



European Union



नागर विमानन मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CIVIL AVIATION

सत्यमेव जयते

‘Women in Aviation’ session at EU-India Aviation Summit, 20-21 April

Date: 20 April, 2023

Time: 18:45 – 19:30 hrs IST

Venue: Nilgiri Room (ground floor), The Oberoi Hotel, New Delhi

Co-hosted by: the European Union & the Government of India

Context:

Women still have to claim their place in the world of work, especially in sectors that are not aligned with the societally constructed gender roles for women. The aviation sector is one such, where women remain under-represented as pilots, as well as in maintenance, repair and overhaul. This can result of lack of role models and stereotyped views that women do not have the abilities needed to fly or repair an aircraft, and the lack of encouragement for women to choose careers in aviation¹. In EU, it is reflected in the fact that despite aviation’s labour pool being 40% women (according to SESAR 3 Joint undertaking), the presence of women in aviation’s high visibility role of commercial pilots stands only at 4-5%, and women’s representation is highest as flight attendants.

The lack of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) has been a major factor for lesser women in the aviation sector. There is also a lack of knowledge about the requirement and the selection procedure for the aviation sector. High education and training costs to become pilots -or even flight attendants- are also a deterrent. With growing staff shortages in all areas of the transport sector, aviation cannot afford to ignore half of the talent pool. A culture shift is needed to bring women into aviation in a meaningful way. It requires consistent leadership commitment and support over time, both from government and industry.

Purposeful attention to recruitment, retention and advancement of women in aviation is required to improve access to all those seeking an opportunity for careers. This includes adequate and attractive working conditions in the sector, which will benefit all staff.

Many companies have undertaken initiatives to encourage women staff and retain them. Indigo and Vistara for example offer ground duties for pregnant flight cabin staff and pilots. Several companies offer pick-up and drop-off service to ensure the safety of women. Airbus invites female secondary school students to visit their facilities. Eurocontrol hosted in 2022 the Aviation4Girls Day in Brussels. IATA has launched its ‘25by2025 campaign’, which is a voluntary commitment by IATA member airlines to advance gender diversity in the airline industry.

EU action: The European Commission set up in 2017 the ‘Women in Transport – Platform for Change’ to help strengthen women's employment and equal opportunities in the transport sector.

¹ Houston, S., 2018. “8 misconceptions about women and sexism in aviation”, The balance careers.



European Union



नागर विमानन मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CIVIL AVIATION

सत्यमेव जयते

Moreover, the Commission has published Educational Toolkits to help fight gender stereotypes to help women and girls overcome gender-stereotypes and raise interest in STEM studies and transport related jobs. Finally, the Commission has also published good practices and recommendations on rostering and staff scheduling in the transport sector to improve work-life balance for all staff.

The India Scenario: India has the highest percentage of female pilots globally according to the International Society of Women Airline Pilots, with about 12.4% of all pilots being women, compared with 5.5% in the US, the world's largest aviation market, or 5% in the EU.

Many Indian women are drawn to flying through an air wing of the National Cadet Corps, a youth program where students are trained to operate microlight aircraft. To make the expensive commercial pilot training more accessible to women, it is subsidised by some state governments. Companies such as Honda Motor Co. give full scholarships for an 18-month course at an Indian flying school and help them get jobs. The Indian Air Force began recruiting women pilots for helicopters and transport aircraft back in the 1990s. Recently they allowed women to take up fighter roles too. Effort has also been made to recruit women into STEM positions, including pilots. The Ministry of Civil Aviation in India is pushing for growth in the number of female pilots, which needs to be accompanied by making STEM accessible at the grassroots.

The aviation industry however is much more than pilots, and more efforts need to be made to have a better representation in the broad aviation spectrum beyond commercial & military pilots, such as mechanical engineers, aeronautical engineers, technicians, astronauts, entrepreneurs, AMEs, air traffic controllers, academicians, researchers, aviation journalists, flight attendants, airport managers and ground staff.

Efforts are being made but they are few and far between. As the world today is at a cusp, and innovation and digitalisation will mean new types of transport jobs, especially in a rapidly expanding sector like aviation. This opens up an opportunity to build a transformative agenda for gender equality. Priority theme: Innovation, technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Session theme:

UN Women India and the European Union propose a discussion during the India -EU summit on Civil Aviation, with a panel focused on **'Unlocking Potential for Women's Inclusion and Leadership in Aviation'**.



European Union



नागर विमानन मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CIVIL AVIATION

सत्यमेव जयते

Objectives:

1. To increase awareness of good practices and experiences by India and the EU on women's inclusion in aviation
2. To deliberate on opportunities and challenges for women's participation and leadership in STEM leading to the aviation sector
3. To discuss concrete steps to promoting women's leadership in the overall aviation industry

Session Brief: Speakers are invited to contribute to the following key areas:

1. India's vision on Women-led Development through inclusion of women in aviation.
2. Public Private Partnership as a lever for women's greater and safe access to varied employment opportunities in aviation.
3. Innovative approaches to bring women into STEM.
4. Recommendations for enhancing women's leadership in the aviation industry.

Target Audience:

- Government of India and EU
- Private Sector representatives of the aviation industry

Agenda:

18:45 - 18:50	Welcome Address and Opening Remarks	H.E. Andreas Carlson Minister for Infrastructure & Housing, Sweden
18:50 - 18:55	Special message	H.E. Adina Vălean European Commissioner for Transport via video message
19:00 - 19:25	Panel Discussion 'Unlocking potential for women's inclusion and leadership in Aviation'	Moderated by: Ms Susan Ferguson , Country Representative, UN Women, India Panellists: Captain Zoya Agarwal , Pilot, Air India Ms Rachel Daeschler , Certification Director, European Union Aviation Safety Agency Mr Pieter Elbers , CEO, Indigo Mr Ajay Singh , Chairperson and Managing Director, SpiceJet Ltd.
19:25 - 19:30	Special Address	H.E. Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia , Union Minister of Civil Aviation, GoI via video message