Region Report - Quarter 2 2014

The first quarter of 2014 started positively with the appointment of Callum McLoughlin as Strategic Development Director for VATEUR, who immediately began strengthening communication channels between all divisions and vACCs and the VATEUR team.

Work has been ongoing at regional level, in consultation with key divisional leaders, to produce official guidance on partnerships with virtual flying organizations. When launched in Q2, this will be the first pillar in the region led strategy to increase and improve participation on the network.

There has been renewed energy in the development of unofficial vACCs within VATEUD with a number of meetings taking place to gather information and views on the best way forward for later decision-making and implementation.

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Member Retention (Cathy Mariani-1183082)	If we monitor the situation in the world community of Flight Sim enthusiasts, the in-terest in the hobby of desktop aviators seems to be stable, slightly reducing but still quite powerful. Xplane and P3D are developments into the right direction. But never-theless; they don't explain the stable numbers of new members flowing in. The EUD setup with its 32 entities currently holds approx. 20.000 active (non sus-pended or inactivated) members. Overall, the numbers of new registrations of the first six months of 2014 (in reference the numbers of 2013) don't look too bad:

	VATSIM	EUD	%	lost
1.01.2014 - 30.06.2014	15072	4325	28,70%	144
1.01.2013 - 30.06.2013	12699	3698	29,12%	240
	118,7%	117,0%	98,5%	

These numbers indicate the new and active member's collection (CERT) in the global circus and the EUD part of it. All over all, we see a small increase of members in the first six months of 2014.

If we take the number of lost members (inactive or suspended), we see a bigger difference to the 2013 numbers. Currently, we can keep more members than in the last period. This gets more visible if we see the two periods before: 2012 roughly 700, 2011 approx. 500 members.

It seems to be that a number of initiatives to ease the entry to our hobby have worked out. Furthermore, we don't have to underestimate the different events shap-ing the community. The most important event for the last roughly ten years was the W14 meeting in Vienna. Despite all the management issues (especially those during the finalization of the project), the W14 team of VATSIM Austria did an outstanding job. I don't think that the meeting can be topped the next decades. And finally, we have to keep in mind that the numbers of 2013 also show the fact that members leaving had more time to leave.

To take care of member administration and contact, I am happy to have Cathy Mariani VATEUD4 and Laurent Laborde VATEUD5 in the team. For an effective member handling it becomes really necessary to rethink the current VATSIM DB setup. Espe-cially for the daily work on the db, the structure needs to become handier, more modern.

ATC Training (Mike Welten – 971511)	ATC was one of the setups that faced a team change within the last six months. My big thanks go to the outgoing leads Kay Wesche and Georg Lauenstein, who did a great job in the positions. With the takeover by our new ATC Team leads Mike Wel-ten and Nicolas Ammann, ATC is getting reshaped on a few areas. Currently the discussion about the INS-grading in the EUD theatre is reaching a final discussion phase. Furthermore, both strive to setup ATC Training in the line between both ob-stacles, best possible ATC training placed in the communities, and the need of a faster reach of the ATC-rating. On this way we will discuss possible achievements and blocking procedures and will bring them into the discussion with the following entities. A possible way to get the local mentor's workload reduced would be the setup of a class system that – in the basic steps – could be archived by self-studies and a check system.

VATSIM states an "as real as it gets" around all we do. That's absolutely a correct move to reach the best setup for our members while being online. But we shouldn't measure the strategy onto those of our real world ATC counter parts. Our traffic is flowing differently to the real world. In reality there won't be group flights from A to B with midsized passenger jets. Therefore we need to do what real life ATC companies would do in our position: orchestrate ATC setups to our reality. In this light, we would like to rethink a couple of current setups.

Without a doubt, VATEUD is striving for a better ATC service. Most controllers are simply doing a great job in the surge of evening in- and outbound traffic. However, since quality seems to be on the right way, predictability will get the needed focus. An ATC station coming online for 30 minutes to find out that there is no traffic in the vicinity and then logs off again; this scenario is helping nobody. We need an ATC booking,

