to an organisation, contributing to employee well-being and engagement.

The moral case for building fairer and more inclusive labour markets and workplaces is indisputable: regardless of our identity, background or circumstance, we all deserve the opportunity to develop our skills and talents to our full potential, work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, be fairly rewarded and recognised for our work and have a meaningful voice on matters that affect us<sup>1</sup>.

The ATM sector has a strong case to develop a network approach to increase Inclusion and Diversity to increase sustainability, improve safety and to ensure sufficient qualified staff for aviation in the future. Such work links directly with EC Directives(see references) , many state laws, the UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Environment, Society and Governance (ESG) standards in general. This think paper builds on a number of linked initiatives in setting goals and bringing up awareness (IATA25by25, ICAO Gender equality programme, DG-Move platform for Change, Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors, EUROCAE WG125 and others). However, it differs from them in that it aims to provide the practical tool for the ATM organisations to implement efficient DEI programs.

With over 55,000 employees in the sector, of which 17,800 ATCOs, in 37 service providers and 62 en-route facilities in Europe, the sector can clearly benefit from economies of scale and economies of learning. The shortage of qualified labor is plaguing the current labor market and especially aviation where certification processes take relatively long time. A more diverse workforce can achieve better results if there are equal opportunities and a culture of inclusion to incorporate the richness of the knowledge among diverse employees. At the same time, a more inclusive sector will be a more attractive sector to the new generation. Therefore, it is strategically important to build an setting where best practices are exchanged, shared learning is tailored to the ATM context and the sector is seen as one standing for inclusion, diversity and innovation, and one not tolerating discrimination of any form.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cipd.co.uk/about/who-we-are/annual-report#gref>

The definition of diversity in this paper goes beyond the issue of gender equality to also include age, disabilities, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, wealth, education, family situation, and cognitive diversity. With this wider approach the intention and scope of this paper on one hand builds up on many gender equality initiatives in the aviation sector and on the other hand goes a steps further beyond.

## Main findings

Aviation needs to ensure that the diversity of aviation leaders and the wider workforce more closely matches the diversity in our local, national and European-wide societies to ensure that we are able to tap into the full talent pool of personnel. Equality will ensure that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, giving everyone equal opportunities to develop. Inclusion forms the base for psychological safety also contributes to a better safety culture that is imperative in ATM organisations. It is vital for the sustainability of businesses and economies. Everyone stands to benefit when we embrace and value the diversity of thoughts, ideas, and ways of working that people from different backgrounds, experiences and identities bring to an organisation<sup>2</sup>. Even though there is wide acceptance of the EC directives and UN SDGs, and the benefits for the companies, there is great difficulty to translate them into actions . Given that the political and societal will is so strong, there is a clear need to provide for pragmatic and efficient approaches to achieve DEI in compliment, mapping and referring to the other existing initiatives so double work and fragmentation of efforts can be avoided.

The DEI work so far has been largely uneven, and executed on local level with many organisations working in isolation. More efficiency and faster results will be achieved if there is a collaborative approach to leverage scale of economies and economies of knowledge. People and organisations need to actively engage on the topic and a coherent strategy is needed to ensure that working practices across the industry support an inclusive culture which embraces difference, at local, international, and organisational levels.

## Call for action

We invite organisations to endorse the content of this paper so they can become part of the industry-wide movement to increase DEI in aviation. This will be done by a working group supported by EUROCONTROL and EASA. The working group will have as a direct delivery goal developing of a toolbox and as a collateral benefit developing a network of DEI practitioners and specialists from the various organisations to support their DEI journey.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cipd.co.uk/about/who-we-are/annual-report#gref>

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## 1. European and global framework

In 2020 the EU introduced its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 sets out key actions for the next 5 years and commits to ensure that the Commission will include an equality perspective in all EU policy areas. The Strategy pursues a dual approach of gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions, and intersectionality is a horizontal principle for its implementation. Special focus is kept on gender diversity given that 12% less women labor participation compared to men. Closing this gender gap will enhance economic growth and help alleviate inequalities based on gender.

