



# **QUARTER 4 2025 BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING MINUTES**

## **WARNING**

**Information contained in this document is  
intended for flight simulation purposes only.**

## Control Pages

### *Document Identification*

Document Identification	
Department	Board of Governors
Type	Meeting Minutes
Version	1.0
Issue Date	26 Jan 2026
Identification	BoG 2025Q4 Meeting Minutes

### *Version Records*

Version Number	Date	Description of Change	Author
0.1	19 Jan 2026	Initial draft	DD
0.2	23 Jan 2026	Incorporated requested updates	DD
1.0	25 Jan 2026	Release	DD

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## 1 Opening and Roll Call

The meeting was opened at 2003 UTC on 17 Jan 2026 by Don Desfosse.

DD opened the meeting by thanking all for their trust and confidence and support in his new role as VATSIM President, and recognized and thanked TB for all of his contributions and successes over the last 4 years.

### 1.01 *In Attendance*

Don Desfosse (DD) –President

Mani Manigault (MM) – Vice President, Americas Region

Anastasios Stefopoulos (AS) – Vice President, Asia Pacific Region

Matt Cianfarani (MC) – Vice President, Technology

Nick Cavacini (NC) – Vice President, Supervisors

Nicola Felini (NF) – Vice President, Standards and Compliance

Alan Cooke (AC) – Vice President, Membership

Roger Curtiss (RC) – Vice President, Virtual Airlines and Special Operations

Rob Shearman, Jr. (RS) – Vice President, Pilot Training

Jannes van Gestel (JVG) – Vice President, Marketing and Communications

Tim Barber (TB) – BoG Member at Large

### 1.02 *Regrets*

Simon Irvine (SI) – Vice President, Europe, Middle East, Africa Region

### 1.03 *Ad hoc Votes Since the Last Meeting (DD)*

The question of "To approve and publish the 2025Q3 BoG Meeting Minutes" has been resolved.

Results: With 11 votes Yes, 0 votes No, and 0 votes Abstain, the motion has carried.

The question of "To approve, adopt, and publish the Code of Regulations Draft version 20251018 as the VATSIM Code of Regulations for a target implementation date of 15 NOV 2025" has been resolved.

Results: With 9 votes Yes, 0 votes No, and 0 votes Abstain, the motion has carried.

The question of "To approve, adopt, and publish the Code of Conduct Draft version 20251018 as the VATSIM Code of Conduct for a target implementation date of 15 NOV 2025, but not before the Code of Regulations update." has been resolved.

Results: With 9 votes Yes, 0 votes No, and 0 votes Abstain, the motion has carried.

The question of "To elect a VATSIM President" has been resolved.

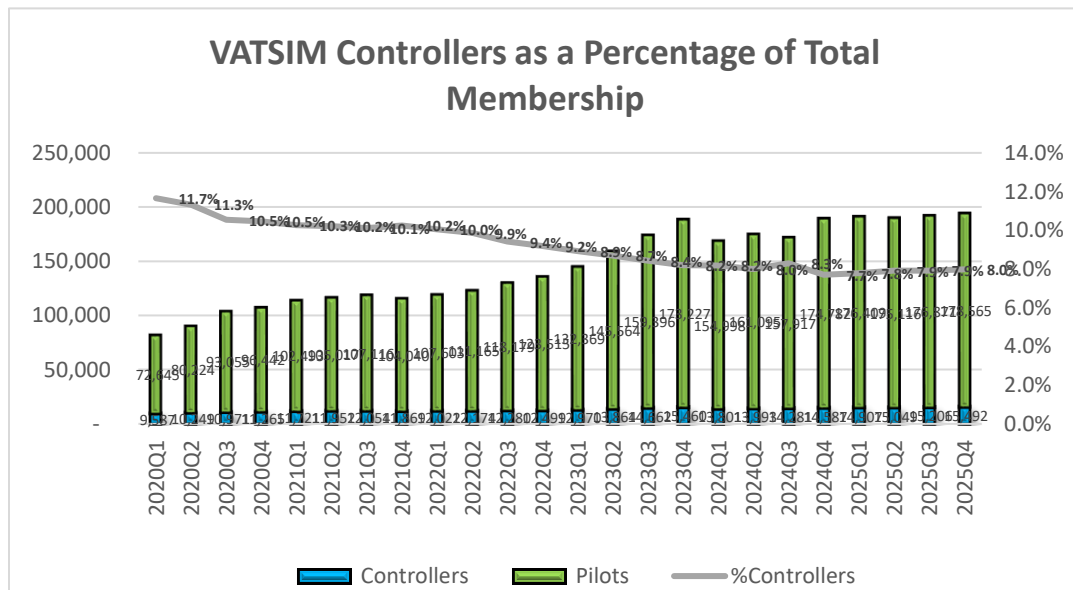
Results: Don Desfosse was elected VATSIM President, effective 01 Jan 2026.

## 2 Key Metrics

### 2.01 Membership Key Metrics (AC)

We currently have 194,057 active membership accounts. We're averaging 55 new accounts per day.

- 178,565 (92%) hold a Pilot/Observer rating
- 15,492 (8%) hold an ATC, Supervisor or Administrator rating



## 2.02 *VATSIM Funding Status (DD)*

VATSIM currently has operating reserves in the contingency fund for at least 12 months of operation on the assumption that monthly expenses remain relatively constant at around \$1,350 per month on average. Tech continues to find ways to reduce expenditures, which has been necessary due to a reduction in donations. We have scaled back services prioritizing maintaining user experience as best possible under the circumstances.

Our 2025 donation totals were 16% less than our 2024 donations, from 12% fewer donors, which is impacting our ability to improve and grow our services to our community. Twelve percent of our donations were one-time donations; 88% were recurring donations. Recurring donations, though of course can be changed at any time, help with our ability to budget with greater confidence and help lower the risk of sustainability. We will need to make a renewed call for donations to the community in the next few months.

## 3 Old Business

### 3.01 *Technical Project Pipeline and Status (MC)*

Tech focus has been primarily on audio issues and stability. That work continues into the first quarter of 2026. Key priorities include:

- Audio issues and stability, including refactor (2026Q1)
- Better overall tech project management and visibility
- Improved ability to vet and onboard new developers with critical infrastructure systems

### 3.02 *Policy Update Status (DD)*

DD presented an update on current policy review and update status. All policies that were due for review and update have been reviewed and updated. There are 3 policies due for review in the next quarter, which we discussed to ensure the reviewers were aware. Noted that the User Agreement and Code of Regulations and Privacy Policies were updated for the new minimum age requirement.

### 3.03 *Code of Regulations and Code of Conduct Update Status (NC)*

Feedback has generally been positive with the updated CoC and CoR. Reviewed feedback that, not surprisingly with the number of people involved, there has been some variation with respect to understanding and enforcement, particularly with respect to CoC A14 changes, which addressed a much firmer stance on requiring voice. Discussed that some controllers were violating CoC by absolutely refusing to provide service to non-full-voice (/v/) pilots, and/or were walloping every pilot who presented as receive-only (/r/) or text-only (/t/), which is definitely not in the spirit nor the letter of the latest updates. BoG discussion confirmed intent to require stronger full-voice participation, yet be as accommodating as possible for those who cannot participate full-voice. Discussed that non-full voice pilots should expect delays commensurate with ATC activity (e.g. busy controllers, busy events, etc.), but controllers are not expected to ignore non-full-voice pilots nor enact retributory delays. DD asked the Regional VPs to underscore with their divisions and subdivisions that controllers are there to control, and not try to enforce CoC.

The BoG will discuss potential wording updates to CoC A14 over the next quarter to clarify intent and policy.

Noted that CoR was updated on 01 Jan 2026 to reflect minimum age requirement.

### *3.04 Advisory Frequency Status and Update (NC)*

VATPAC has asked to join the list of divisions that participates fully in the Advisory Frequency program. Discussed that Tech needs to enable API allowing for view/update of Advisory frequencies for VATPAC, and there should be a one-month communication and awareness campaign prior to implementation (lesson learned from prior implementations). Target date for implementation preliminarily set for 01 May, but will check that with the division to obtain their desires. VATPAC has subsequently asked if implementation could happen earlier, by 01 Apr.

MM mentioned that VATMEX and VATCAR had requested to exit the Advisory Frequency program. The Division Directors cite the same initial concerns that VATUSA and VATCAN experienced, namely lack of use and understanding. It was noted that neither VATMEX nor VATCAR sponsored the same types of awareness, education and training comms that VATUSA and VATCAN did to help promote adoption and normalization. It was also noted that Advisory/CTAF frequencies are used in Mexico and the Caribbean, so VATSIM's use of Advisory/CTAF is realistic.

Action: MM to work with his DDs to actively engage awareness, education and outreach, and to report back to the BoG at the April meeting with results.

### 3.05 *VATSIM Minimum Age Requirement Change Implementation (DD)*

Implementation directed by BoD for 01 Jan 2026, and it was implemented on schedule. User Agreement and associated policies were updated accordingly.

### 3.06 *Cross the Pond Progress (JVG)*

Reviewed progress toward Spring 2026 CTP. JVG indicated that the division leadership from the participating divisions are working well together, but not making progress as quickly as hoped. Nonetheless, still targeting April for Spring CTP.

CTP will likely remain an annual Spring event, and Cross the Land will likely be the main Autumn event.

### 3.07 *WorldFlight 2025 Feedback (TB)*

WorldFlight 2025 was a highly successful global event for the VATSIM network, once again demonstrating the strength of our community, the dedication of our volunteers, and the platform's ability to support meaningful charitable causes.

Across all participating official WorldFlight teams, the event raised in excess of \$100,000 USD for charities worldwide. Beyond the charitable fundraising, WorldFlight 2025 delivered exceptional engagement, operational complexity, and international collaboration — showcasing the network at its very best.

WorldFlight 2025 continued the long-standing tradition of a continuous, multi-day global flight operation, featuring:

- Fourteen official World Flight teams operating a variety of aircraft type from fixed base simulators around the world
- Continuous 24/7 flight operations across 45 flight leg, starting and ending in YSSY
- Full ATC coverage provided by volunteer divisions and regions
- Real-time coordination between pilots, controllers, event staff, and technical teams
- Integrated charity fundraising campaigns across multiple platforms including Twitch and YouTube among others

The event ran smoothly with strong participation from all regions and sustained network activity throughout the duration of the flight.

WorldFlight 2025 delivered exceptional visibility and engagement for VATSIM:

- Thousands of pilots participated through fly-ins, event legs, and supporting traffic
- ATC divisions coordinated complex, high-density operations across multiple FIRs



- Live streams and social platforms attracted large external audiences
- Media and aviation community attention helped promote both VATSIM and the supported charities

The event continues to serve as a powerful recruitment and retention tool, introducing new members to VATSIM while re-engaging long-standing pilots and controllers.

WorldFlight 2025 would not be possible without the extraordinary efforts of volunteers at every level, including:

- World Flight flight crews and organizers
- Regional and divisional ATC teams
- Event coordinators and planners
- Marketing and communications volunteers
- Technical and network operations staff

The professionalism, dedication, and coordination displayed throughout the event reflected extremely well on VATSIM as an organization.

