THALES AND ENAC JOIN FORCES TO SHAPE THE AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OF THE FUTURE

News / Airports / Routes, Manufacturer

Thales and ENAC (École Nationale de l'Aviation Civile), the French Civil Aviation University, announce a strategic partnership aimed at shaping the future of air transport, focusing on two key areas: R&D: accelerate innovation and the deployment of AI-based solutions for safer, smarter, and more sustainable air traffic management; Training: expand the training offering in aeronautical engineering and air traffic management, in order to support the evolution of air traffic controller professions and meet the recruitment needs of a changing aeronautics industry.

Olivier Chansou,ENAC Director commented: "With Thales, we are creating a unique ecosystem where academic research meets real-world expertise. Our students and researchers will benefit from an inspiring environment to prepare and imagine the aviation industry of 2050."

Youzec Kurp, Vice-President, Airspace Mobility Solutions, Thales stated: "This partnership with ENAC is key to our open innovation strategy. Together, we will accelerate progress in critical technologies for safer, smarter, and more sustainable aviation, while training talent to acquire the skills needed to manage today's and tomorrow's complex and dynamic ATM ecosystem."

Joint research and innovation for advanced ATM solutions

By combining Thales' expertise in air traffic control systems, AI, cybersecurity, and embedded

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technologies with ENAC’s academic excellence in research, regulation, and talent development, the partnership will focus on joint research and validation of advanced concepts. Together, the two partners will tackle the challenges facing the aviation industry and develop innovative concepts for the air traffic management of tomorrow.

Key initiatives include AI-based air traffic management and airspace optimisation solutions designed to help airlines optimise fuel consumption, as well as the development of next-generation ATC systems to enhance flight safety, optimise air traffic flow, and improve flight trajectories, with the aim of reducing aviation-related CO? emissions by around 10%.

The partnership will also create new opportunities to enrich career pathways - from initial training, through doctoral studies, to research positions - ensuring a better alignment between academic education and the evolving needs of the aerospace industry.

Training – putting people at the heart of aeronautical innovation

ENAC (École Nationale de l’Aviation Civile) is a comprehensive and multidisciplinary institution offering high-level education and training across all aviation professions, including programmes in aeronautical engineering and air transport, as well as pilot and air traffic controller training programmes.

This memorandum of understanding covers various cooperation initiatives, particularly regarding the development of educational offerings for students, with the aim of better addressing changes in the air traffic control sector and, more broadly, the evolving needs of the aeronautics industry — especially for engineers and managers with a comprehensive understanding of the aviation ecosystem.

Thales and ENAC will strengthen their joint approach, including in the export of their combined expertise. This collaboration is already demonstrated in Mongolia, where Thales’ ATM system is deployed alongside ENAC’s training programme, ensuring optimal use of advanced technologies.

Among the key ambitions of the partnership are increasing the presence of women in aviation and making the sector even more attractive to the talent of tomorrow.

This partnership could foster a collaborative and open ecosystem for aerospace by welcoming new stakeholders - such as start-ups, research laboratories, and institutions - to participate in and contribute to targeted projects.

The agreement was signed on 27 May, at Airspace World Lisbon, for a minimum duration of three years.

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