Key milestones in EU policies are the adoption of the Directive on gender balance in corporate boards, which seeks to improve the gender balance in corporate decision-making positions in the EU's largest listed companies adopted on 22 November 2022. By 2026, companies will need to have 40% of the underrepresented gender among non-executive directors or 33% among all directors. In addition, the European Parliament adopted the new rules on binding pay-transparency measures in March 2023<sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, Horizon Europe 2021-2022 work programme makes having Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in place a part of the mandatory requirements as an eligibility criterion for calls with deadlines in 2022 and onwards. Funding of the SESAR 3 Joint Undertaking projects is also under Horizon Europe framework programme (2021-2027) - EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion. The programme tackles climate change and helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth.

On a global level ICAO has established The "Air Transport Gender Equality Initiative"<sup>4</sup>. This Initiative includes the establishment of air transport gender indicators through the collection of workforce statistics as provided on a voluntary basis from States. Collaboration and ongoing discussion between ICAO with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will allow cross-organizational learning on best practices in collecting gender related data with the aim of incorporating the information in the "Global and Regional 20-Year Forecasts: Pilots. Maintenance Personnel. Air Traffic" and the creation of an online platform for sharing data on workforce statistics.

## 2. Existing initiatives

In 2017 EU established Women in transport<sup>5</sup> - EU Platform for change to address the low number of women participating in the EU transport sector. EC also launched the Ambassadors for Diversity in Transport Network. This think paper and its call for action were presented at the platform and will become a part of its activities. The effort of the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230327IPR78545/gender-pay-gap-parliament-adopts-new-rules-on-binding-pay-transparency-measures>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.icao.int/sustainability/Documents/Air%20Transport%20Gender%20Equality.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/social-issues-equality-and-attractiveness-transport-sector/equality/women-transport-eu-platform-change\\_en](https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/social-issues-equality-and-attractiveness-transport-sector/equality/women-transport-eu-platform-change_en)

aviation community is connected with the overall effort of EU to attract and retain more people to address its labor shortage.

In 2023 EUROCAE launched its WG125<sup>6</sup> Next Generation Aviation Professional (NGAP) to follow on the ICAO NGAP initiative from 2009, to ensure that sufficient qualified aviation professional would be available to operate, manage, and maintain the future international air transport system. The WG125 aims to engage with members of the aviation industry, universities and students, organisations that work on a similar topic, and act as a facilitator in encouraging industry-university collaboration.

IATA25by2025<sup>7</sup> is a voluntary campaign for IATA member airlines to improve female representation in the senior positions in the industry by 25%, or up to a minimum of 25% by 2025. Many organisations, including non-IATA members have joined this initiative.

To address the need for tailored to ATM, pragmatic, collaborative, and mutually beneficial approach to DEI, representatives from AviAll, BULATSA, CAOP, DSN, EAAP, EASA, ECAC, ENAV, EPAN (European Pride in Aviation), ETF, EUROCAE, CANSO, IAWA, IFATCA, Irish Aviation Authority, Leiden University, LVNL, NATS, NAV Portugal, NLR, PANSA, skeyes, Skyguide, T-C Alliance participated in an Inclusion and Diversity workshop<sup>8</sup>, which took place on 16th and 17th Nov 2022 in Amsterdam, deliberating on the importance of this topic in European ATM. This think-paper and the call for action stem from this workshop.

### 3. Economies of scale

Many of the participating ANSPs and organisations at the 2022 November workshop were already working on DEI training and awareness programmes. For most of them, the DEI journey was rather nascent, with only limited number ANSPs reporting work since 2017. The industry could save both time and money if they share existing knowledge, best practices and materials. In addition, exchange of speakers who are conversant in the specific context is very impactful, bringing an external view, as well as knowledge of the environment and its constraints, and possibilities for benchmarking. Exchange of existing learning methods, presentation and communication materials will create a comprehensive tool set. If organisations partner, each of them can share their own knowledge and leverage the material already shared.