World Flight continues to deliver value well beyond the fundraising totals:

- Enhances VATSIM's public reputation
- Demonstrates network scalability and resilience
- Showcases volunteer excellence
- Strengthens partnerships with aviation and simulation communities
- Reinforces VATSIM's role as a global leader in online flight simulation

## 4 New Business

### 4.01 *VATSIM Strategy and Priorities (DD)*

DD displayed the VATSIM Mission, Values and Strategy, and underscored that although we have done much to overcome challenges related to the gaming mentality (largely spurred on by the release of MS Flight Simulator in 2020), we still need to actively seek the balance of realism, quality and fun that is foundational to the network, and hopefully attract back some of our community that left during a period when there was more of a gaming mentality on the network than the “as realistic as reasonable simulation platform” mentality. DD reminded all that we have done a lot lately to help with such things, including:

- Significant CoC updates to mandate foundational aviation skill, as well as the CoC companion document to help guide and provide more clarity with community expectations

- Significantly overhauled, and continue to improve, the New Member Orientation program, with a strong focus on foundational skill expectations
- Creating and steering lesser-experienced users toward “First Wings” events
- Instituting Advisory Frequency (vs. everyone on Unicom), which enhances the realism of pilots having to find and use proper terminal-area frequencies
- Forced observer mode to reduce impact of people misbehaving or unable to properly aviate on the simulation
- Pilot referrals, with robust follow-up and attempts to retrain
- Ability for Pilot Training leadership to suspend accounts for those that demonstrate significant and likely perpetual ability to aviate properly on the network
- Changing the minimum age to join VATSIM to 16, which should yield an overall maturity improvement on the network
- It’s really important that we realize we’re all looking for a good quality simulation culture and environment, and we do all that we can to achieve that balance.

#### *4.02 VP Operations Search Status (DD)*

Currently, there are 5 Vice Presidents that have expressed interest in the VPOps role. DD and TB are assembling a search panel to conduct interviews and recommend selection.

#### *4.03 VATSIM Achievement Badges (RS)*

RS has been investigating the concept of capitalizing on programs, such as the Boston Virtual ARTCC “Wings over New England” program, and Navigraph’s in-development “Virtual Pilot Academy”, that don’t meet all the requirements of the current VATSIM Pilot Ratings program, through the use of achievements/badges, that would give visible community credit for completing various phases of these valuable pilot training programs. Pilot Training will continue to mature the concept and roll out a trial over the next several months.

## 5 Departmental Updates

### 5.01 *President (TB)*

TB's end of year and farewell message to the community included his thoughts about the network now, future potential, and thanked the volunteers that make it all happen.

### 5.02 *Operations (DD)*

#### **Accomplishments**

- Collaborated with IVAO on 1 issue to protect both minors on both networks.
- Worked with BoD on implementation of new age eligibility requirements.
- Coordinated implementation of Trademark designation on website and VATSIM documents

#### **Projects in Process**

- Continue to work to ensure all VATSIM policies are reviewed and updated as necessary on a timely basis. Working with project leads for policies with overdue reviews.

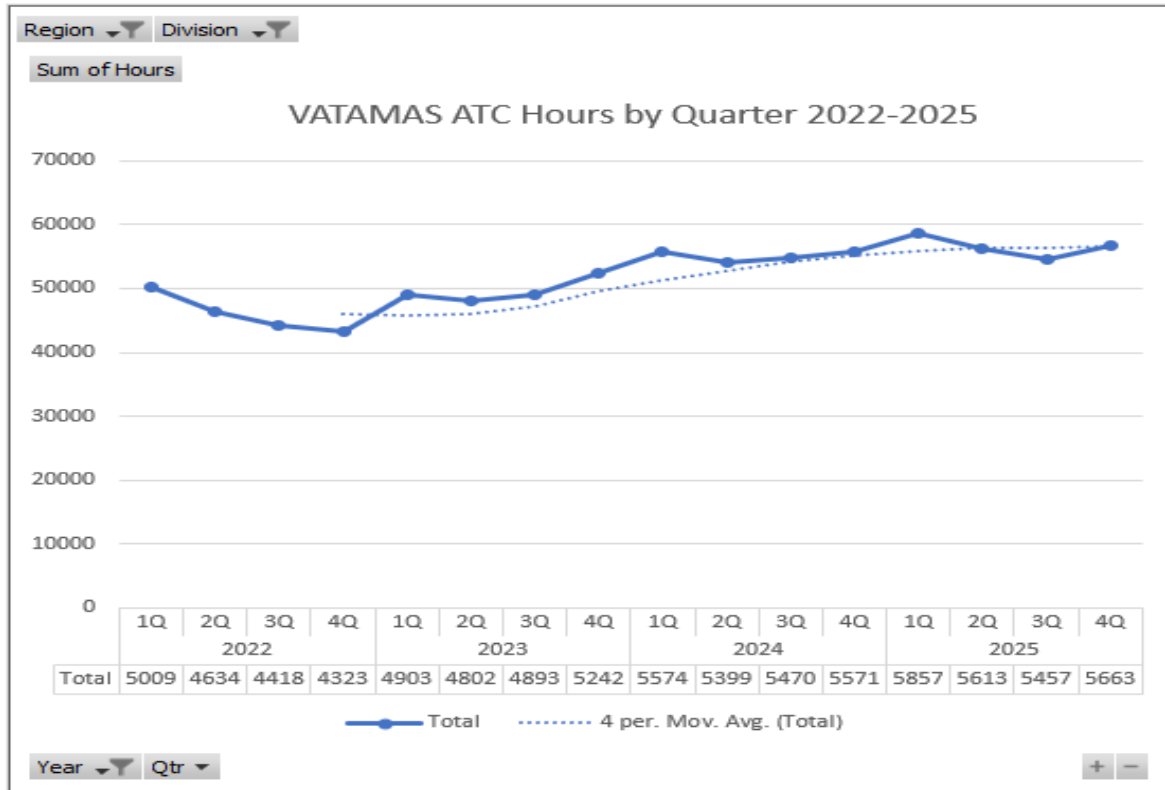
#### **Outlook**

- Continuing to work with Technology for priority with automation that promises to improve efficiency and velocity and reduce risk for the network and the members we serve.

### 5.03 *Americas Region (MM)*

#### **Region Report Summary**

Controlling activity in the Americas Region, though significantly increased from 2022, was flat from 2024Q3 to 2025Q3.



## Divisional Updates

**VATBRZ:** There has recently been a significant resurgence in activity in Brazil!

The average time from OBS to S1 decreased slightly to 15 days, down from 20 in Q3. This change is primarily attributed to the end of the school year as well as summer holidays, which impacted instructor and student availability.

C1+ controller hours remained stable compared to Q3.

Training requests dropped this quarter, which was expected after the large influx of migrations from IVAO seen previously. Controller activity also declined from Q3 to Q4, particularly among S1, S2, and S3 controllers.

Our new metrics system shows additional data, including hours by Facility and total controlling hours per quarter. The most notable changes were observed at ground, tower, and center positions this quarter.

Event participation remained steady, with an average of 86 movements per event compared to 85 in Q3. There were fewer events overall, dropping from 23 in Q3 to 14 this quarter—mainly due to summer, end-of-year holidays, and some international events being cancelled, such as South America Overload and CTP.

**VATCA:** The Training Center has been completed, advancing the Division's dedication to organized training. Plans include targeted sessions for I1s and Mentors on the new tool, uploading all training rubrics, closely monitoring adaptation, moving communications from Discord to the official site, increasing exam opportunities at events, adding Mentor and Instructor positions, and promoting website use across the division.

Recent highlights:

- Finished the Pilot Phraseology Manual following VATSIM and ICAO standards; a simplified version is in development.
- Finalized operational checklists for Cessna 172 variants.
- Expanded academic resources for pilots.
- Integrated PPL and CPL theory into the VATCA site to centralize learning materials.

January goals:

- Update MPZL QRH/SOP; SIDs/STARs published in December
- Upload exams
- Develop MHCC QRH/SOP and Approach Control Facility guides
- Restructure training (S1–S3 “survival mode”; C1+ advanced mastery)
- Revise exams

During the review, the VATCA Training Center's design and foundation were aligned with division and VATSIM standards. New tools were launched to improve training and operations. Continuous updates maintained technological stability. Improved curricula now reflect role-specific needs.

Events included collaborations with nearby divisions and VATSIM Spain, fostering pilot growth and developing new routes.

CENAMER and Panama FIRs Sector Files received corrections: updated STAR and SID procedures, improved visuals, and optimized airport layouts. Airways, FIXes, and vectoring altitudes were adjusted for AIRAC compliance. Communication coverage along southern Panama FIR was enhanced, and ATC frequencies verified. Master files and settings were updated for more effective ATC operations.

**VATCAN:** CZQM reports a three-month training wait time, up from previous months. CZVR's onboarding is six months. CZEG's training lasts three to six months, with onboarding in a few weeks. CZWG faces a six to eight month wait due to instructor shortages. CZUL's wait is a few weeks to a month, unchanged from last quarter. CZYZ now has a ten-month wait, two months longer than last quarter. Current S1 exam pass rate is 88%. CZQM estimates a ten-to-twelve-month process. CZVR's onboarding takes twelve to eighteen months. CZEG's training spans six to fifteen months. CZWG's onboarding is about one year. CZUL expects six months to a year. CZYZ anticipates about ten months.

Vancouver made significant SID/STAR and arrival changes, creating challenges as some pilots use outdated navigation data.

VATCAN and Gander Oceanic are negotiating an Atlantic sectors agreement.

Weekly events continue: "Moncton Mondays" (CZQM), weekly event (CZVR), "Northern Lights Tuesdays" (CZEG), "Les Mercredis Montreal" (CZUL), weekly event and FNO Canada (CZYZ). CZEG and CZWG held a crossfire event at CYOD and CYMJ.

Staffing updates:

- CZUL: Guillaume Therien removed as CI; Anthony Belliveau is acting CI.
- CZWG: Tim Lowe appointed Events Coordinator; the CI role is jointly managed during recruitment.
- CZYZ: Kyle Tam resigned as Chief Instructor.
- No direct staff changes in VATCAN; VATCAN7 (Webmaster) recruitment is ongoing.

**VATCAR:** Most facilities are maintaining 2 Weeks from the initial request to S1 certification.

Hit Squad policy being brought before sub-divisions to discuss how hit squad functions with sub-divisions outside of event support.

Web team has raised flags about hosting, and there is a strong probability of VATCAR switching hosts in December 2025.

The Curacao FIR and Piarco FIR have been expanding their teams, in part, to encourage newer VATSIM members to spend more time within the FIR and become the next generation of FIR leaders

**VATMEX:**

- Community & Policy: The division has stabilized after leadership changes. VATMEX now maintains neutrality with Virtual Airlines and no longer endorses or partners exclusively to ensure fairness.
- Technology & Infrastructure: Focus is on updating core tools like the Operations Center, Training Platform, Discord, and the website. Gustavo Valdez, the new Operations Director, is prioritizing VatSys updates (now at AIRAC 2511), event ATC assignments via Discord, and development of a Euroscope simulation for Thales TopSky HE.
- Training Department: Major restructuring is underway. Mauricio Esparza joins as Training Director, bringing 15+ years of experience. Initiatives include a unified training outline for all ratings, automation of materials for S2 Tower Controllers to reduce instructor dependency, and accelerating S3 TMA Controller certification.
- Events & Public Relations: Jose Walls continues to manage public affairs and events, maintaining active network engagement.

- Internal Policies: In response to changes in VATSIM's CoC and GCAP, all procedures and manuals are under review to ensure compliance with global standards.
- Current Progression Times (days): S2: 45 (goal: <30); S3: 90 (goal: 60); C1: 30 (goal: 30).
- Bottlenecks: S2 training delayed by manual theoretical instruction; solution is automated modules. S3 progress limited by few instructors, outdated materials, and lacking simulation files—top priority for next quarter.
- Sectorfile Update: VatSys sector files updated to AIRAC 2511.
- Upcoming Initiatives: Developing an automated bot for event ATC assignments and restarting Euroscope's TopSky HE simulation. Both projects are early-stage with no release dates yet.

