

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published today its Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA) on the licensing and medical certification of air traffic controllers as a result of nearly three years of work involving experts and stakeholder representatives in the framework of a dedicated rulemaking group.

This NPA follows the adoption and implementation of Commission Regulation (EU) No 805/2011 laying down detailed rules for air traffic controllers' licenses and certain certificates pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council in August 2011 as an intermediate step.

The subject NPA covers the licensing and medical certification of air traffic controllers and proposes the requirements, accompanied by Acceptable Means of Compliance and Guidance Material where necessary, for all aspects governing the access to this safety-related aviation profession, as well as for exercising the privileges granted by the air traffic controller licence.

The proposed rule in this NPA aims at filling the gaps between the safety objectives in the relevant essential requirements of Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 and the currently applicable Regulation (EU) No 805/2011, which although already started the implementation of the said essential requirements, it did not accomplish this task completely. Moreover, many aspects of this proposal are stemming from the implementation feedback the Agency has received or observed - through its standardisation visits in the domain of ATM/ANS as well as from different SES reporting and peer-review mechanisms.

The proposed draft Regulation aims at establishing and implementing common training standards for air traffic controllers, which is a key factor to facilitate Europe-wide recognition of licences and the mobility of air traffic controllers, as well as to enhance further harmonisation and the necessary integration at FAB level.

The draft proposal is seeking to establish the highest level of synergies within the activities of aero-medical examiners and aero-medical centres concerning the medical certification of air traffic controllers and flight crew, and provides a clear framework for the activities of air traffic controller training organisations, irrespective of whether they are independent training schools only or are providing on-the-job training as a service provider as well. Where introducing changes to the technical requirements, for example in the system of ratings and rating endorsements, the draft proposal is aiming at facilitating and accommodating future developments by providing for a technology-independent framework for surveillance.

The draft proposal repeals Regulation (EU) No 805/2011 and replaces it with a clear structure enabling stakeholders to better identify the requirements applicable to them as well as their interaction with the other aspects of the licensing and medical certification of air traffic controllers. Following the cover Regulation, the draft rule contains four chapters, each of them dedicated to a given subject. Annex I, Part-ATCO, defines now not only the licensing but also the qualification and training requirements for air traffic controllers. Annex II, Part ATCO-AR, contains the relevant administrative requirements from the perspective of the competent authorities. Annex III, Part ATCO-OR, defines the requirements applicable to air traffic controller training organisations from the perspective of their organisational set-up. Annex IV, Part ATCO-MED, establishes the necessary requirements for the medical certification of air traffic controllers and for the training of aero-medical examiners.

Although this proposal covers fully the regulatory needs arising from Regulation (EC) No 216/2008, there is a number of issues where EASA wishes to use this NPA to collect further information from stakeholders to better understand the regulated environment as well as the needs stemming from future technical developments. Stakeholders are therefore invited to provide their comments and views on the proposed approaches, as well as their answers and preferences to the questions posed.

Following the evaluation of the comments and the applicable rulemaking procedure EASA will propose an Opinion for a Commission Regulation on the subject. EASA is organising a dedicated workshop to explain the proposal in detail on 16 January 2013 in Cologne.