

Opening Statement: Recruiting Online Conference - Recruiting in a changing environment (approx. 4 minutes, video-statement)

Dear participants,

On behalf of FABEC and of DFS which are hosting this InterFAB event, I would like to extend a warm welcome to contributors, organisers and participants to this online recruitment conference, addressing the challenge of recruiting in a changing environment – a topic that is more relevant now than ever before.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic we observed severe changes and new challenges in regard to recruiting future generations of ATC personnel. We were all faced with demographic changes leading to a noticeable lack of qualified employees, which forced us and many other companies, to “fish in the same small pond” of skilled candidates. In order to survive in this so-called war for talent, we needed to further improve our position in the labor market and strengthen our employer attractiveness.

Especially younger, highly skilled talent became a more and more sought-after target group- So, our greatest challenge was to find new ways to attract this generation of digitally-minded, climate-conscious and purpose-seeking people in very competitive circumstances. Since we had a very high need for young talent, our top goal became appealing to the right people at the right time.

And then the pandemic occurred and all of a sudden the whole world seemingly stopped turning. With Covid-19 new challenges were added to the existing situation: When will the traffic reach pre-pandemic levels again? Will the job be the same at that point in time? Does a job in the aviation industry have a future? Does a job in air traffic control fit in with my moral code and sustainable lifestyle? Do I still want to work in the aviation industry at all? Questions candidates have in their minds in perceived insecure times like this, to which we as an ANSP need to have sound answers. Therefore, it is now more important than ever to invest in our reputation as a reliable, sustainable and attractive employer of choice.

Latest forecasts predict we will not reach pre-pandemic traffic levels until 2025. Looking at the last few months we all know how volatile traffic developments can be and will probably continue to be as long as travel restrictions due to Covid-19 across the world come and go. Nevertheless, despite the uncertainty we face regarding the point in time when traffic picks up again, we must not be complacent. It would be a mistake to be too cautious. The opposite is the case: we need to continue our recruiting efforts to have the post-Covid generation of our ATC personnel on board when we need them. I am very glad that this is seen as a common sense viewpoint among ANSPs. And there is another momentum we must not lose: the time to shape and build the “Digital Single European Sky” is right now. Therefore, we need highly skilled people with a digital mind-set, who are enthusiastic about pushing the aviation industry towards the next digital level.

So, how do we convince the new generation that working for an ANSP is and will always be an excellent choice? Which arguments, which channels and ways of addressing potential candidates do we need to explore to meet our future needs for operational, technical and administrative personnel? These are questions which I know all of us have and which I would like to invite you to discuss today.

My colleagues will guide you through the day with their deep knowledge and experience. I wish you and your families all the best in these difficult times. Please stay healthy, optimistic and enthusiastic about our industry!