**VATSUR:** Argentina led ATC promotions this quarter with 7, followed by Colombia and Uruguay. Bolivia had no rating upgrades, and Ecuador recorded one C3 upgrade. Promotion numbers remained steady compared to Q3 2025 but rose more than 100% versus Q4 2024 (10 upgrades).

Joaquin Aliaga resigned as ATC Training Director, replacement pending. Benicio Ayala joined as flight instructor, and Elias Gonzalez was promoted to Flight Examiner, improving exam efficiency but highlighting instructor shortages since he cannot be both examiner and trainer.

P3 certification is targeted for completion in 1H 2026.

The Operations Director was mostly on leave; routine website maintenance continued. The web team supported process improvements and subdivisions, including VATSpy Data Project updates.

Martin Romero resigned as Events Director, with Jared Bardales joining as Events Assistant and potential successor. The South America Tour collaboration with BRZ was mostly successful, despite subdivision challenges. Communication with subdivisions has lagged due to vacancies, but efforts to improve are underway.

Argentina and Uruguay remain leaders in ATC activity, although overall activity dropped from Q3 2025, likely due to summer travel. Jairo Ulloa plans to resign as Peru FIR Chief in early Q1 2026, and Isaac Benitez has stepped down as Ecuador FIR Chief.

**VATUSA:** VATUSA is currently working with other divisions involved in CTP to restructure the admin side of the event. We are also in discussion with NAT simultaneously.

Statement of activities and tax receipts were sent out to all donors Dec 31st. The board of directors are actively in discussion regarding bylaws and other documentations.

No airspace change request came through recently. We will continue to compare numbers periodically to judge any designation changes.

ZDC continues to outperform other divisions with the most training notes submitted. We've found a few volunteers to help out with the training academy. We continue to refine the training material to better prep new OBS's. Our division training newsletter will be put on pause for the time being. Our student to teacher ratio still floats around 5.5 students per teacher. In the past few quarters this year we've gotten positive feedback on our "top teachers" campaign where we recognize teachers who go above and beyond - submitting the most hours of training per quarter. We've seen a slight uptick in training hours which may have contributed to the aforementioned. Our average training sessions dropped a bit due to the holiday season.

#### Training Overview

- Student-to-teacher ratio 5.5
- Average session per month per teacher 8.74
- Average session per month 38.6
- Average sessions per quarter 116

In the past few quarters there has been a slowdown in momentum of designing our new website. We have been searching for a new technical manager. The position is actively posted, and we've received a few serious candidates. A new tech manager should be hired no later than March.

Our events manager was notified that CTP will be postponed this year. VATUSA will work closely with the rest of the "stakeholders" team to introduce the event manager. The events manager will be the POC for all CTP talks going forward.

#### Census

Rating	VATBRZ	VATCA	VATCAN	VATCAR	VATMEX	VATSUR	VATUSA
<b>S1</b>	25	8	264	37	15	160	404
<b>S2</b>	23	3	35	19	13	157	265
<b>S3</b>	21	3	27	16	2	123	173
<b>C1</b>	32	13	95	23	7	170	370
<b>C3</b>	8	2	16	0	6	46	106
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>1318</b>



## 5.04 Asia Pacific Region (AS)

### VATAPAC

Q4 2025 was characterized by sustained operational delivery, strategic consolidation, and preparation for further development in 2026.

APAC region experienced a strong period of activity, highlighted by significant involvement in WorldFlight 2025, which saw extensive controller participation. APAC also featured local division events and community flying, policy updates, ongoing training, operational development and active membership engagement across the region. VATNZ hosted ongoing Christchurch Control Night Shift events and other regular event series throughout October–December 2025. VATKOR ran a themed flight event (Welcome to APEC 2025) on 1 November 2025, commemorating the real-world APEC meeting with a cross-airport flight between Gimpo and Gimhae. VATPAC hosted a plethora of events within this quarter - Panic Stations Alice Springs, Cross the Land: Asia Pacific with 300 movements across all airports with positive feedback from pilots and controllers and Real Operations Sydney with 315 movements, Milk Run Monday and Spilled Milk Run Monday. Divisions across the region continued to deliver regular local and themed events, maintaining steady pilot and controller engagement despite the heavy workload associated with major global events. Training and operational work progressed throughout the quarter, with divisions focusing on controller development and the management of instructor capacity. Membership levels across APAC were broadly stable, with some divisions noting minor fluctuations between active and inactive members. From a governance perspective, APAC divisions worked through leadership transitions, policy reviews, and alignment with updated VATSIM network policies that came into effect mid-quarter. Collaboration between divisions remained a key theme, particularly in shared operational support, event coordination, and improvements to membership transfer processes.

### VATPAC

- ACNC registration remains ongoing.
- Staff appointment - Deputy Division Director and Events Director.
- VATPAC Conference planning in progress.
- Reduction of Non-Executive Director positions planned for the coming year.
- Ongoing progress on the VATNZ LOA and Oceanic procedures, including discussion on reviewing currency requirements.
- Development of the ATS Standards Framework is ~75% complete.
- Successful delivery of multiple major and general events, with positive pilot and controller feedback (Panic Stations Alice Springs, Cross the Land: Asia Pacific, Real Operations Sydney, Milk Run Monday, Spilled Milk Run Monday).
- Planning underway for the 2026 events calendar and the VATPAC Conference.

- Improved communication and planning processes identified as key focus areas for future events.
- Community-assisted CTAF data implementation as there have been delays in VATSIM API updates.
- Ongoing resolution of vatSys issues, including Mumble connectivity and plugin management.
- Continued development and review of member-facing websites and event systems.
- Reactivation survey completed, highlighting varied needs for returning controllers.
- Frameworks being developed for proactive engagement with members approaching inactivity.
- Staff Conduct, VASO, and Data Protection policies reviews scheduled.
- Release of the Pilot Procedures website and major updates to SOPs and controller tools.
- Educational video production and plugin development significantly enhanced controller and pilot experience.
- Focus on completing standards frameworks, training improvements, technology onboarding, and enhanced staff engagement, estimated in the next quarter.

## VATNZ

- Tom Kilpatrick appointed as Division Director. Deputy Division Director and Community Engagement Director roles remain vacant- under recruitment. Division leadership focused on stabilization, continuity, and setting strategic direction for the next 6–24 months. New Operations team member appointed.
- Total membership stands at 1,187 members (393 active, 794 inactive).
- One-on-one reviews completed with all Portfolio Directors to assess departmental health and challenges.
- Key six-month priorities include leadership continuity, divisional and domain policy development, policy consolidation, technology stack review, and closer collaboration with VATPAC. Confidence expressed in current leadership team and outlook for meaningful progress.
- Two AIRAC cycles and Controller datasets completed. SOPs updated for AIRAC changes and World Flight support; 22 issues remain open.
- Controller booking system using Discord and future web integration development in progress.
- Six controller ratings issued during the quarter (S1–S3). Active training cohort includes 36 theory students and 28 practical students. Currently mentor shortages, average waiting times vary depending on availability 12-15weeks, VATNZ looking for ways to mitigate this. Ongoing updates to SweatBox training materials and completion of practical exam files. Collaboration with VATPAC progressing on a differences course.
- Q4 heavily focused on World Flight 2025, with Cross the Ditch (Summer) cancelled due to workload. Successful hosting of 24 Hours of VATSIM and World Flight 2025, with strong pilot and controller engagement. Regular Christchurch Control events achieved

steady participation. Events team now nearing full capacity and planning increased activity in the coming year.

- Focus in 2026 will be on policy finalization, training reform, operational tooling improvements, and increased event delivery. Strong emphasis on sustainability, staff support, and improving the member experience across the Division.

## VATSEA

- Hoo Jiong Sheng appointed as VATSEA Division Director. Senior leadership changes occurred, prompting planned recruitment for key divisional roles within Q1- 2026.
- Rating upgrades declined slightly compared to the previous quarter, while new controller intakes continued to increase, indicating positive recruitment momentum despite slower progression.
- Overall divisional activity remained stable, with continued focus on training, events and organizational continuity.
- A total of 23 rating upgrades, primarily at S1-S3 levels. 27 membership transfers for ATC training. Collaboration with other divisions on differences training and best practices.
- Membership levels across the division remained broadly stable, with minor fluctuations in active and inactive controllers.
- Event activity remained strong across the division, including participation in major VATSIM and VATSEA events such as WorldFlight and 24 Hours of VATSIM. Regular local and regional events were maintained, typically at a rate of two to three events per month per vACC. Some events were cancelled or planned for another date to manage workload and avoid clashes with major global activities. Feedback indicated a positive pilot and controller engagement.
- Ongoing updates were made to SOPs, sector files, datasets, and Letters of Agreement to improve realism and operational accuracy.
- Several divisions introduced or tested new plugins, tools, and bots to enhance training, coordination, and administrative workflows. Infrastructure reviews and optimization efforts were underway to improve reliability, reduce costs and support future growth.
- Updates on Training policies and SOPs.
- HKvACC released major SOPs revision and implementation of the newly released VACS plugin.
- Indonesia vACC has experienced an increase in overall activity. New controller intake has been initiated. 5 ATC upgrades and 2 major events recorded for this quarter. Two staff members have joined the vACC's team. Lack of mentor and examiner are still a concern but are currently mitigated.
- Malaysia vACC: new staff members joined the team (Events, PR, Training). 8 events in total this quarter.
- Singapore vACC Conducted approximately 80 training sessions during the quarter. Continued refinement of the training framework to improve efficiency and trainee progression. Better integration of Secondary and VFR theory, with a shift toward Home-Based Learning for theory delivery. Implemented measures to manage mentor

availability, including LOA guidance and trainer shadowing arrangements. Membership trends remained stable. Training policy and agreement reviews underway to streamline progression and improve accountability. Technical improvements progressed, including infrastructure optimization and development of a Discord bot to support internal operations.

- Thailand vACC: Has been a quiet quarter, participated into 24h VATSIM, WorldFlight and Cross the Land: Asia Pacific. Joint event took place in collaboration with India VACC. Planning to pick up pace within Q1-2026.
- Vietnam VACC stable with monthly events. Sector file package updated. Slight slowdown of Training activities in comparison with Q3-2025.

#### **VATJPN**

- New airspace SOPs for RJFF APP, RJDG CTR, ROAH APP.
- Organized 4 domestic events and 2 international events in collaboration with VATAKOR and HKvACC.
- 47 new members joined VATJPN site.

#### **VATAKOR**

- 58 new members joined VATAKOR site, total 7414. VATSIM census 1408.
- Established a new training program for visiting controllers in the Pyongyang airspace and is making efforts to promote the activation of this airspace.
- Total of 6 events, 3 international in collaboration with VATJPN, VATPRC and HKvACC and 3 domestic.

### **5.05 Europe, Middle East, and Africa Region (SI)**

#### **Europe (except UK)**

Steady income of new members to the Division, with 590 new joiners. A good pick up to the CPTs, with the last quarter hitting over 300+ CPT taken (for all ratings).

