

The AsMA Global Connection Story via Our GLOC (Global Liaison and Outreach Committee)

Roland Vermeiren, M.D., FAsMA

Dear readers, members and friends of AsMA,

In this final edition of our global connection story, I would like to highlight our renewed GLOC, the former International Activities Committee. No, the name does not stand for a well-known sudden situation in military aviation (G-force induced loss of consciousness), or for a special Austrian kind of gun, but for our AsMA Global Liaison and Outreach Committee (name given by former president David Gradwell)!

I'm especially attached to this committee because it was totally reshaped during my term as Vice President for International Services. We changed the international perspective to global, since nowadays we don't have international versus U.S. members anymore at AsMA, as we are all "members"! We also changed the goal of the committee from being mainly a support for non-U.S. AsMA members, to an interactive tool from and for the global aviation medicine community: AsMA wants to support scientific activities where needed (e.g., sending funded speakers), but also likes to get information about what is being organised and what is happening in our professional domains worldwide. This will help to realise a global network and create possibilities to support each other.

As the International Activities Committee we only had one chair and one vice-chair, and it was obviously impossible for them to have an overview of what was happening all over the world. We, therefore, divided the globe into 7 regions (N. America, S. America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Far East, and Oceania) each with a vice-chair who should collect information about their regions and bring information about AsMA activities to them.



Felix Porras

Currently the (3rd) Chair of the GLOC is Felix Porras from Mexico, a very good friend of mine, and also a very good musician, who at every AsMA Scientific Meeting finds a piano to play.

So Felix, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself?

Hi, I am Felix Porras, M.D. Born in Mexico and graduate of Universidad Veracruzana

Medical School. I have been certified by the Mexican Board of Aerospace Medicine since 2005 and am a founding member of the Mexican College of Aerospace Medicine. Currently I'm the director of the medical services of Los Cabos International Airport in San Jose del Cabo, Baja California Sur. I have been practicing as a flight surgeon since 1998 and have for 20 years been a Medical Adviser to all major airlines operating at this destination. I have conducted major emergency drills at the airport, I teach CPR courses for all airport personnel and was a CPR instructor for air ambulance pilots in the Rainbow Air Academy at Long Beach California Airport.

What is your and their relationship with AsMA and since how long has it been in existence?

I have been an active member since 2000, currently an Associate Fellow, as well as an active member of the Airlines Medical Directors Association since 2005.

I have been an active member of the Society of U.S. Naval Flight Surgeons since 2004 and of the International Association of Military Flight Surgeon Pilots since 2008, and formerly represented the Iberoamerican Association in the Science and Technology Committee of AsMA. As an active member of the Aerospace Human Factors Association since 2016, I was Vice-chairman in the same year for S. America in the Global Liaison and Outreach Committee, and have been the Chairman of the GLOC since 2017.

What is the role of your GLOC committee?

Enhancing communication amongst aeromedical specialists all over the world, and encouraging interaction in the scientific field. We are currently in the process of analyzing the Associate Membership proposed by the President, Dr. Roland Vermeiren. Also the vice-chairs for all 7 regions of the world are enlisting countries that have Aeromedical Associations and those which do not as yet, in order to reach out to every possible practitioner of our specialty to promote knowledge updating and standardize criteria.

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CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: President@asma.org • **Web site:** www.asma.org • **Facebook:** Aerospace Medical Association • **Twitter:** @Aero_Med

What works well in this relationship and what could be improved in our collaboration?

It will be very beneficial to create a mechanism for interaction with the Airlines Medical Directors Association and several committees of AsMA involved in the same objectives (Membership, Education and Training, etc.). Promoting specific specialties within the daily aeromedical practice could be very useful, such as aeronautical psychology and dentistry, researching what they do in those fields in every country of all regions.

Do you have ideas for AsMA?

Increasing our membership by reaching out to countries that so far have been isolated from scientific aeromedical education. It is of paramount importance to involve younger generations in our branch of specialty.

Do you have an interest in participating further in the work or leadership of the Association?

Yes, of course. I am willing to contribute practically the whole year!

My dear colleagues and friends, with this edition of the Journal our trip through the world's organisations and association comes to an end. I could have, and would have, interviewed many more active colleagues and specialists all over the world, because there are a lot more of regional activities, but I did not have the time and place to give them the floor, for which I offer my heartfelt apologies. But obviously it is time for a new AsMA President and new accents in our Journal:

I wish my friend Dr Joe Ortega all the best for his term! In the meantime, I hope you will consider becoming an active member of our GLOC committee, which is open to all, and yourself become a part of our AsMA Global Connection Story!

Amicaliter, Roland