

NEWSLETTER

August 2025



EDITORIAL

Dear ESASI Members and Friends,

As the peak of the summer season subsides in Europe, I hope that you have had an opportunity to take a break and recharge before getting back into your routines.

The summer season is also the culmination of a very busy period for the ESASI Committee following the ESASI Seminar, which was held in Vienna, in May, and prior to that, the FocusOn... webinar, in March, dedicated to the topic of Safety Management Systems. Both of these events were attended in large numbers, and the presentations were very well received. Further details about the subjects covered at both events and where to find the presentations are provided in this newsletter.

This period was also one of rest, reflection and reinvigoration for the ESASI Committee as we plan the activities for the future. These include another FocusOn... webinar towards the end of the year and the next ESASI Seminar in 2026, which will once again be held back-to-back with the ECAC ACC meeting. Details will be provided in due course, in coordination with ECAC and our hosts.

Most importantly though, and what I would like to draw your attention to, are the ESASI elections which will take place in November. I would like to invite all of you to consider joining the ESASI Committee, a dynamic and dedicated group of volunteers who work enthusiastically towards organising ESASI's activities and affairs in support of safety investigation activities across Europe and beyond. Additional information is provided in the newsletter.

Finally, I'm pleased to extend a warm welcome to two new members of the ESASI 'family' – Denis Krainov and Pete McCarthy. I look forward to meeting both of you in person in the near future.

A quick reminder: ISASI 2025 will be held in Denver, Colorado, at the end of September and there is still time to register. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Nuno Aghdassi

ESASI Committee: Nuno Aghdassi, President (Portugal); Thorkell Agustsson, European Councillor (Iceland); Robert Carter (UK); Arben Dika (Kosovo); Paula Dugdale (UK); Olivier Ferrante, Secretary (France); Kate Fitzgerald (Ireland); Matt Greaves, Treasurer (UK) and David King (UK)

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ESASI Elections

The next ESASI elections will be held in November 2025 where ESASI individual members will be invited to elect candidates for three seats on the ESASI Committee – two currently serving members, Thorkell Agustsson and Nuno Aghdassi (who are both seeking re-election), and at least one new member for retired former member, Brian McDermid.

All ESASI individual members are strongly encouraged to consider serving on the ESASI Committee; a voluntary, non-remunerated role, which is highly fulfilling as we offer our time, effort and experience in support of others engaged in safety investigation activities across Europe and beyond, striving to exemplify the high standards of diligence and dedication required by our profession, in an active thriving society, which is ESASI.

Further details will be provided by email in October on the ESASI elections and how to stand as a candidate member. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Committee members to learn more about the role, in case you have an interest.

ESASI New Members

ESASI is glad to welcome the following new members to ISASI and ESASI:

- **Mr. Denis Krainov**

Denis Krainov, 33 years old, was born and raised in Estonia, a small and cold northern country. He has a passion for sports, cars and the arts. While his childhood dream was to become a dentist, life led him to a different direction. Today, he holds dual licenses—both EASA and UK ATPL(A). He is an experienced

First Officer on the A330 and A320, with approximately 3,600 total flight hours. He currently works for Heston Airlines, an ACMI company. This type of flying gives him the opportunity to travel extensively and experience a wide variety of operations. Beyond his flying duties, he also serves as a Flight Data Monitoring Officer and Interview Assessor at his current company.



He has always been deeply interested in the safety aspect of aviation, and he particularly enjoys performing Flight Data Monitoring analysis. There is always something new to learn from the data, which helps

enhance both individual and company performance. Denis is passionate about aviation safety, and happy to have discovered ESASI, which promotes this important field. He can be contacted on LinkedIn.

- **Dr. Pete McCarthy**



Pete is Head of Group Human Factors at Cathay Pacific Airways and Director/Co-Founder of The Safety Collaborative, a consultancy dedicated to bringing the latest human factors and safety science into practical application.

He previously spent five years as a Senior Lecturer in Human Factors and Accident Investigation at Cranfield University, delivering training and research across aviation, healthcare, and other high-reliability sectors, including a major safety culture study for the Hong Kong Government Flying Service.

Before academia, Pete served 32 years in the British Army, 25 of them as a helicopter pilot and aircraft commander on global operations. His final tours were as Senior Simulator Instructor at the UK Attack Helicopter Force

and as an Air Accident Investigator with the Military Air Accident Investigation Branch, working alongside the UK AAIB. He holds a PhD in “Investigating Human Performance in Complex Socio-Technical Systems”, a BSc (Hons) in Psychology, and postgraduate qualifications in Education and Accident Investigation.

In his spare time, Pete competes in triathlons around the world, which gives him the chance to explore fantastic cities, beaches, and regions at a very leisurely pace (complete, not compete). He also enjoys trail walking in Hong Kong and travelling in his motorhome with his very patient wife, Beverley.

FocusOn... SMS

ESASI held another of its popular ‘FocusOn...’ webinars on the 5th of March. The theme this time was on SMS (Safety Management Systems).