This year GCAP and the Division Training Policy (DTP) as well as the new TVCP needed to be implemented. This worked pretty well, and besides some issues with TVCP which are being worked on, implementation went well and training across the division should be fully compliant with the new policies. Training activity in the last quarter (best quarter of the year!) should be proof enough that implementing GCAP and DTP was successful while we indeed still face the issue in larger vACCs that the number of new trainees exceeds the mentor capacity. This will remain the main focus for the coming year. Another issue is the ever-increasing amount of traffic which increases the amount of required training especially in the busiest places in EUD - including CTR airspace.

2 years after the implementation of GCAP, we are now in the processing of collecting the feedback from the vACCs, in order to understand what is missing or what can be changed. Feedback is open to all staff members, will be collected and discussed with VP EMEA.

## **Russia**

In Q4 2024, the VATRUS Division welcomed around 60 new registrations, which brought us to a number of 7220 members (as of Jan 1, 2026).

Connecting to the VATSIM network is hindered by blocks imposed by Russian authorities, often necessitating VPN usage for stable access. Reports from pilots and controllers indicate that direct connections from Russia have been disrupted since at least August 2025, impacting real-time flight simulation and streaming capabilities. Broader internet restrictions in Russia, including mobile data blocks and site throttling, exacerbate these connectivity issues for aviation enthusiasts.

Increased activity has been noted in the Central Asia region, where several new instructors have been appointed in recent months. This has positively impacted the training process and overall availability of instruction.

Work is ongoing with the "Regions" within the Division on transitioning to a "Sub-Division" structure. The ATC Training Department has determined that it is appropriate to establish subdivisions aligned with the current "regions" structure. Nevertheless, disagreements persist between FIR and regional leadership regarding the application of certain policies. Division staff continues to engage with regional management and instructors' staff on matters related to ATC Training Center operations.

Furthermore, given the local operational specifics of air traffic in the VATRUS Division, limited instructor resources, and the volunteer nature of the Training Department's activities, ATC Training Center management, in coordination with the Division Director, is preparing a formal request to VP EMEA for "Local Alterations" to adjust solo endorsement timeframes. This request will be submitted at the earliest opportunity. The issue is also being addressed through ongoing working-level discussions with EMEA regional leadership.

The presence of positions such as Radar and Approach in post-Soviet busy airspaces (e.g., Moscow UUWV, St. Petersburg ULLL) creates additional challenges for controllers' training, necessitating extensions to solo clearances beyond the 90-day maximum. This is likely the only obstacle we face in implementing GCAP.

In Q4 2025, 27 new cadets were enrolled in the Pilot Training Center. During the period from October to December, 7 examinations were conducted, and 2 P1 (PPL) and 3 IR (P2) VATSIM ratings were assigned.

Our training center developed and tested a helicopter pilot training program over the past 24/25 years. Last fall, in a letter to the new director of the Training Center, we proposed

introducing a helicopter pilot rating in PRAMS. Currently, such a rating does not exist, but there is certainly interest, as PvP flights in general and helicopter flights in particular are actively developing in flight simulators. We have developed and submitted MCS (member certification standards) for helicopter pilots for approval. One of our suggestions is to add a helicopter rating to PRAMS (for example, H1/ Helicopter1).

The first-division APIs (METAR, TAF) have been successfully deployed. Key division documents have been migrated to S3 Cloud Storage and integrated into the API, including support for versioning and other features.

A new event management core (API-based) is currently in development.

Plans are underway to migrate all news data to a new editor engine.

Discussions are ongoing regarding data interchange with the VATSIM Radar project.

In the fourth quarter, the VATRUS Division hosted 69 events across multiple formats—both regular events like online evenings and unique events. Two Real-Ops and Over-Real events were organized by our regions using the Division's slot system at [slots.vatrus.info](https://slots.vatrus.info).

The internal event coordination system, available at [events.vatrus.info](https://events.vatrus.info) (Event Portal), has reached the production stage. All division event managers use the portal to communicate across departments and coordinate the details of each event. The implementation of the portal has significantly increased the transparency and manageability of the event approval and launch business process. We invite other divisions to write to us by email at [events@vatrus.info](mailto:events@vatrus.info) if they are interested in our experience.

## **UK**

2025 has been a welcome year of stability and steady growth within VATSIM UK. The Pilot Training and Technology Departments in particular have seen significant progress, with the PTD recording the highest number of rating upgrades in Division history. This is largely due to the efforts of Ben Carpenter and his team during his appointment as P1 Flight Instructor and later as Pilot Training Director. Callum Axon and his Technology Team have made significant progress on the migration of key VATSIM UK services from the legacy Central Training System to VATSIM UK Core. Unlike previous attempts, this migration is taking place via a phased approach to ensure the task remains manageable and any issues can be identified and rectified early. Throughout the latter half of 2025 we have seen the implementation of waiting lists for all ATC and pilot ratings into Core, as well as the movement of exam reporting from CTS to Core. The ATC Training Department has benefitted enormously thanks to these developments, as it removes a significant administrative burden from the ATC Training team. We look forward to continued Tech progress throughout 2026, with a new Training Management system expected to be delivered next.

ATC Training throughout put remains comparable from 2024 to 2025 - although we are sure the ATC Training Department will be somewhat frustrated that a clear upwards trend in performance cannot be clearly determined, it is also important to bear in mind the relatively small numbers of rating upgrades take place across the year which makes statistical analysis somewhat challenging. This is of course exaggerated at the S3 and C1 levels due to their historically low progression rates, and there will always be some variance in the ability and commitment of student cohorts over time. Nevertheless, the Division welcomed 68 new S1 controllers onto the Network in 2025. Another 22, 9 and 6 controllers received their S2, S3 and C1 ratings respectively, with 1146 mentoring sessions provided in total. Assuming a conservative estimate of 2 hours to complete a mentoring session and admin activities, this equates to over 3 months' worth of continuous mentoring from our volunteer team. To put this into perspective, assuming each volunteer were paid at the UK minimum wage, this would cost VATSIM UK in the region of \$40,000. The scale of their contribution cannot be overstated and the Division remains incredibly grateful for their generosity - it is also encouraging to see that interest in giving back to VATSIM, in whatever form that may take, remains strong within our community. In this area, our Community Department has continued their outreach efforts with a number of initiatives designed to help newer members resolve issues more easily, and encourage them to take an active role within the community. Naturally with an ever-expanding membership, moderation of our Services is become more and more crucial to ensure discussion channels remain engaging and relevant to all members. VATSIM UK has always maintained a gentler approach to moderation than other communities within VATSIM, often favouring real-time guidance to members over local suspensions, however it seems to be increasingly common that some members are not capable (or do not wish) to follow the advice of moderators. For this reason, the decision made by the BoG to increase the minimum age on VATSIM has been well received, and we hope this will have a measurable reduction in disruption over the coming years.

In the Q4 2024 region report, following record breaking traffic levels in the Division that year, we wrote that we "look forward to seeing the continuation of this trend over the next year". This year, we are pleased to report that the trend did indeed continue, with over 600,000 arrivals and departures from UK airfields in 2025 - for context this is over 1/5th of real-world movements within the UK in 2024. This also represents a 5% increase when compared to 2024's figure on VATSIM. Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester ranked overall 1st, 5th and 7th busiest on the VATSIM Network, identical to their 2024 rankings. This is made even more surprising considering that Heathrow hosted only 2 events the year and that Frankfurt, the second-place entry, hosts a weekly event each Friday. It is clear that even outside of events, pilots from across the Network enjoy flying to the UK and it remains



my belief that the quality and consistency of ATC within the UK speaks for itself in this regard. In many ways, the Division benefits from hosting events at its busiest airports rather infrequently, as the network has now approached the point where such events quickly become unmanageable and result in large delays for pilots. Clearly this is counter-productive to emulating real world operations yet VATSIM UK seems to be an outlier within Europe in this approach. It is my belief that this is in part why we remain so popular - pilots are able to get a sense of what it would be like to fly out of Heathrow, Manchester, or Gatwick in real life, without the tediousness of flow-measure induced delays and terminal holds filled beyond capacity. Our Operations Department has instead used events to highlight different UK airports and provide ATC as lesser-staffed airfield. Q4 2025 has seen events at Shoreham, Southend, Guernsey, Alderney, Aberdeen and Cambridge to name some lesser-known airfields. We continue to collaborate with UK-based Virtual Airlines on many of our events and we were delighted to once again partner with iniBuilds (following the previous Heathrow release event with BigJetTV) to provide a launch event for their new Manchester scenery in MSFS 2024. Traffic levels across the UK and Overseas Territories remain healthy with some notable airfields such as Leeds, Belfast City and Luton recording significant decreases in traffic levels when compared to 2024, although in each instance this is explained by new scenery releases artificially inflating statistics for the 2024 year. RAF Coningsby and RAF Brize Norton saw the largest increases in movements compared to the previous year at 82% and 69% respectively - it interesting to see the direct impact that the number of UK based or operating vSOAs has had on traffic statistics. Our Operations Department continues to actively support vSOA activity and has recently implemented the V-LARA system, giving vSOAs the ability to book special use airspace and providing this information directly to a controller's radar scope via TopSky. VATSIM UK controllers are trained to provide a realistic level of civilian service to these military flights and rescue operations, and tools such as V-LARA make the handling of vSOA easier and therefore more frequent.

Throughout 2025, the department saw steady progress across both outreach, and transfer & visiting activities. Early in the year, a renewed focus on outreach led to the introduction of new community discussion channels, an expanded Media team and the launch of pilot focused educational content, all aimed at improving engagement and supporting member development. These initiatives continued to develop over the year with social media becoming more active and educational content consistently well received (The team maintained our online presence, with 157,525 views in 2025 across our social platforms)

The team itself grew during the year, bringing in new skills and ideas that supported progress across multiple projects, including the quarter 4 released frequently asked questions area of our Discord, and of course our annual Christmas quiz.



Transfer and Visiting controllers remains an area of ongoing development, and we have undertaken a series of changes to ensure participants go into practical validations well prepared, however capacity constraints on the ATC training department side and variable engagement with the process, including varying levels of self-study still presents a challenge.

Visiting requests, outside of Shanwick Oceanic, continue to experience long wait times with transferring requests prioritised. In 2025, my team processed 43 controller transfer requests, of which the majority were S1 and S2, which accounted for 33 of the 43 applications.

VATSIM UK is committed to ensuring all controllers can consistently operate to a high standard, which is reflected in our Pass/Fail rates. However, of those who undertook a practical exam 7 passed and 6 failed, indicating that we are managing to weed out candidates before utilising valuable mentor/examiner time. The 21 other candidates within the 'Fail' criteria, were removed for a number of reasons, however by far the main reason for removal was failing to engage at some point in the process, a continuing trend from 2024.

Availability of mentors and ability to train under good traffic presentations remains the two most limiting factors within ATC Training. There is a narrow window within which ATC Training sessions can be booked to avoid unmanageable traffic levels associated with peak times, and little to no traffic / complexity during off-peak times

New ATC Training Policy and Handbook delivered in 2025 alongside efficiency improvements around training administration.

Staff retention has stabilised this year although two ATC Training staff posts currently remain vacant, one is expected to be filled within Q1 2026.

There has been a slow increase in the S3 waiting list length throughout the year. Both S3 and C1 training has been impacted lately due to poor-quality students who are putting in some effort and therefore don't warrant the removal of their training place, but making little progress despite this.

Quarter 4 for pilot training has seen a big quarter of change, development and progress which has stemmed from the new vision set out in quarter 3.