### 4. Need to ramp up DEI beyond gender

Many of the initiatives currently existing are focusing on gender. However, many of the other diversity aspects are being left behind while we see more people identifying themselves as a part of the LGBTQ community, or having a non-binary gender identity. With the migrants waves we have much more citizens with different ethnicity to the main group of the country they live in. The migrations brought more religions, cultures and traditions to our societies. Furthermore, more is known about neurodiversity and how the workplace can accommodate better people with

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eurocae.net/news/posts/2023/january/first-meeting-of-the-working-group-125-on-ngap-next-generation-of-aviation-professionals/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.iata.org/en/about/our-commitment/25-by-2025/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/newsroom-and-events/events/workshop-inclusion-and-diversity-atm>

neurodiversity. The psychological paths to unbiased behavior and fight stereotyping work equally well not only for gender, but also for all other diversity aspects. Many ANSPs and organisations are taking actions for DEI, but results are limited with mostly internal audience. Often similar initiatives, for example surveys, are proposed by more than one international organisation. This segmentation is increasing the workload and confusing for the ANSPs. The segmentation wastes effort and creates pockets of uncoordinated work. It is necessary that the actors, professionals, and activists committed to DEI avoid duplication of work, making it much easier for organisations which are just starting their journey to connect with the existing network. In addition, such an approach will prevent working in silos. Creation of a toolbox with a map of existing initiatives will help in avoiding pitfalls in de-centralized approach that DEI efforts necessitate.

## 5. Why DEI? Importance for:

### i. Performance

A key argument to work on Inclusion is its strong link with psychological safety and by proxy with safety. Psychological safety is proven to be a foundation for increased productivity and innovation<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, for safety critical organizations such as ATM, psychological safety improves safety as safety risks are voiced and concerns are addressed ultimately improving safety performance (Noort et al., 2016, 2019).

### ii. Ensuring the sufficient qualified personnel in ATM/aviation

Staff and skill shortage chronically plague aviation. This problem is only expected to worsen in the coming years (Lutte, 2019, IATA - Aviation Workforce Skills & Training Report). Yet, the outreach to groups of people who are under-represented across the aviation community insufficient. As a key aspect to increase the sustainability of our industry, we must improve the lived experiences of the diverse workforce in aviation (gender, religion, background, education, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and other diverse categories).

### iii. Sustainability

People commonly associate the term sustainability with environmental or ecological concerns. However, the environment is just one aspect of sustainability. Three "pillars" comprise the notion of sustainability. Organizations that effectively implement sustainability efforts show equal dedication to and balance among:

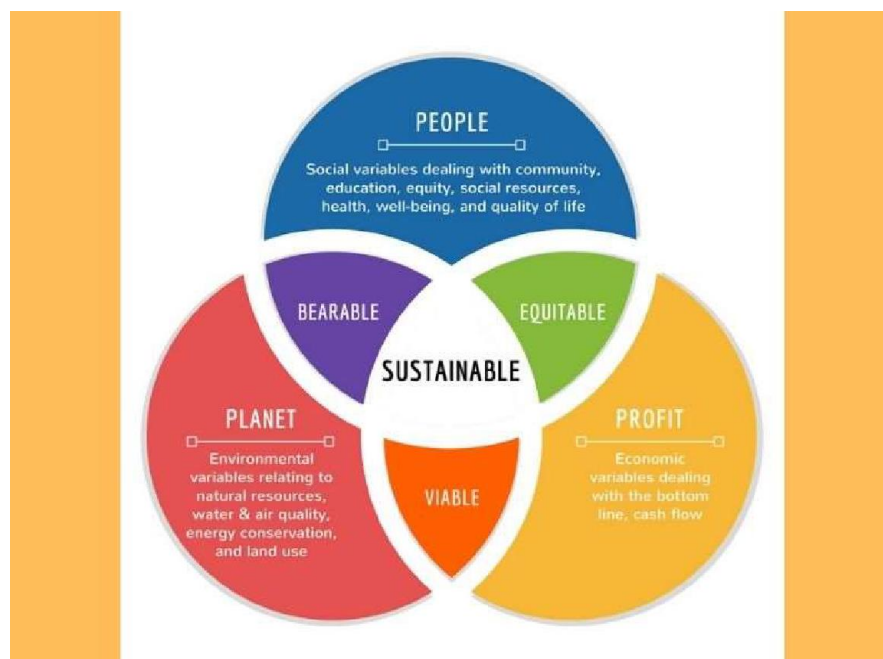
1. Improving the well-being of workers and the community
2. Reducing an organization's environmental impact
3. Achieving economic and financial objectives