Approximately 180 delegates dialled in for the online seminar, which was ably chaired by ESASI committee member and Rolls-Royce Air Safety Investigator, Paula Dugdale. The speakers represented a broad spectrum of the aviation community including airlines, regulators, ATC and aviation research.

The seminar opened with a presentation from Cathay Pacific’s Dr. Pete McCarthy who described their proactive approach to gathering safety data, known as ‘adaptive capacity’. Pete was followed by Youri Auroque of EASA, who presented recent regulatory changes in Part 21. Marc St-Laurent from Cranfield University then guided the audience through the relationships between SMS, State Safety Plans and Safety Investigations. The line up of speakers was completed by Martin Timmons of AIRNAV Ireland, who looked at the human side of safety management and described the ‘Incomplete Safety Manager’. Martin included interesting and amusing references to his favourite films to represent his theme.

There was a lively Q&A throughout the seminar, with links to additional useful

information provided in the seminar chat. For those who couldn’t make the seminar, a recording and pdf versions of the presentations are available on the [ESASI website](#).

The ESASI Committee is working towards holding another FocusOn... in Q4 of 2025.

ESASI 2025 Seminar, Vienna

ESASI held its annual seminar in Vienna, Austria, earlier this year on the 14 and 15 of May. ESASI 2025 was attended by over 130 international delegates from across Europe and beyond. Kindly hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure, the seminar was held back-to-back with the ECAC ACC/62 meeting.

The Austrian Federal Director General for Transport, Mrs. Vera Hofbauer, made the opening address at ESASI 2025, welcoming the delegates to Vienna and emphasizing the critical role which safety investigations, and the lessons drawn from this activity, play in aviation safety. The programme contained several presentations on case studies of recent investigations as well as others detailing safety related topics from the different aviation stakeholders. The MASI group, which ESASI supports completely, held its regular meeting in the afternoon of the second day, upon conclusion of the main seminar.

The regular and annual gathering of the European Society is an opportunity for the ESASI Committee to meet with its members and to hold its Annual General Meeting. At the AGM, the ESASI Committee gave an account of its recent and planned activities as well as an overview of its positive financial health, thanks to growing numbers in membership (affiliation with ESASI), the delivery of attractive webinars and seminars, regular communication, and, not least, the active support of its members, as demonstrated, by the large number of participants at ESASI 2025 and sponsorship by Airbus, ATR, Austrian Airlines and Rolls-Royce.

A summary of the presentations of ESASI 2025 is available in the Appendix (Thank you, Rob Carter 🙏) and the presentations themselves can be accessed from the [ESASI website](#). The

AGM report will be sent separately to the newsletter.

ISASI 2025 – Final Call!

Last chance to attend ISASI 2025 which will be held in Denver, Colorado from the **29th of September to the 2nd of October**. Full details will be made available here: [ISASI 2025 Seminar Website](#)



Appendix 1 – ESASI 2025

Summary of presentations at ESASI 2025

The Seminar was opened by Nuno Aghdassi, President of ESASI, thanking our hosts and introducing Vera Hofbauer, General Director of Section Transport in Austria and Bettina Bogner, Head of the (multimodal) Safety Investigation Authority of Austria.

Johannes Woldrich, Head of the Aviation Safety Investigation Board of Austria explained the venue, its facilities and the attractive local area.

Assisting in Investigations - the future SME (Subject Matter Expert) - *Peter Beer, airline pilot and lecturer at University of Applied Science, Graz-Johanneum, Austria*

As a retired airline pilot turned lecturer, Peter was able to explain the wide range of courses available for introducing students to aviation safety as 'subject matter experts' (SMEs). This led to a description of the development of safety investigation from Orville Wright at Fort Myers in 1908 onward, including both accidents and serious incidents, illustrated with a number of case studies.

How the AAIB develops and maintains investigator competency - *Emily Knight, Senior Inspector, Air Accidents Investigation Branch, UK*

Emily described the AAIB processes for introducing and developing new Inspectors over their first two years. These include AAIB induction, health & safety and the Fundamentals and Applied courses at Cranfield University. Further development is important across many technical competencies, different for each individual – an important lesson is “You cannot know everything” and Inspectors need to be able to identify and involve external specialists. Participating in accident simulations with different agencies, such as the Emergency Services, are a useful source of ongoing development.

Is the weather still a safety issue? A pilot perspective - *Bertrand de Courville, airline pilot and aviation consultant*

Bertrand gave a wide background of the influence of weather threats in safety investigations. He discussed the principles of 'anticipation, detection and avoidance' and that extreme weather events are not necessarily the most dangerous. He described the evolution of managing threats such as microbursts, clear air turbulence, pyroclastic eruption and high-altitude ice crystals. Bertrand concluded with discussion of other developing threats and included comments on lightning strikes and hail damage occurring at low altitude.

Flying parachutists – does the system assure safe flights? - *Peter Swaffer for Mats Trense, Swedish investigation authority, SHK*

Peter, standing in for Mats, described a set of accidents in Sweden involving accidents to parachuting aircraft. This has led to ongoing discussions with EASA, as regulator, about topics such as the introduction of formal training for pilots of parachuting aircraft and on the regulation of parachute operations. This has led to work by EASA looking at the mitigation of risk factors in parachuting operations. Alessandro Cometa of EASA was able to respond on EASA activity. Peter concluded with the need for a “robust system” of safety in parachuting aviation “as memories and good practice fade with time”.