The P1 course has been the most stable course of the quarter after receiving a lot of development earlier in the year. This quarter has been focussed on student output and mentor recruitment and retention. The P1 has yet again seen an even bigger success on the previous quarter with 12 passes and 1 fail making it again the best quarter on record 2 months consecutively. This brings our total exam passes for 2025 up to 25 which is our best year on record after our last highest number of exam passes was 8 in 2023. The P1 also had

65 total mentoring sessions which is a notable increase from last quarter. Riley Casement was appointed as the P1 flight instructor in October to replace Ben Carpenter and Ben Arrowsmith unfortunately handed in his resignation for the position of the P1 flight instructor.

In 25Q4 the operations department has continued to update the sector file and the controller pack monthly. Monthly meetings are being conducted where all changes to the AIP are checked and updated in our materials if required.

Towards the end of the quarter implemented VACS to our controller pack, giving controllers a better way to coordinate. vLARA is now fully operational within VATSIM UK, and has proved to be a great addition for VSOAs (which are becoming increasingly popular in VATSIM UK). We've also been continuing to trial the CDM plugin to effectively manage flow control.

Work has started to allow a second permanent split to the London South area group, meaning controllers will have more flexibility to open sectors suitable for the current levels of traffic.

Events have been received positively. However, we are continuing to struggle with the low numbers of S3s and C1s expressing interest to control events. Consultations with these groups of controllers have been completed, and we look to implement the suggestions in the new year.

### **Middle East and North Africa**

This quarter has been a period of strategic refinement and positive momentum. We have taken proactive steps to streamline our leadership by identifying and resolving internal bottlenecks, ensuring that our team is fully aligned with the division's growth. By clearing these hurdles, we have paved the way for fresh talent, and we are excited to welcome new, motivated staff into our subdivisions soon.

The impact of these changes is already visible, with a highly positive outcome across our operations. We are moving forward with a renewed sense of energy, focused on enhancing our technical standards and fostering a more collaborative environment. The division is stronger, more efficient, and perfectly positioned for the ambitious goals we have set for 2026.

Administration: In this quarter deputy membership replaced the Divisional Membership Director; while the full onboarding is currently in progress

Policy and Compliance: Membership Policy has been fully updated, with this review outlining the Bad Understanding within Division, for improper conduct.

ATC Training: In Q4, 2025, VATMENA ATC Training recorded notable progress.

- Divisional Exam Platform: The site has been successfully updated to include all exams up to the C1 level and I1.
- Training Policies are now finalized and complete, with the OpenSkies policy currently under final review and expected later this month.
- Deputy ATC Director will be announced again with an addition to ATC team members to support this important department.
- Training in progress to add local examiners I1 within (Khaleej & Levant) subdivisions.

This quarter, the Operations and Web Department Director vacancy was released and interviews are ongoing. With only existing team members, progress has been slow but steady. Key achievements include revamping the FSS sector files to the latest standards, updating the OpenSky sector files, and assisting several subdivisions with their sector files.

For Events, Q4 has been a successful quarter, marked by increased traffic levels across events and a higher number of events overall. The Cross the Land edition also performed well and contributed positively to engagement.

The Marketing Department expanded its team with the appointment of Dhiaeddine Keskes, a former Marketing Team member, as Deputy of the Marketing Department. While progress has been strong, we are still continuing work on the remaining Q3 objectives, particularly the Events & Marketing Policy, which is nearing completion and is scheduled for release in Q1.

We have successfully regained access to all social media accounts except Instagram, for which a new account has been created. Additionally, plans are underway to establish a divisional event planning tracker that will log all divisional events along with their performance statistics.

Planning for divisional events has also begun, with the first few editions planned in Q1 2026. At the same time, the Divisional Marketing Team is working on resuming event planning for the Arabian division, until the appointment of a new Events & Marketing Director.

### **Israel**

We have finished building our new website and are currently launching it.

Last quarter we created a routine of one event per month. We started filling the calendar with events for the coming months.

### **Sub-Sahara Africa**

No significant updates

## 5.06 Technology (MC)

Work this Quarter:

- Investigations ongoing to some network instability
- Continued engagement with community developer projects
- AFV Re-factor is in progress to allow for future improvements and stability fixes

Near-Term Priorities:

- Planning is underway to create a priority list of network development projects to be shared by mid-February 2026.
  - Project priority
  - Objective completion dates
  - Impacted departments
  - Developers allocated
  - Stakeholders involved
- Rewriting support desk canned responses and improving time to resolution

## 5.07 Supervisors (NC)

### Senior Staffing

No new updates regarding Senior Staffing.

### Current Roster and Application Update

There are currently 123 active Supervisors and 3 candidates in training.

Applications remain open and reviews are ongoing. There will be another wave of hiring in Q1.

### Conduct Trends

Issues relating to use of appropriate advisory frequency have been on an upward trajectory. Issues related to pilots monitoring their connections and pilot competency remained relatively constant.

A total of 133 suspensions were issued in September. Suspension counts increased for October and December with 157 & 162 respectively.

### Quality Assurance

The department's QA team continues to track issues and resolving complaints against Supervisors. Where feedback needs to be provided to Supervisors, the feedback is either passed directly from the QA team or via the Supervisor's Team Lead as appropriate.

The department is seeing a downward trend of invalidated emergency suspensions and more standardization across the large team of Supervisors. Efforts to standardize how Supervisors respond to and address cases appear to be having a positive effect.

There is ongoing collaboration with the Pilot Training Department (PTD) for pilot feedback reports. There have been some issues with ensuring that enough information is made available to the PTD team to review and resolve feedback reports.

## **New Business and Ongoing Projects**

### **CTAF Implementation**

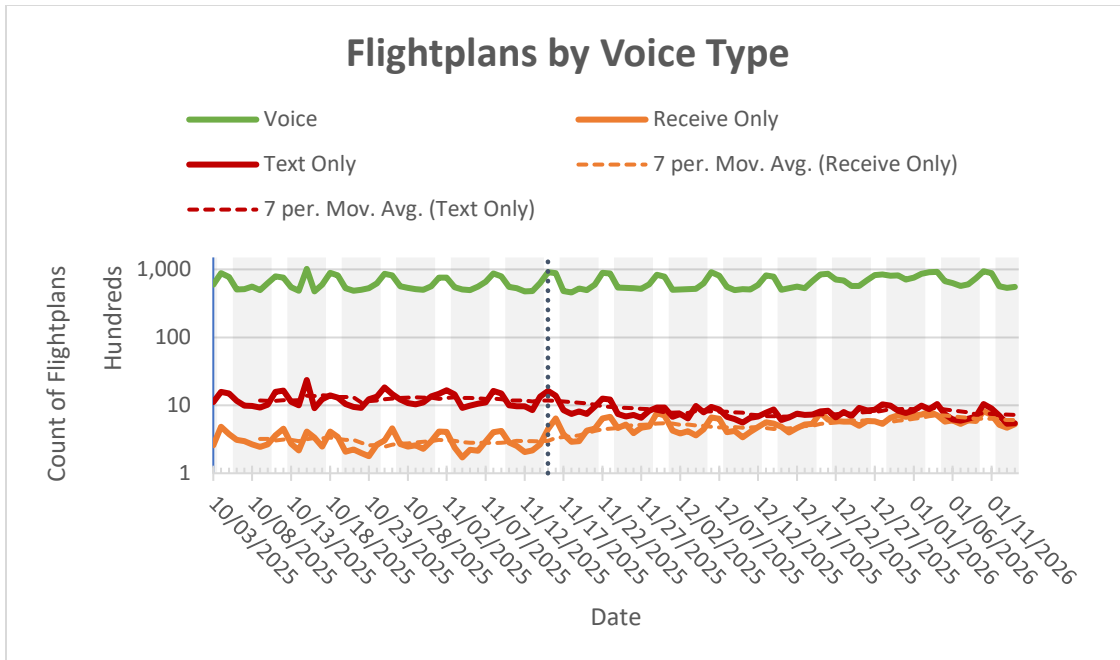
VATPAC has expressed interest in implementing CTAF within the division. Required data has been entered into MyVATSIM. A technical update will be required to enable querying of the CTAF for Australia airports via the API. VATPAC plans to create educational videos on how CTAF will be used and are asking about the necessary lead time to implement.

VATMEX has expressed interest in withdrawing from CTAF. The division reports that the confusion primarily stems from pilots who do not normally use CTAF, so pilots are confused if it's still in use. There's difficulty in making people use it even with proper communication.

### **Code of Regulations & Code of Conduct Updates**

The Code of Regulations and Code of Conduct were approved and implemented on November 15th, 2025. The implemented changes were promptly integrated into the daily operations of the network including pilot suspensions with required training & summary judgements. Both changes represent essential implementations which support the organization's ability to adapt in response to changes within the community.

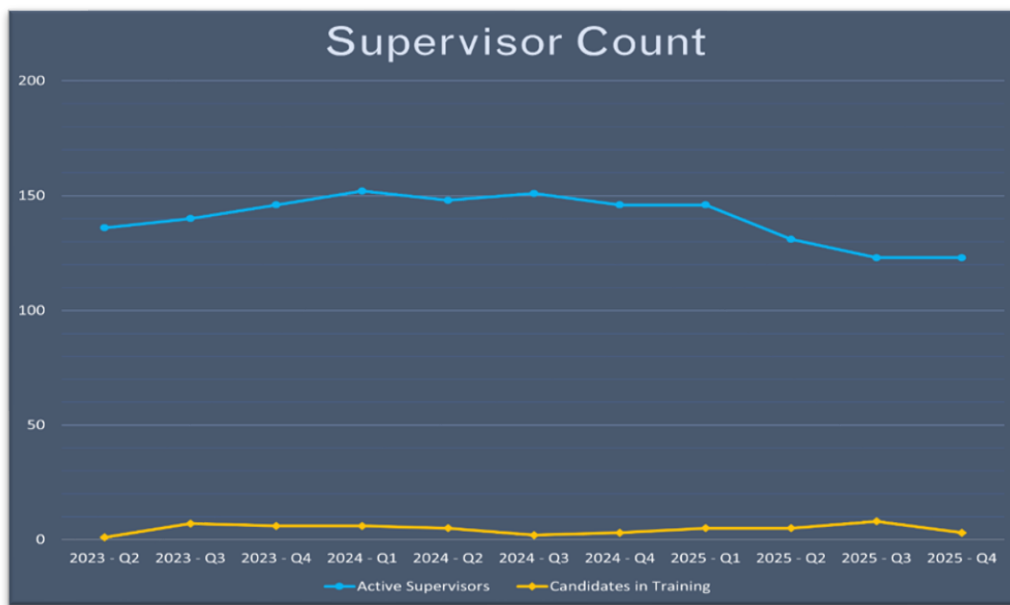
Data on pilot voice usage since the change is positive and shows a wider adoption of receive-only on the network. Use of full voice has remained relatively steady. Use of text-only is down 38% while use of receive-only is up 74%. Use of full voice is relatively unchanged with a modest increase of 0.4%.



## Support Tickets

The Supervisor Department currently averages 4 new support tickets per day. Tickets regularly require back and forth with the complainant and additional evidence before having enough information to review the complaint. This makes cases difficult to resolve in an expeditious manner with limited staffing.

## Statistics



## 5.08 Standards and Compliance (NF)

Changes to the CoR are working well. NC noted that Standards and Compliance Managers (SCM) seem to be regarding the summary judgment table as “up to” the penalties imposed. NF noted that the SCMs are sometimes still pulling significant supporting data and issuing lengthy judgment documents when summary judgments are all that are needed. NF will refresh the intent and execution of summary judgments with his team.