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<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/diversity%20wins%20how%20inclusion%20matters/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters-vf.pdf>





## 6. Call for action: establish a working group to:

### i. work on the identified issues and possible solutions

This paper calls for the establishment of a working group at European level to develop a toolbox to support DEI work on both regional and local level. The working group is to organise workshops, learning opportunities, share experiences, best practice out of which it will create the toolbox as a common approach of deployment of DEI policies. The founding backbone of the group is set out by ANSPs, but it is open to engaging and attracting stakeholders from the entire European aviation community. Such a group could also contribute to global level initiatives.

A key finding of the 2022 November workshop was not only sharing DEI practices but also the steps or actions to establish them. The discussion outlined challenges, the need for cooperation, not only in putting policies into effect, but establishing structures, forming networks, changing the culture of an organization, and the necessary steps and actions to establish the microclimate to make these policies a reality. It was unanimously agreed that raising awareness is a key factor to promote DEI policies, processes and practices.

The main ATM and political organisations at European and, global level should support the collaborative approach to DEI. Support and endorsement is required by NGOs, social partners, academia and professional networks. Once such support is secured, a network of specialists engaged on DEI can be created as well as the material needed to help organisations to successfully enact I&D initiatives on local level.

### ii. Making it happen -tentative toolbox development

The topics underneath have been identified as possible stepwise activities, based on different dimensions of work, to be included as possible dimensions of the toolbox.

#### a. Engaging – how to raise awareness leading to buy-in

- Awareness raising leading to buy-in (the Why)
- Awareness raising of What DEI is (the What)
- Tools to support its implementation that (mostly middle management) can pick up and use (the How)
- Engaging with EU Institutions
- Engaging with senior management (operational, recruitment, strategic, change management, decision-makers)
- Engaging the middle management
- Engaging with professional staff organizations and social partners
- Engaging the staff in the company

#### b. Partnering

- Partnering with NGOs
- Partnering with local educational institutions to promote aviation, ATM professions
- Partnering with academia for research
- Connecting and participation with international organizations and working groups
- Partnering with other industries (IT sector, Girls Who Code initiatives to promote amongst diverse groups)

#### c. Use of data and statistics

- Exchange data between organisations
- Using metrics to track progress
- Using indexes to track attraction, retention and promotion processes
- Gender Equality Center require statistics and data, therefore use this as steppingstone, as a basis to accumulate numbers and statics, which are primordial when developing and adapting policies.

#### d. Learning programs

- Learning programs for leaders
- Competence development on equality leadership
- Changing mindsets (fear of quotas, fear of speaking up, others)
- List external certification programs for practitioners

#### e. Certification- mapping some available certifications, pros and cons of using them

- Certification of practitioners
- Certification of organisations

#### f. Communication

- Introducing DEI vocabulary
- Building a successful communication strategy

### 7. Conclusion and way ahead



#### i. Engagement and support needed

- There is a political will expressed by EU directives and national legislation. This political will needs to be put into concrete actions. There are procedures/measures/steps needed at a strategic level to set the industry on the right path. At a practical level, each individual organisation must find ways to translate the political and strategic will into actions to improve its Inclusion and Diversity. The proposed toolbox creation supported by a working group and its network will fill this gap.

#### ii. Funding and resourcing

- Funding for the creation of such a working group will be sought through ETF and CANSO from EC. Local top management to identify and allocate resources to support the working group.

#### iii. The path to success

- First draft of this paper was on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The draft was open for comments until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- The call for action of this paper was presented at the Airspace World 2023 at Geneva, 8<sup>th</sup> March.
- Second draft of this paper will be released for comments until end of May.
- Final version is targeted for end June 2023.
- The think-paper can be presented as a reference material at Board of Directors levels, Executive management

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#### Attachment

The program of the workshop is attached underneath.



Diversity Workshop Agenda.pdf