SMS in an investigation context - *Sophie Rougé, Airbus Commercial, France*

Sophie described the development of SMS, resulting from the merging of the ‘technical’, ‘human factors’ and ‘organisational’ eras of safety development over 50+ years. She looked at the ICAO Annex 19 regulatory framework, dealing with policy & objectives, risk management, safety assurance and safety promotion, and how the ‘maturity of SMS may be assessed in an organisation. She also stressed the importance of investigators having good experience and knowledge of SMS principles for Annex 13 investigations.

Integrated Protection Management - *Captains Christian Flatschart & Rudolf Buchsteiner, Austrian Airlines*

Rudolf laid out the background and development of Austrian Airlines as a ‘relatively small network carrier’. The presenters went on to describe the Safety and Security arrangements within the airline as well as Compliance Monitoring, everyone having a knowledge of these systems. Christian gave a case history of a B767 engine failure in 2022 operating from IAD (Dulles in Washington DC area). In this instance the ‘Incident Guide’ was not used and there was confusion as to which checklist to use, resulting in internal safety recommendations.

Aerodrome Safety Investigations, a collaborative and evolving approach - *Massimo Catusi, Safety Investigation, Milan Bergamo airport, Italy*

Massimo introduced Milan Bergamo airport, third busiest in Italy. He described the regulatory framework and the investigation process for safety events. He introduced two case studies; one involved a pair of adjacent passenger loading bridges, the other involved Rampflow incidents with delayed taxi times. Massimo quoted the late (and great) James Reason - “*You cannot change the human condition, but you can choose the conditions in which humans operate*”

Aerobatic flight in formation, in-flight collision - *Sorin Dună, Head of Investigation and Analysis, Romania*

Sorin described an accident between two homebuilt Steen Skybolt aerobatic aircraft during formation flight. There was a witness recording with the potential for video and spectral analysis. During the physical examination of the wreckage, items of fuel tank sealant were identified in the fuel system of the upper (inverted) aircraft. This was likely to have resulted in a fuel blockage and loss of engine power, leading to the collision.

AI in state aviation - *Brigadier General Christophe Michel, Director French State aviation safety board*

Christophe described the scope of 'State aviation' in France, of BEA-E as its investigative authority and of the challenges of balancing risk assessment and flight safety. This is especially important with growing 'mission autonomy' in UAVs. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be implanted for many uses. For investigation this requires building technical ability in the state agency and developing trust with AI manufacturers, to be able to evaluate the human/machine interface. Christophe commented that he does not have ready solutions but is happy to lay out the issues.

"Uncontrolled descent" – a case study - *Ragnar Gudmundsson, Safety Investigation Authority, Iceland*

Ragnar described the event, with a B777-300 ER flying from Toronto to Istanbul when it lost some 8,000 ft in one minute. There was a peak rate of descent of 17,000 ft/min, and there were injuries onboard. The wind was southerly and the event was in the lee of substantial mountains, with 'severe turbulence' predicted. The weather conditions were not sufficient to explain the loss of height and the investigation revealed that poorly co-ordinated crew control inputs contributed directly to the severity of the event. The investigation has led to significant safety improvements.

Using Online Flight Trackers in Accident Investigation - *Chris Scott, Senior Inspector, Air Accidents Investigation Branch, UK*

Chris described the evolution in recorded data over his 19 years at the AAIB. There are many automatic processes for collecting the transmissions of aircraft position and altitude, ADS-B being the most prominent. The data is then 'fused' in multiple ways and is then available for replay, download and sale, such as by FlightRadar24, based in Sweden. Chris described how the investigator might access and manage this information, with specialist access to a wider range of information than is normally displayed. This is useful for instance, for 'quick look' initial assessment, checking other data sources and looking for other aircraft in the area of a safety event. Chris gave some AAIB cases and mentioned limitations of using these technologies.

Accident, Van's RV8 I-LOVI and Van's RV7 I-AMEL - *Giulio Rosati, investigator, ANSV, Italy*

Giulio described this accident scenario, with two Van's RV aerobatic aircraft, in 'mirror' flight. The aircraft collided, near a beach, with good video coverage, including within the accident aircraft itself.

There were medical issues identified in the resulting report by the ANSV and the ANSV issued two Safety Recommendations on medical assessment for aerobatic flight.

Post-traumatic stress disorder in Aviation Medicine - Alpo Vuorio, MD and adjunct professor, Finland

Alpo described an in-flight turbulence event involving a Singapore Airlines widebody aircraft. He discussed the prominence of such turbulence events, its implications for diagnosis for post-traumatic stress disorder and as a possible contributory factor in the analysis of aircraft accidents. There are differing assessment protocols between different aviation authorities. Alpo discussed the practical actions that might be taken for people suffering from PTSD and he had a number of recommendations.