## 5.09 Membership (AC)

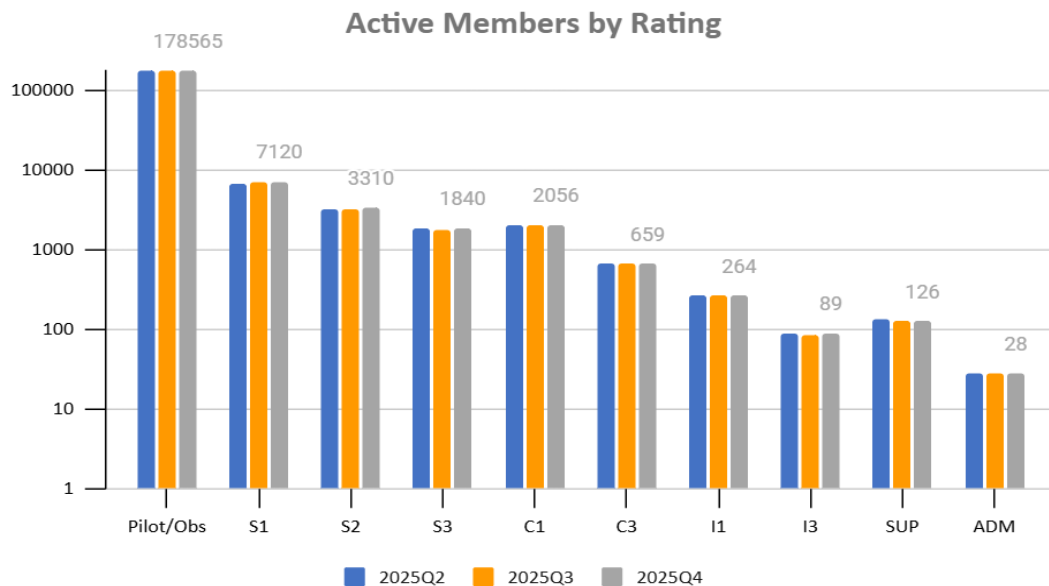
### New Member Registrations

This past quarter, we saw 5073 new member registrations, an average of 55 per day which is a decrease by 17% per day in Q3 2025. A contributing factor would be the continuing effect of the introduction of the new P0. The difference in Q3 was a 31% increase so we are seeing a steady decrease in membership again.

### Active Membership Statistics

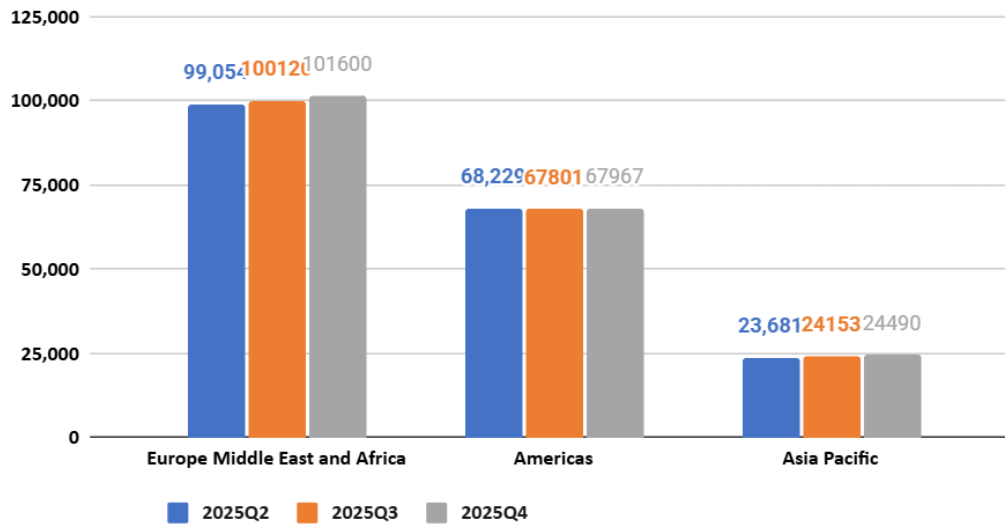
We currently have 194,057 active membership accounts.

- 178,565 (92%) hold a Pilot/Observer rating
- 15,492 (8%) hold an ATC, Supervisor or Administrator rating



(Note: Y scale is logarithmic, not linear)

### Active Members by Region

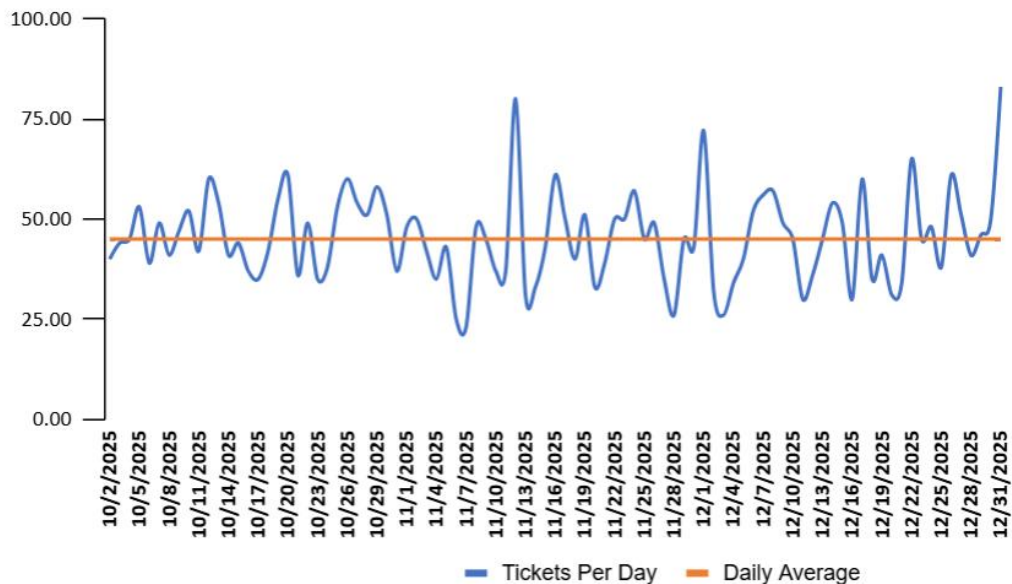


### Tickets and Responsiveness

In 2025Q4, VATSIM worked 4138 member support request tickets, an average of 45 per day. That is a decrease of 996 tickets less than 2025Q3.

The average membership ticket is resolved within 8.1 hours of ticket submission, which is an excellent response time for the small team of volunteers. This figure is slightly down since 2025Q3. On 31 Dec 25 there were 83 tickets submitted which is the largest amount for one day for the quarter.

### Membership Support Tickets 2025Q4



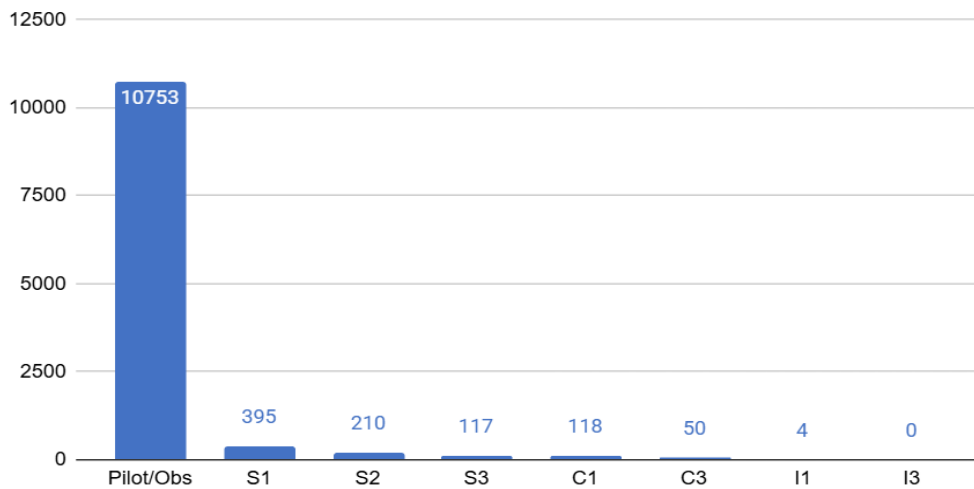


## Inactive

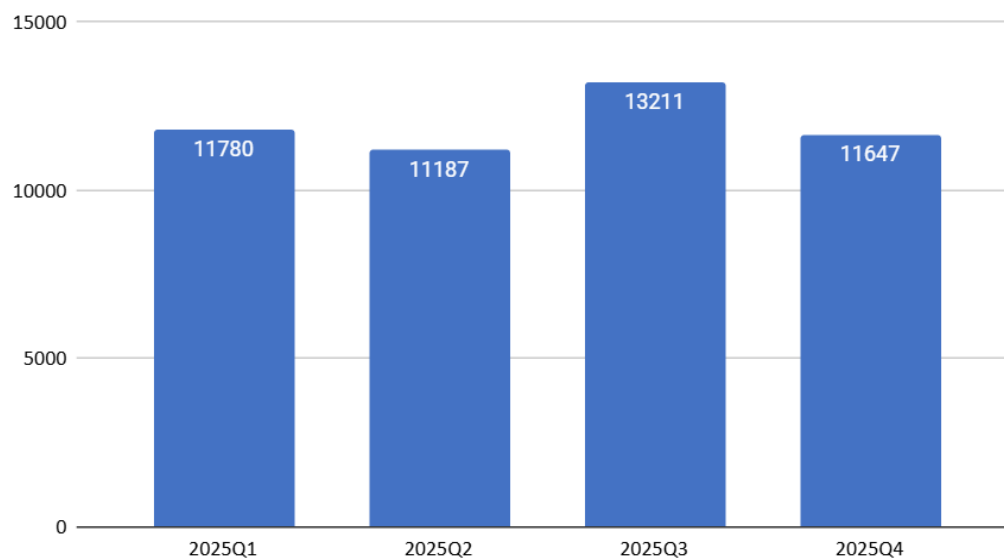
The following two graphs show how many users whose rating was automatically changed to inactive due to not being active on the network.

The first graph shows the number of users made inactive for the quarter as per rating. The second graph shows a comparison between the last 4 quarters.

Inactive per CoR 2025Q4



Quarterly Comparisons



## **GDPR**

In Q3, Membership managed the fulfillment of 11 right of erasure requests, 6 right of access requests, and 0 right of rectification requests. It should be noted that GDPR erasure requests and right of access requests have decreased by 30% since 2025Q3.

## **Membership Team**

The membership department said goodbye to 2 members during Q4. Steven Brown resigned as an audit manager and Christian Kovanen also left the auditing department. Considering hiring 1 additional auditor in the next quarter. Thanks to both of them for their help during their time with us and we wish them goodwill for the future.

## **Outlook**

The Membership department continues to work with Tech to explore the possibility of further automation. The AVPMEM is monitoring the workload and ensuring that staffing levels equal the workload. The team provides an outstanding service to our membership well above expectations of a volunteer organisation. A new automated rota system was designed and implemented by Kyle Porter for our auditors. It is integrated into discord and pings members when auditing has not been picked up on certain days. A great improvement to the department.

### **5.10      *Virtual Airlines and Special Operations (RC)***

#### **Virtual Airlines**

In October the Virtual Airlines Department had 35 applications for joining the VATSIM Virtual Airlines Partner and or Associate Programs. 20 applications were found to meet initial requirements and have joined the program. 15 were not meeting requirements and were rejected.

