



Dear guests, delegates, observers and companions,

I would like to welcome everybody for attending and thank our Serbian affiliates for their considerable efforts to organizing this congress and also their hospitality.

As I always advocate, annual congresses are also social events and as such any I address a special thanks to the companions/spouses who have had to put up with all of us.

It is therefore more important that we make sure that the social part is always successful otherwise we are in danger of losing the support.

As regards the period between this AC and previous one many things have happened and especially as regards industrial action support.

I thought that what happened with Serbians was wonderful and this single action epitomized what AEI stands for and not only but it has proven that in the event of industrial action proper management procedures have to be applied in order to result in a positive outcome which of course is the reaching of consensus between the parties. As such AEI will have to learn by the experiences of its affiliates.

Although we have been described at times as technocrats and specialists in our field

We must not forget our roots which are purely union work.

AEI has to uphold safety, standards etc but it has to protect and promote the Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer.

We always welcome new members but we are now in a situation where we have to consolidate our position especially in the rapidly changing aviation environment.

This is especially evident considering the affiliation of our United States colleagues, Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association, AMFA, something which we consider as a landmark in the evolution of our Organization.

In order to help ourselves we need to help our employers i.e. the airlines and maintenance organizations but also the authorities as well and as such we consider ourselves and are indeed accepted as stakeholders.

We must also make sure that engineers are not turned against each other by using idle labor in case of industrial action.

We have managed, over the last year to improve our relations with the Industry and the Authorities and especially EASA and as such we feel that by being critical on occasion, we actually help them out in resolving serious problems.

I feel that at this time our main concern is to consolidate the situation as far as the existing regulations are concerned especially taking into consideration the effort and man-hours spent in terms of preparing and approving them.

We must therefore be very vigilant as the implementation of the various rules by the NAA's has become perhaps the most serious standing problem.

I wish you all a pleasant stay and a very successful annual congress and many thanks to our Serbian colleagues and in particular the organizing committee. And after a special warm Welcome to AMFA colleagues from USA.

I declare this congress to be open for business.