

EVENT REPORT

WORKSHOP: The ICAO LPRs – 10 years on: Progress or Pain?

An exploration of what has and hasn't worked since the introduction of the ICAO LPRs

Date: 24th & 25th April, 2017

Location: Dubrovnik, Croatia

OVERVIEW

This international workshop was hosted by **Croatia Control Ltd** at Hotel Neptun, a resort on the sea front about 6km from the old walled city of Dubrovnik. The event brought together old and new members of ICAEA, and the generous social programme offered by the host helped greatly to create a warm and open ambience throughout the entire event.

With 117 participants from 36 countries, this was one of ICAEA's best attended events in recent years. Clearly the ICAO LPRs is still a topic which affects people across the industry who are looking for opportunities to share their experiences and gain insights and guidance from others.

ICAEA has never received such a large number of submissions to deliver workshops, nor the diversity of attendees from so many countries and from different sectors of the international aviation community. Speakers included representatives from ICAO, airlines, ANSPs, regulators, researchers, academics, trainers, test developers and the ICAEA Board – all able to draw on current real-world case studies and perspectives.



OBJECTIVES

The aim of the workshop was to evaluate the successes and challenges the ICAO LPRs have posed since they were first implemented in 2007. The programme was divided into four themed sessions, which enabled exploration of key overarching questions:

Session 1 Have LPR tests been doing their job? Are LPR testing standards improving? What are the issues that shape testing practices? What can we do to ensure standards are being met?

Session 2 What have been the washback effects of LPR tests? Is training generally being positively or negatively influenced by prevailing testing practices? If so, why – and how can any negative effects be addressed?



Session 3 How have the LPRs affected perceptions and attitudes towards communication, testing and learning? Do operational personnel feel the LPRs have improved communications and safety? Have the LPRs led to recognition of communications as a human factors issue?

Session 4 Are communications improving as a result of the LPRs? What elements of air-ground communications contribute to their effectiveness? How does culture and cultural perceptions of proficiency influence communications and training?

PROCEEDINGS

The workshop began with a recap of the aims of the LPRs and a review of a pre-workshop survey that was completed by the majority of participants. The findings and discussion that followed revealed opinions often markedly shaped by our origins and backgrounds. Overall, there was a general consensus that more needs to be done to improve testing standards, and that testing practices do influence training programmes.

During the intense 2-day event, participants were able to attend 5 plenary presentations, attend their choice from 12 interactive workshops, join an open discussion Q&A panel, and share their expertise and opinions more informally during a drinks reception and evening meal in Dubrovnik Old Town.



OUTCOMES

By the end of the full two-day event, it was apparent that there was general consensus among participants that:

- Overall, the ICAO LPRs have had a positive impact in raising awareness of the role English language proficiency in safe and effective aeronautical communications, but more still needs to be done;
- The ICAO LPRs are still in their infancy, and while the policy frameworks have been established and accepted, more work still needs to be done to implement best practice standards in language testing and training in order to bring aviation language testing and training standards in line with the more established English language training and assessment industry;
- Varying interpretations of the LPRs have resulted in different models of testing, and this poses challenges for regulators, test users, trainers and operators to identify a sense of comparative equivalence between tests, and application of the standards uniformly;



- There is a need for more research in the field of aeronautical communications to highlight the importance of the roles of culture, attitude and language proficiency as factors that influence the efficiency and effectiveness of air-ground communications and therefore operational safety.

With the learnings from this event, the ICAEA Board is considering ways in which the Association can further support the development of initiatives to continue raising awareness of language proficiency within the industry, engender more uniform testing practices and standards, and provide a new platform for research into language use in aviation communications.

A post-event survey was conducted among participants. The results of the survey, the full workshop programme, copies of all presentations and workshop materials, and a gallery of event photos are available to **ICAEA Members** via the Association's website.

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