In November the Virtual Airlines Department had 13 applications for joining the VATSIM Virtual Airlines Partner and or Associate Programs. 7 applications were found to meet initial requirements and have joined the program. 6 were not meeting requirements and were rejected.

In December the Virtual Airlines Department had 19 applications for joining the VATSIM Virtual Airlines Partner and or Associate Programs. 8 applications were found to meet initial requirements and have joined the program. 11 were not meeting requirements and were rejected.

Director Burner began working on revisions to the Virtual Airline Partner and Associate policies to implement Discord Communities. He also began working on working on the teams Audit Management System to implement new features and enhancements.

### **Audit**

We removed two inactive Senior Audit Managers who were identified as not being active for several months, and replaced them with several new hires. The probationary Audit Manager training program remains strong with new audit managers being hired and appointed to conduct audits. The training has consisted of learning the requirements for VA Partners and Associates.

In October 125 Virtual Airlines were audited, with 82 Virtual Airlines Partners met the audit requirements. 30 Virtual Airline Partners did not meet requirements. 4 Virtual Airlines Associates met the audit requirements while 6 Virtual Airline Associates did not meet requirements.

In November 56 Virtual Airlines were audited, with 30 Virtual Airline Partners meeting audit requirements. 14 Virtual Airline Partners did not meet audit requirements. 2 Virtual Airline Associates met audit requirements while 4 did not meet audit requirements.

In December 45 Virtual Airlines were audited, with 26 Virtual Airline Partners meeting audit requirements. 8 Virtual Airline Partners did not meet audit requirements. 1 Virtual Airline Associate met audit requirements while 4 Virtual Airline Associates did not meet audit requirements.

### **Statistics**

In 2025 we found an error with counting total number of VA Partners and Associates. Director Burner made enhancements to reflect accurate number counts of Partners and Associates by their respective tiers. In Q1 2026 the Vatsim Virtual Airlines Department has 260 Virtual Airline Partners and Associates combined. We have 176 VA Partners and 56 VA Associates. In 2025 the Virtual Airlines Department revoked 26 Virtual Airlines and Associates from the program due to the revoked VA Partners and Associates continuing to not meet requirements in the VA Partner and VA Associate Policy.

### **Goals**

Some of the goals for this year as we enter 2026, are continuing to make enhancements to our Audit Management System. Assistant Director Janus Junkmann is joining Director Burner in helping with simple coding of the HTML language. We have implemented Discord Only Virtual Airlines. We are awaiting the VA Partner and VA Associate Policies to be implemented and approved by the Vatsim Board of Governors and Board of Directors. We also want to implement VA Partner Events. We have the process ready to go for VA Partners to submit events. We have some more planning and discussions to do to implement this.

## Special Operations

The Virtual Spanish Air Force was added as a new VSOA.

The VSOD began an in-depth talk discussion with the community regarding M-ratings. Unfortunately, the M-Ratings have struggled due to seeking a way to make them not mirror the P ratings, and to make them notable due to the wide range of activities each VSOA performs.

Q4 mini audits performed on the VSOAs. vPEAK appears to have gone silent and will be removed as a VSOA. VSOD plans to start off the new year by focusing on the PPM update by April.

## Statistics

The number of VSOAs over CY25 did increase by 2, with a significant growth in users increasing by a total of 176 pilots which is a 76% increase. This is also shown in both VSO Activities and the number of pilots in attendance at those activities.

Date	VSO Users	No of VSOs	VSO Activities	Activity Attendance
24/Q4	260	17	5	63
25/Q1	353	19	6	78
25/Q2	423	19	6	165
25/Q3	470	20	5	98
25/Q4	458	19	8	165

## Goals

Focus for Q1 will be the PPM. There are plans to look at many aspects with a hope to include some provisions for M-ratings should they advance. We will also be looking at requirements for VSOAs, and trying to keep things fresh based on feedback. We will continue to address those areas that we tend to get questions on, or have to explain often, to ensure the PPM is clear and complete.

### 5.11 *Pilot Training (RS)*

#### **Administrative**

This quarter, the Administrative section assisted with finalization and implementation of the updated Code of Regulations and Code of Conduct, and with that, began adjudicating cases in which the new CoR 6.05C (“Pilot Suspension with Required Training”) clause was invoked. The section also completed a long-standing project to re-vamp the department’s policies and procedures, the updated versions of which have been presented to the Board of Governors for review and approval. Additionally, a significant number of new PTD staff members were brought on board to the Pilot Feedback and Digital Content teams, in preparation for increased project undertakings in 2026. The PTD Administrative section also continued conversations with an outside entity for a potential partnership which could enhance the overall level of pilot education on the network – a separate proposal for which will be presented to the Board of Governors.

#### **Digital Content**

**New Member Orientation Course and Exam.** Nearly one year since its adoption, the updated version of the New Member Orientation Course and Exam remains a positive addition to the network’s process for on-boarding new users. A more detailed statistical analysis of its effect appears later in this document – however, it suffices for now to say that it seems to be screening out approximately 40% of prospective users who begin the sign-up process and then apparently decide that VATSIM isn’t a good fit for them. Hypothetically, a majority of those may not initially understand VATSIM’s purpose beyond being a multiplayer network, and hopefully the Course and Exam clarify this and encourages them to seek casual networks more suitable for their enjoyment.

Additionally, per request of the outgoing VATGOV1, we have formed a team in conjunction with users from VATSIM’s Chinese Division (VATPRC) in order to create a vetted Mandarin translation of the New Member Orientation Course and Exam. Although the capability of automated translation tools continues to grow, it remains the case that such tools are not as effective at creating clear translations of highly specialized, technical concepts. Work has begun on producing this translation, and our goal is to begin limited testing of it within 2026.

A significant growing concern is the use of AI tools with respect to the New Member Orientation Exam. While the Pilot Training Department has no issue with users resorting to these types of tools to supplement their learning process, the fear is that some are using it to substitute for their own learning instead. This has resulted in a number of cases (further discussed below in Section 1.3 under “Suspension with Required Training”) in which newer VATSIM users are found to lack even the most basic understanding of the network, wherein further research shows that they passed the New Member Exam with high marks in

attempts which took very little time. Many of them, when asked, have admitted to misusing AI tools in this manner. There is currently no explicit prohibition against doing so, nor would there be a clear manner of enforcing one if implemented. Finding strategies to combat this trend effectively will certainly prove difficult.

**Pilot Learning Center.** During Quarter 4 we expanded the staff of people who will be tasked with updating, reorganizing, and adding to the Pilot Learning Center. Our goal is to reorganize it both by topic and by region – i.e. in such a manner that tutorials and other guidance on any procedure or communication which is specific to a certain country or region is identified and categorized accordingly. Additionally, the team will be updating materials where needed, and adding links to other external resources where appropriate. The focus will be on finding, vetting, and linking video tutorials as opposed to written materials, as videos seem more effective in retaining a modern audience's attention.

### **Pilot Feedback**

**General Updates.** This quarter, the updated Pilot Feedback System Policy and Procedures document was completed and disseminated for review and comment – and will be brought separately to this Board of Governors Quarterly Meeting for approval. Additionally, PTD's Assistant VP coordinated with members from the Technology department in implementing several refinements to the portal by which Pilot Feedback is handled. Also, much time was spent during the quarter in terms of adding to the staff of Pilot Feedback Evaluators and Reviewers, in preparation for a broader rollout of the Pilot Feedback program in 2026. Workflow and communication improvements were also implemented in preparation for the increased volume of cases. Applications were solicited to fill the vacant Pilot Feedback Manager position, and a selection is anticipated within the first part of January.

**Plans to Broaden Access.** During the quarter, Pilot Training collected e-mail addresses for the various Division Directors, with the intent to begin selectively rolling out the program more broadly across the network. Right now, Supervisors remain the primary conduit for Pilot Feedback case intake. The eventual goal is that any user may submit feedback when merited and desired. Getting from here to there needs to be done cautiously and with careful monitoring of the caseload in comparison to the level of PFS staff required to handle it expeditiously. The plan as of today is to invite certain key Controllers across the network into a limited beta-test of the system, then gradually broaden access from there.

**Suspension with Required Training.** Starting with the adoption of the updated Code of Regulations on November 15th, Pilot Training has been granted the authority to suspend a user's account temporarily, pending their completion of additional training. While each new Pilot Feedback case (presuming it is with merit) results in the PTD staff reaching out to the subject pilot to provide guidance and resources to aid in avoiding similar future errors, this new clause in the CoR allows us to identify the most severe cases and make

participation in additional training mandatory before connecting again. While still understandably viewed by many as punitive, the goal is to have a vehicle for limiting disruptive behavior due to lack of knowledge – one that is separate from the process to limit disruptive behavior due to outright malicious neglect or intent.

Between November 15th and December 31st, ten Feedback cases resulted in an invocation of CoR 6.05C. Of those:

- one never replied to the notice in any way and thus remains suspended at this time;
- two replied favorably, but have not completed the assigned training and thus remain suspended at this time;
- two were found in violation of other Code of Conduct or Code of Regulations clauses, and were issued longer-term sanctions accordingly;
- one completed the assigned training, was reinstated, but then suffered a further incident after which he was found to be violation of other CoC / CoR clauses;
- four completed the assigned training and were reinstated without further incident.

Of the four which were reinstated without incident, two were relatively early in this timeline, but both have had a fairly sparse connection history since returning. The other two were reinstated very recently as of this writing. So, in all four cases, there is not sufficient data yet to determine whether the process is effective in reducing recurrence of issues. Currently, with an extremely limited sample size and timeframe, the rate of recurrence could be stated as one in five.

Notably, of the ten cases, seven users were ones who self-identified at registration as having been between the ages of 13 and 17. Again, this is all with an extremely limited sample. Careful data analysis will be ongoing throughout 2026.

### **Pilot Ratings**

ATO Program Updates. Earlier in 2025 we rolled back some of the prior administration's requirements for one to work as a Flight Instructor within a VATSIM ATO, leaving qualifications up to each individual organization. We also allowed ATOs to provide their own Flight Examiners, while keeping the requirement for all Exam documentation to be shared with the central PTD for quality assurance. This resulted in the largest number of ATO-issued pilot ratings per quarter within the last two years, and a 145% year-over-year increase from 2024's Q4. However, while these numbers are trending in the right direction, they remain small compared to the overall network userbase. Notably, we still have not increased the number of operating ATOs, and will continue to seek ways to reduce barriers for entry into that arena. Other plans for 2026 include updating and standardizing the documentation for each Pilot Rating's learning goals and evaluation criteria.

Proposal for Additional Pilot Recognition. A separate proposal will be brought to the Board of Governors for consideration at this Quarterly Meeting. The proposal is to offer an additional means of recognizing pilots for completing training programs aside from the official, full Pilot Ratings awarded by our Authorized Training Organizations. There are a number of programs worthy of consideration for secondary recognition, both internal and external to VATSIM – and giving them visibility may be a way to incentivize the pilot userbase to seek such training and education, even if those programs are not as rigorous as our Pilot Ratings. Further details will be contained in the aforementioned proposal.

