

Organised by **Flight Standards Directorate - Air Operations Implementation Section**

AGENDA

1	Welcome and opening remarks by EASA and EUROCONTROL	2
2	Adoption of the Agenda	2
3	Data and statistics	2
4	Eurocontrol – Flight planning	3
5	Ramp NextGen	3
6	Rules, AMC and GM in Ramp	3
7	Alcohol testing results	3
8	AFOSA* overview & general introduction	4
9	RAMP Inspections – The Operator’s Perspective	5
10	Electronic/Digital Pilot Licenses	6
11	Frequently Asked Questions	6
	Wrap up	6

Related Links/ Documents:

1. Attendance registry RIF 2025
2. RIF Agenda final
3. Action item list
4. Presentations
 - a. AI03 - Data and statistics
 - b. AI04 – EUROCONTROL Flight planning
 - c. AI05 - Ramp NextGen
 - d. AI06 - Rules, AMC and GM in Ramp
 - e. AI07 - Alcohol testing results
 - f. AI08 - AFOSA* overview & general introduction
 - g. AI09 - RAMP Inspections – The Operator’s Perspective
 - h. AI10 - Electronic/Digital Pilot Licenses
 - i. AI11- Frequently Asked Questions
5. RIF Slido poll results

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EASA Events Page

<p>1 Welcome and opening remarks by EASA and EUROCONTROL <i>Presented by: EASA and EUROCONTROL</i></p>
<p>Steven Moore (Eurocontrol) welcomed participants and provided an overview of Eurocontrol’s airspace traffic management, highlighting the role of the Network Manager Operations Centre (NMOC) and key lessons learned for summer 2026 preparations.</p> <p>Francesco Gaetani (EASA) thanked Eurocontrol for hosting the RIF and acknowledged the contributions of AFOSA colleagues. He emphasised the importance of Ramp NextGen, noting the need for the EU Ramp Inspection Programme to evolve into an even more risk- and performance-based programme.</p> <p>The introductory statements focused on operational improvements, collaboration, and future strategies to enhance air traffic efficiency and safety.</p>

<p>2 Adoption of the Agenda <i>Presented by: EASA</i></p>
<p>The agenda was adopted without comments. The Chair explained the use of Slido throughout the meeting.</p>

<p>3 Data and statistics <i>Presented by: EASA</i></p>
<p>EASA presented statistics on the RAMP Inspection Programme, noting the influence of geopolitical factors on results and emphasising the roles of the State of Inspection, State of Oversight and the operator.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the B14 inspection item, which requires attention of and communication between the crew, but delays should be prevented. EASA clarified that the item is inspected only occasionally and it is often omitted to avoid unnecessary delays. To address this, EASA could consider integrating additional awareness in the training of new inspectors with guidance to exclude B13 and B14 items when time constraints necessitate a focus on more critical checks.</p> <p>Regarding the SAFA ratio, EASA clarified that the ratio is not a safety indicator but a tool for deeper analysis, cautioning against direct comparisons between operators.</p> <p>Operators raised concerns about inconsistencies in the enforcement of findings across authorities and inquired about whom to contact in case of disputes. EASA explained that such matters are a national responsibility, requiring operators to follow national appeal processes. For unresolved disputes, EASA advised engaging with national coordinators.</p> <p>Similarly, in case where delayed responses from the inspecting authority hinder resolution, EASA cannot intervene to close or discard the finding but can facilitate communication with relevant authorities.</p> <p>A significant rise in Cat 1 findings was noted. However, the operators cannot currently respond to Cat 1 findings via the RIT (e.g. in cases where processes have been approved by the Oversight Authority). EASA indicated that it will explore the possibility to allow operators to respond to Cat 1 findings via the RIT to resolve misunderstandings.</p>

Regarding the increase in C-item findings (maintenance-related), EASA recommended deeper oversight reviews by the relevant technical bodies (both in the authorities and within the operators).

Regarding the number of findings, EASA indicated that recent guidance updates (2022) may have contributed to the higher number of findings due to stricter interpretations and added that it will assess whether guidance clarity is a factor in the increase of findings.

4 Eurocontrol – Flight planning

Presented by: Eurocontrol

Eurocontrol delivered a presentation on flight planning, and outlining the processes and procedures related to warnings and alerts. The EU Air Safety List identifies aircraft prohibited from or imposes restrictions on aircraft entering European airspace, while a prioritisation list is developed based on SAFA data analysis. The EASA RAMP Coordination Team provides EUROCONTROL, as the Network Manager (NM), with the relevant information, so the NM can support this process through their EC SAFA – Safety List Alarming Function whenever an affected operator files a flight plan.

5 Ramp NextGen

Presented by: EASA

EASA outlined the background of the Task Force and provided detailed explanations about its members, meeting set-up and Terms of Reference. The challenges encountered during the group's activities, as well as its progress and next steps were highlighted during the presentation.

