

10th EASA ROTORCRAFT SYMPOSIUM.

Köln, December 6th -7th, 2016

Jaime Arqué----- Keynote speech.

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning

First of all, I would like to thank the EASA management for inviting me to give you the keynote speech on the occasion of the 10th EASA Rotorcraft Symposium.

Last year I started by mentioning Bob Dylan's song "The times are changing". Since then he has been awarded the Nobel Prize, and we have seen many changes in the world and also and specifically in our helicopter world. And many more will come.

What does not seem to be changing, though, is the attitude of our politicians!

I have to tell you that I'm very disappointed with our European politicians, and in particular with the EU Commission.

It is clear for all of us that their agenda is mainly focused on reaching agreements on Economic and Tax Policies, on Defence Policy, on Refugees Policy and on how to cope with the Brexit Issue, just to mention few examples. And nothing to argue about.

But very often they seem to forget that amongst the factors that contribute to the welfare of the European citizens, helicopter operations play a very important role. Maybe it would be a dream to see our politicians thinking about how to improve helicopter operations in order to have our machines integrated in a holistic European transport system. When, on December 2015, the EU Commission published the Aviation Strategy Package for Europe, I was greedily reading the thick document hoping to find, in a small corner, the word "helicopter" or "rotorcraft".

Pity there was no mention of it!

Does it mean that helicopters are not important for them? Or simply, that they do not know the services that helicopters are providing to the European citizens? If the answer to one of these two questions is yes, it is very clear to me, as it should be for all of you, that the helicopter industry has still a long way to go in order to have the helicopters recognized in the European society for their unique capabilities in providing Emergency, Rescue, Firefighting, Security and Transport Services where no other aircraft, boat or machine can do it.

Luckily enough at the intermediate level, or better, at the level of those who really have to "deliver", we have some positive developments. For starters, it looks like EASA has started to consider helicopters in their own right, and not a variation of the airplanes, as it has been in the past. And this is good news. Today, as we all know, EASA has a rotorcraft department in Certification and rotorcraft specialists in other departments,

like the Flight Standards one. These experts provide an opportunity to discuss rotorcraft issues with somebody who has a rotorcraft background, although sometimes a bit too oriented on the regulatory/legal side but I'm totally confident that things will improve.

But what I want to welcome today is the restructuring of the Advisory Bodies. Apparently it is meant to enhance the important role of the stakeholders in all those aspects related to strategic developments, safety programmes, etc. and if this will be achieved, it can only be seen as a positive step forward.

The real achievement for us - for the helicopter industry. - is that amongst the various technical Committees tasked to support the SAB (Stakeholder Advisory Body), EASA agreed to establish a Rotorcraft Sectorial Committee (RSC). This new body will advise EASA about all rotorcraft matters.

I think this is an important milestone for our sector as this decision demonstrates that EASA is more and more recognizing the unique characteristics of the helicopters and their operation. Thank you.

The RSC will have 25 members and 10 of the available seats will be for the operators, where EHA will occupy 8 seats and EHAC 2 seats. The kick-off meeting will take place on January 24th and I wish a lot of success to this just established Rotorcraft Committee.

But do we think that this is enough? Obviously not. The Member States will also have their Advisory Structure (the MAB) supported by eight Technical bodies. Unfortunately no Rotorcraft Technical Body is foreseen to support the MAB. Reason for this is that several Member States declared not having enough resources to provide helicopter experts but in my opinion this is a lack in the system which will need to be solved soon if we wish to have a constructive discussion with our NAAs.

And this is where operators and the whole helicopter industry have to act. You all know that very often the National Authorities do not share our opinions. Sometimes because of well-grounded reasons and sometimes because the lack of knowledge or the lack of helicopter experts make it difficult to understand our concerns.

I want to ask you, the helicopter operators, to do your best to establish a fruitful relationship with your national authorities, to reach agreements, and make them understand that, when talking about rotorcraft operations, the approach cannot be the same as they have with airplanes operations. That they need helicopter experts. For us it is very important that whenever National Authorities representatives participate in any EASA Board or Committee, the concerns of their helicopter industry are clearly understood and defended.

I've been talking about EU Politicians, about EASA, about the NAA's and our relation with them, but what about our own performance? The operators cannot be sitting, complaining and waiting for the others to change and improve things. We also have to change and improve. Being the operational safety the main target, we have to comply with the regulations, constantly improve the safety culture in our companies, keep the business running and, this is also needed, be proactive in promoting some rule's changes

aimed at alleviating the constraints that for many small companies makes the survivability very difficult. If we don't do something today, it might be too late for some of these small companies.

Thank you very much, and I wish you the best in the present 10th EASA Rotorcraft Symposium starting today.

Jaime Arqué

EHA Chairman