	combined with the promise to stay online for that time. If we don't, a pilot would prepare a flight due to online situation and - since the ATC made up his/her mind and disappearing again - land on Unicom. Furthermore, the upper air traffic stations are the basis for ATC training on lower positions. The groups doing ATC should think of a kind of Collective intelligence and work together.
Pilot Training (Burak Bugday - 983451)	The role of the single pilot in the support of the Division played a small role for a long time: they were more or less invisible to the vACC's. Thankfully, the position is changing. The offers by the Division and its entities to the single member have been increased in the last year by e.g. offering the Pilots Training and Rating Programs. But this can be just a startup. The Pilots Training Scheme is quite successful. Last years main objective was to appoint new instructors to the PTD Team as the number of instructors was starting to be not enough to continue healthy operations. For that, the rollout for the P5 Training needed to be held until instructors and examiners were available. The setup of Pilots training needed to combine all participating entities with e.g. part-nership structures over borders. Starting the PTD scenario, it was complicated to get all instances running. Luckily, we have now trainings up from P1 to P4. Since VATSIM PTD started the P1-ratubg without practical examinations, we were able to concentrate more on P2 and P4 training and examinations to take advantage of this reduction. And this paid off. Once appointing more instructors and examiners we will start work again on the P5 project hopefully to complete our initial goal for the VATEUD PTD. You can find the details at http://ptd.vateud.net/statistics In this light, I would like to thank our VATEUD3, Burak Bugday, and Duarte Folgado VATEUD11, very much for their hard work to make the PTD successful. VATSIM doesn't differ between pilots and ATC trained members. The only difference is the rating one needs to man an ATC station. Indeed: Pilots are equal to ATC mem-bers. They have their place in the vACC. VATSIM doesn't differ between both groups. Every vACC community needs to be open to integrate pilots into their lines. The closer a vACC group binds pilots to their community, the easier it can be to get some traffic for e.g. the trainings.
Web Services (Vacant)	The changes in the EUD Staff made it necessary to reorganize parts of it. My huge thanks go to outgoing Svilen Vassilev for his exemplary great work in the excellently created and hatched VATEUD Web Services. The whole setup with all the systems (e.g. api.vateud.net) is perfectly done and even better documented. No wonder that the api is in use and basis for many services in- and outside of VATEUD. New in the function is Rahul Parkar, VATEUD7. He is real life programmer and de-signer for a global media company seated in London. My thanks go to him for facing the challenge. All over all, we need to setup more services on Division level than to create own service on each vACC site. Since most of the local tasks are always following the same needs, it would make sense to develop an standard vACC package that deliv-ers all needed features but also creates space for the local tasks e.g. branding, edit-ing local functions and. In that ride I would also like to mention the GNG setup to create sector files out of a Division Database instead of doing each edit by local designers. It must be our focus to give the communities the time and space for the community work and unblocked by all the management functions in the side arms of the entities. It would make sense to think of a CMS package easily to administrate. It doesn't make really sense that each member organizing entity develops an own service. We will follow that thought in the next months.
Events (Florian Harms- 841181)	Marketing on a Division level means to feed both parts, the externals and the inter-nals. Internal marketing follows a member community strategy, while external mar-keting tries to place the area into the media. Both are real challenging jobs and I am really thankful to have Daniel Conrad as VATEUD6 aside. The last three quarters were completely filled with more or less one task: the W14.ME VATSIM Global Conference in Vienna. I can't express more thanks to the crew around our VATEUD6, Daniel Conrad, with all his co-organizers for setting up such a great event. Who ever had the task to organize a global conference will surely remember the challenge. But to organize a W14, with all its obstacles and problems, without a

budget for a rough number between 100 and 250 members; this is strong tobacco. I really have to admit: they have done a GREAT job. Our all thanks goes to Daniel, Stephan and all team organizers around W14 mainly from VATSIM Austria. I am sure that we will have to wait for a long time to find something such exceptional again in VATSIM.

We are trying to enable a regularly communication setups to reach directly the mem-bers. Plans are already growing and we are real confident that a better informed member would use our network and services more often. As side effect, we establish direct connections to our members and therefore fight the problems of feeling lost.