In the discussion, the role of training organisations delivering Ramp Inspector training was acknowledged as critical. During these trainings, EASA's standards are promoted globally, making it essential for EASA to support RITOs in fulfilling this role not only in EU but also in states outside of EU.

6 Rules, AMC and GM in Ramp

Presented by: EASA

EASA presented the background and principles of the RAMP Inspection Programme, outlining its historical development and identifying the key users of the data, described the programme's legal basis, clarified the distinction between SAFA and SACA and outlined the findings raised.

7 Alcohol testing results

Presented by: EASA

EASA presented the regulatory framework and the alcohol testing coverage, including key statistics on the tests performed and positive cases. Key observations highlighted a gradual increase in testing volume, primarily conducted by EASA Member States and a low incidence of positive cases. A positive remark was made to operators for the crew's understanding and cooperative attitude during alcohol testing.

Drug testing by the authority remains optional for aviation personnel across the EU, with no current plans to make it mandatory. While some Member States have implemented voluntary testing programs, most of the States have not. EASA emphasised the need for feedback from participating states to evaluate potential integration into the Ramp Inspection Tool (RIT), as the procedure is not currently included in the Proof of Inspection (POI). With limited states currently conducting drug testing, EASA is exploring optional approaches to determine future steps. Some participants confirmed conducting random drug testing on flight crew and cabin crew, but also on other operational personnel. It should be noted that data remains limited at present but that in future there might be more statistics.



Regarding the question whether positive alcohol cases were detected through breathalyser or another testing method, EASA clarified that aviation alcohol testing follows a two-step process: an initial screening test and a confirmatory breathalyser test (blood tests are not common). The positive cases included in the presentation only represent those cases where the initial and confirmation test were positive.

The frequency of alcohol testing for aviation crew carried out under the framework of the EU Ramp Inspection Programme is not fixed, with individual states determining their own approach. Initial guidance suggested that during 10% of the ramp inspection alcohol testing should be conducted and prioritisation be based on existing national testing schemes, considering the limited data available when alcohol testing was implemented. EASA has since sought additional input via state questionnaires to refine future policies.

Participants inquired whether, for RAMP NextGen, it is expected that alcohol testing will become a more mandatory item. EASA explained that its implementation would depend on operational conditions, and results would vary based on whether testing is conducted by aviation authorities or other officials (e.g. police). EASA continues to assess the program's effectiveness before considering further requirements. It should be noted though, that alcohol testing is already mandatory for EASA states.

Participants discuss the actions to be taken in case of confirmed positive cases. In such cases, a Category 3 finding is raised and actions must be taken by the operator before departure which includes removing from duty the intoxicated crew member. With the removal from duty of the crew member, additional actions may need to be taken such as finding a replacement for the intoxicated crew member reducing passenger numbers to be within the limits. In any case the finding remains a CAT 3 and will result in a class 3 action (e.g. restriction on the operation, corrective action before departure). Some of the participants asked whether it would be better to replace the intoxicated crew member immediately or wait for the crew member to become sober. EASA replied that the latter is an operational decision and depends on company procedures and must be accepted by the oversight and inspecting authority.

EASA clarified that alcohol testing does not have a dedicated item, with item E01 used in case of AT findings and information on the proof of inspection that alcohol testing has been carried out. It was also highlighted that enforcement actions (including arrest) can be taken depending on the State where the alcohol testing is carried out.

8 AFOSA* overview & general introduction

Presented by: Singapore

AFOSA presented the initiation and establishment of AFOSA, highlighting key milestones since the programme's beginning in 2016. AFOSA is based on ICAO Doc 8335 and uses best practices from the EU Ramp Inspection Programme. The programme shares similarities with the EU Ramp Inspection Programme, but differences were also highlighted.

AFOSA explained that the AFOSA database includes the collection of respective Proof of Inspection (POI). The responsibility for closing findings lies with the respective states. After data submission, safety analysis is conducted and shared with member states. Unlike the Ramp Inspection Tool (RIT), which allows operators to access and follow up on inspection findings, AFOSA's system does not allow operators to log in and follow up on inspections and findings.

In light of the EASA-ASEAN cooperation agreement, participants inquired whether the same database could support activities under both the EU Ramp Inspection Programme and AFOSA. Discussions regarding AFOSA's participation in the EU Ramp Inspection Programme were raised, though implementation depends on political and financial incentives, as well as available human resources.

EASA noted that ICAO is currently working on revisions to Annex 6 and Doc 8335. It is yet to be established whether ICAO will push for national or regional ramp inspection programmes. Harmonization of methodologies



across programs requires significant investment but this would be a prerequisite for meaningful comparisons of results and data between the various ramp inspection programmes.

*ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) Foreign Operator Safety Assessment

9 RAMP Inspections – The Operator’s Perspective

Presented by: Malta Air

Participants indicated the need for a more regular Ramp Inspection Forum facilitating the exchange between the various actors.

Operators expressed different interpretations of the SAFA ratio. A high SAFA ratio doesn’t mean an unsafe operator, since other factors should be considered. A high SAFA ratio is a deviation from a standard.

The standardisation within and among NAAs was emphasised by operators. It was suggested to gather once or twice a year to discuss the level of standardisation. If standardisation is not ensured, there are anomalous results, and it is perceived as the burden is on the operator. Participants encouraged that an operator which is not performing well should be informed.

Operators indicated perceiving the system as unfair considering delayed responses by the inspecting authorities.

Participants expressed the need for an effective appeal process as a necessity in the programme ensuring fairness and a reliable ratio. It was suggested that the person/authority raising the finding should not be the same as the person/authority dealing with the appeal. It was reiterated that appeal processes fall under the national mandate and cannot be facilitated by EASA.

Regarding the process of appeal, it was emphasised that authorities have a dual role. As a state of oversight, they need to push the operator, but on the other side they have to communicate with other states of oversight who have inspected the operator and ensure objective and non-discriminatory treatment. In that sense a proper appeal process would be of benefit.

It was suggested to take the opportunity of the ‘simplification of regulation’ project to improve the current rules on Ramp Inspections. The primary focus should be the prevention of accidents and incidents. Furthermore, it was suggested have the SACA ratio calculation taken under consideration by statisticians.

Participants stated that from a historical perspective there has been a tremendous progress on the number of inspections in the form of SWC. Furthermore, PDFs have been developed and those are a good contribution to the standardisation of the programme. In addition, they emphasised that compliance with regulation provides clarity.

During the discussion a question was raised about the impact on safety of not having a required document (like CoA) on board. It was replied that, despite this only being a piece of paper, these documents are the end result of a whole process and thus, are important. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the right categorisation of this finding. Participants suggested that compliance related inspection items (such as checking of documents) in the cockpit could be facilitated through a desktop exercise, instead of putting the burden on the crew and increasing activities during a turnaround, since all NAAs should already have verified those documents for which they have access to the corresponding documents online.

RITOs and EASA would find it very valuable to receive information on the common issues raised by the operators.

Participants raised their concerns about the correctness of the findings raised before the pre-flight inspection has been completed and the techlog is signed, as it does not allow the operator to detect and address these items themselves before the finding is raised. This leads to endless discussions during the follow-up. EASA indicated that this item is on the agenda of the discussions with the participating states. It was confirmed that



this is a delicate issue, as in some cases also the pre-flight is the last activity of the crew before boarding. There is then a thin line between an inspector raising the issue early so that it can be dealt with to avoid a delay, or raising the issue only after the pre-flight has been completed to see if it will be detected by the crew. In cases where the crew did not detect it, it will undoubtedly lead to a delay, which could have been avoided/reduced if it had been brought to the attention of the crew already earlier. After all, the objective of the inspection is not to raise a finding, but rather to ensure the flight is/can be conducted safely, and early warning may be beneficial to safety. The discussion on whether the finding than may be raised or not takes the attention away from safety, and perhaps necessitates the need to review this practice.

Canada commented that the presentation indicated a complex mix of issues. In Canada regulations are worded differently than in the EU and each member state has their authority in oversight of their operators and activities performed in their territory. There have been efforts for standardisation by ICAO, but some differences will always remain. And even desktop reviews in Canada are dealt with as a safety item.

10 Electronic/Digital Pilot Licenses

Presented by: EASA

EASA presented that existing procedures for licence verification remain in force, with the Electronic Personnel Licence/Digital Personnel Licence (EPL/DPL) serving as an approved alternative to traditional paper licences. The privileges of the licence and the validity of associated ratings must be clear and easily identifiable. Both online and offline methods of verification should be available, ensuring that offline verification can be conducted without placing an undue burden on inspecting states.

Participants commented that China has introduced an electronic licensing system; however, inspectors have found it difficult to verify key details such as ratings and validity without delving deeply into the licence itself, raising questions about the correct format.

EASA explained that as an interim offline solution, ICAO provides guidance on its website to help authorities identify authentic licences and understand their proper format. Access to this information is restricted to authorised state authorities, and currently, only a few states—such as China and India—have published their licence formats there, with others waiting for ICAO’s final technical specifications. Operators do not have direct access and must contact their national authority if they have doubts about licence’s authenticity. Each state must decide whether to issue licences in either paper or digital form to avoid discrepancies; if both formats are in use, further investigation is recommended to ensure consistency and validity.

11 Frequently Asked Questions

Presented by: EASA

EASA reiterated the meaning and reason for the SAFA ratio, namely its use as an analysis indicator. The ratio is not used as a sole source of safety concern identification; the ratio triggers further analysis and requires context. Furthermore, EASA emphasised the main actors for the follow-up of findings: the operator, the inspecting authority, and last but not least, the oversight authority.

Wrap up

Presented by: EASA

EASA summarised the discussions presented during the day. The main take-aways are: focus on cooperation, creating a forum for valuable discussions between industry and authorities, such as this RIF, and the common goal to improve safety.