VATRUS - Division Director: Evgeny Vygornitsky 862364

Member Retention	Most of the cases when Member Support is needed are wrong registrations or registrations with the Cyrillic letters. In this case, we have a web link to a good visual explanation on how to register in the Vatsim network and what are the common mistakes when registering. Other cases of the Member support are explaining the users of what the Pilot and ATC learning and what the procedures to enter training departments are. Another important thing is Member retention. After successful fly-ins or other events, some people want to come back and revive their Vatsim accounts. They can write email to the Division Director or his deputy and have their IDs recovered.
ATC Training	A new program and a procedure for training department is implemented.
Pilot Training	VATRUS "Strigino" (UWGG) Training Centre is actively working. A lot of new exercises have been published. Pilot Training seems to be very attractive to our new pilots.
Events	[Apr 17 17-20z] Petesburg Pulkovo - Helsinki Vantaa - http://forum.vatrus.info/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=230 [May 24 12-16z] Petersburg Primary radar only - http://forum.vatrus.info/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=238
Other Comments	

VATUK - Division Director: Kris Thomson 989754

Member Retention (Barrie Joplin 1002707 & Simon Irvine 858680)	VATSIM UK is continuing to assess areas in which the member experience can be improved upon - with a particular slant towards community aspects, including the forum and TeamSpeak. We are hoping to understand better the experiences of the membership through a number of initiatives enabling continual to improvement of our services.
ATC Training (Jamie Fox 811029)	We have improved the S1 restrictions at Gatwick. The period of validating of Gatwick GND S1 endorsements has been extended to 1 year, reducing the training burden of providing repeated refresher mentoring while retaining the advantages of the current system. At the same time, to remove any confusion about the system, we've made clearly available the list of qualified controllers, and implemented a clear syllabus with mentor training to ensure that endorsements are granted in a consistent way. In addition to GND, with effect from 6th September 2014, an endorsement will also be required to control Gatwick DEL. We have also this quarter made further improvements to the introductory scheme for new controllers. Group sessions are now made available for booking later - around 5 days prior to the session. This will provide less chance for potential attendees to forget about the session, reducing the loss of capacity that occurs as a result.
Pilot Training (Nayan Mehta 1073673)	Since the end of Q2 we have conducted 24 P2 mentoring sessions. This number has the potential to be higher, however due to many cancellations by students we have seen a lot of wasted time and resources. In addition we have conducted 61 P1 mentoring sessions. This number has dipped since the launch of the VATSIM Pilot Academy, though we do still see some students with P1s that approach us for the practical element of our P1 training. With more members holding a P1, we have seen an increase in P2 session requests, which has proved difficult to tackle due to a human resource deficit, a constant battle the department faces. Thus we have had to enforce a training waiting list for our P2 training course. We currently have 11 students on our waiting list. We launched our P3 course on the 1st June. We currently have 4 students in P3 training.
Operations (Kris Thomson 989754)	An update has been released for "Virtual Controller Assistant", a controlling plugin which is compatible with the new Euroscope 3.2 client. The VATSIM UK websites will be integrated with the new central VATSIM Single Sign On (SSO) system at the end of June. Also, a website redesign is in initial planning stages and discussions are ongoing regarding the visual design of it.

A new letter of agreement was established between VATSIM UK and vACC France (VATEUD), updating the previous document according to new changes in airspace structure over the Channel and around the Channel Islands.

Events
(Simon Irvine 858680)

We began this quarter with the "Iceland Oceanic Shuttle" which involved aircraft flying between Edinburgh and Reykjavik. This was a popular event as it gave pilots (and controllers) a chance to practice their Oceanic skills outwith transatlantic crossings.

Our intra-UK event this quarter centred on Glasgow and Stansted and was called "East meets West". Pilots flew between the two airports receiving full ATC from ground to area. The relatively short distance meant that pilots were able to do more than one leg.

We took part in two legs of the pan-Europe event "Summer Sun". We were proud to be involved in the inaugural event between Gatwick and Palma in May. We also took part in in the event between Birmingham and Nice. These events have been very popular with both pilots and controllers. We will also be involved in another of the Summer Sun legs next quarter.

The South East RTS organised an event to coincide with the closure of Manston Airport. This was popular with both pilots flying VFR along with their IFR colleagues flying in much larger tin.

Our main Marketing activity this quester centred about the Flight Simulator show which takes place at Weston Super Mare in the Southwest of England on the 17th and 18th of May. We had around 20 of our members attend to explain what VATSIM was to the general public. We also had live controlling and flying on the network take place on and adjacent to our exhibit stand. This was very popular and we received some excellent feedback from both our members who attended and from the wider general public. This event coincided with a Bristol Real Ops which took place over the two days.

The Division also announced VATSIM UK Live! 2014. This will take place again at Conference Aston in Birmingham on the 30th and 31st of August. This event gives our members the opportunity and meeting up along with flying and controlling for 2 days. We already have nearly 50 people signed up to attend, showing its increase in popularity from the previous 2 years.