### Key Performance Indicators

Category	Year	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	Q4 (Oct-Dec)
NMOQ Fails (*)	2024	10,220	9,234	11,031	8,266
NMOQ Passes (*)		13,988	12,228	14,660	12,391
Success Rate		57.8%	57.0%	57.1%	60.0%
Avg Passes / Day		154	134	159	135
NMOC Fails (**)	2025	1,197	1,010	1,160	866
NMOC Passes (**)		7,290	6,906	9,117	8,170
Success Rate		85.9%	87.2%	88.7%	90.4%
Avg Passes / Day		81	76	99	89
<i>(*) this refers to the “old” New Member Orientation Quiz on my.vatsim.net.</i>					
<i>(**) Q1 numbers are extrapolated to the full quarter since the “new” course and exam was deployed on the 22nd day of Q1. The raw figures are that 5,589 passed, and 918 failed, over the 69-day period.</i>					
Category	Year	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	Q4 (Oct-Dec)
Feedback Cases Opened	2024	196	367	266	158
	2025	188	150	164	151
CoR 6.05C Cases Initiated (***)	2025	n/a	n/a	n/a	10
<i>(***) CoR update became effective November 15th, almost exactly halfway through the quarter.</i>					



Category	Year	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	Q4 (Oct-Dec)
P1 Transfers Issued	2024	223	192	254	221
	2025	221	190	198	199
P2 Transfers Issued	2024	107	90	97	101
	2025	110	102	86	76
P3 Transfers Issued	2024	129	112	132	122
	2025	111	116	99	114
P4 Transfers Issued	2024	148	105	141	146
	2025	155	132	113	127
Category	Year	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	Q4 (Oct-Dec)
P1 Ratings Issued	2024	9	10	7	8
	2025	12	13	22	19
P2 Ratings Issued	2024	3	1	0	3
	2025	0	0	2	7
P3 Ratings Issued	2024	0	0	0	0
	2025	0	1	0	1
P4 Ratings Issued	2024	1	0	0	0
	2025	0	0	0	0
Total Ratings Issued	2024	13	11	7	11
	2025	12	14	24	27
Active ATOs	2024	12	12	11	11
	2025	10	10	11	11

## Analysis

New Member Orientation Course and Exam. With a full year's worth of data to compare now, it remains the case that the updated version of the New Member Orientation Course and Exam has proven transformative for the process of bringing new users into the network. In 2024, a total of 53,267 users passed the quiz associated with joining VATSIM. In 2025, that number decreased by 41% to 31,483 – an average of 82 per day versus 146 the previous year. Ideally, the delta largely represents users who would have been unlikely to

contribute in a positive manner to the network – but data from the Membership and Supervisor departments is needed in order to corroborate this hypothesis. Additionally, it remains the case that passing results on the New Member Course represent approximately 34.5% of new CIDs created. The Terminal dashboard page (as of this writing on January 6th) shows that 258 new CIDs were created per day, over the last 90 days. In that same approximate period, 89 users passed the NMOC per day.

Interestingly, we have wondered all year how this relates to the numbers reported by Membership, which state in the current (Q4) report that an average of 55 new user registrations per day occurred this quarter. What we have found in a deeper data dive within Pilot Training is that there are a significant number of users who created their accounts prior to the implementation of the current New Member Orientation, but never passed the older version of the New Member Quiz and thus now need to pass the new one in order to activate their accounts. This may at least partially account for the difference between the two departments' statistics.

Pilot Feedback System and CoR 6.05C Data. The number of Pilot Feedback cases remained relatively stable throughout the year, and remains significantly down from its peak in Q2 of 2024. It is still difficult to draw firm conclusions on this data because the system was still in relative infancy during that time. Down-trending data may be partially attributed to the effect of the New Member Orientation, but also may be influenced by perception that little action is taken on Pilot Feedback cases. Now with the advent of Code of Regulations 6.05C, once it becomes more common knowledge that the Pilot Training Department has the ability to act in the most severe manner on these reports when necessary, that could have an effect on the number filed. Also, certainly our planned broadened rollout of access across the network will be reflected in case numbers in 2026.

Only ten Feedback cases since November 15th were escalated to temporary account suspensions per the new Code of Regulations clause authorizing this, and a detailed account of these is included in Section 1.3 of this document, above. A caution about drawing conclusions from such a limited sample size also appears there – but, it bears reemphasizing. Trends will emerge more definitively in 2026 and we will continue to monitor them carefully.

Real-World Ratings Equivalency Transfers. Year-over-year comparison shows that this program was slightly less popular, in terms of pure numbers, in 2025 than in 2024. P1 transfers went from 890 to 808 (down 9.2%); P2s from 395 to 374 (down 5.3%), P3s from 495 to 440 (down 11.1%), and P4s from 540 to 527 (down 2.4%). In total, the change from 2,320 to 2,149 for the year represents a 7.4% overall decrease.

Pilot Ratings Issued by ATOs. The statistical effects of rolling back some of the more restrictive policies governing ATOs are finally showing in definitive fashion. The number of

Pilot Ratings issued by ATOs is currently in a dramatic upward trend. Ratings issued in 2025 were up 83% over those issued in 2024 – and, in particular, ratings issued in the fourth quarter of this year more than doubled (up 145%) from those issued in the fourth quarter last year.

Currently the P3 and P4 ratings remain stagnant, with only three such ratings issued globally over the past two calendar years. This is concerning, but it makes sense given the following considerations:

VATSIM pilots who come in with no real-world knowledge start with the P1;

VATSIM pilots who have real-world experience typically focus on continuing their real-world training versus engaging in (essentially meaningless) virtual training;

Several years of a stagnant ATO program have left us rebuilding its userbase from the bottom up.

Additionally, some work is needed on the Certification Standards for the P3 and P4, to clarify what those programs teach and how they are evaluated, before ATOs may be fully willing to embrace those programs and invest resources in developing them.

However, the one most concerning statistic in the ATO arena is that the number of operating ATOs has been nearly unchanged in two years. From the discussions we have had with several organizations seeking to become VATSIM ATOs, the primary barrier seems to be a technical one – i.e. the complex web development needed in order to maintain student records confidentially with carefully controlled access, and to conduct written exams in a secure and tamper-resistant manner. PTD staff is evaluating the feasibility of loaning technical resources to existing and potential ATOs in order to lower this barrier. A second barrier to ATO formation is motivation and engagement of potential organization staff. An overall revitalization of the ATO program may assist in getting more VATSIM users interested in volunteering for such an endeavor.

## **5.12      *Marketing and Communications (JVG)***

### **Summary**

The Marketing and Communications department has continued steady recruitment in Q4 of 2025. We have managed to fill up the spots opened due to staff resignations.

In the upcoming quarter, we are looking into expanding the events team roster for possible new projects. We are also looking into ways of structuring how events are organised from a .net level and perspective. This includes our involvement in the next editions of Cross the Pond and Cross the Land.

Marketing Staff Overview	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
Events Team	18	17	19	20
Media Team	20	18	16	16
Community Team	13	13	13	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>

Note: Some staff members sit on multiple teams

### Leadership Overview

Vice President, Marketing & Communications

Jannes van Gestel

Assistant Vice President, Marketing & Communications

Angelo Lee (Internal Affairs)

Chris Gardiner (External Affairs)

Marketing & Communications, Team Leads

Rafael Martins (Events Team)

Rahul Chakraborty (Media Team)

Mufassil Yasir (Community Team)

### Events Team

In Q4 2025, the Events Team initiated planning for the next edition of 24 Hours of VATSIM. Planning activities followed the established timeline, with all internal deadlines being met. Coordination is currently focused on confirming airports, legs, and operational details with Divisions. Full leg coordination is expected to be completed by late December, in line with the standard planning cycle.

After a reduction in activity during Q3, event submissions increased significantly in Q4. The quarter closed with 779 events submitted, the highest volume recorded to date. A total of 163 exams were processed, and 6 network-level VATSIM events were supported. Overall event demand increased substantially, resulting in higher operational throughput.

Support provided to the World Flight planning proved successful this quarter. The Events Team assisted with coordination and information gathering, receiving positive feedback

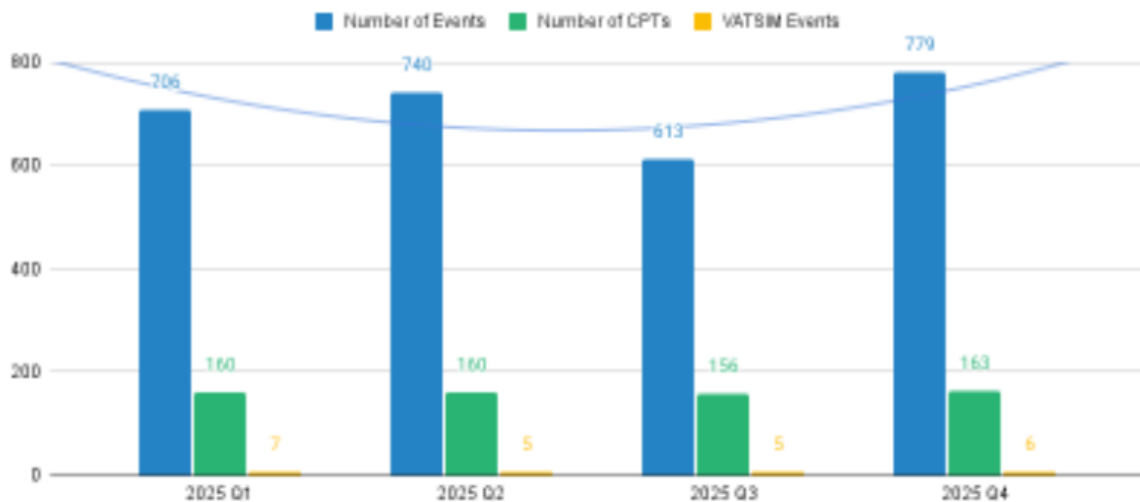
from Divisions and the World Flight team. Lessons learned and improvement points were identified and documented to support future editions.

First Wings and Elite Wings remain ongoing initiatives, with continuous planning in place to support future execution. During this quarter, the Media Team also completed a rebrand of both programs. The updated visual identity is expected to be rolled out in Q1 and Q2 2026.

The team has been requesting transfer of CTP ownership from Kieran Hardern, who is no longer on the planning team. DD offered to reach out and ask for his priority.

Events Data	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
Events + CPTs Held	872	900	615	942
VATSIM-organised Events	7	5	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>948</b>
Late Events Submitted	21	19	23	11

**Number of Events, CPTs and VATSIM Events per Quarter**



## Media Team

This quarter, the Media team maintained standard operations, including two Twitch streams. Engagement for Behind the Scopes (BTS) was lower than expected from the APAC region, and invitations have since been sent to the AMAS region for Q1 '26.

4 SOAR posts were published, with a plan to increase this to 6 posts next quarter. New Elite Wings and First Wings creatives were developed by the Design team. Next quarter, we plan to work with the Events team on 24 hours of VATSIM banners.

Social Media Channels (FB/Insta/X)	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
Total Impressions / Reach	63116 (+2.5%)	64224 (+2%)	66422 (+3.4%)	70849 (+6.6%)
Total Engagements / Page Visits	26235 (+108%)	22835 (-12%)	20740 (-9%)	36165 (+74.3%)
TikTok Followers	12385 (+10%)	15252 (+23%)	17278 (+13%)	18353 (+6.2%)
TikTok Post Likes	6286 (-59%)	11937 (+90%)	16462 (+38%)	7283 (-55%)
TikTok Post Views	89767 (-35%)	137261 (+53%)	207659 (+52%)	101542 (-51%)
Banners	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
Event Banners	11	11	22	7
Social Media Graphics	5	16	26	32
Announcement Graphics	9	6	3	6
Σ	25	33	51	45

## Community Team

Q4 2025 demonstrated sustained community growth and high engagement despite a reduction in ticket volume from the Q3 peak. While voice activity was impacted in December due to moderation-related channel closures, text engagement and membership continued to rise, highlighting ongoing community participation and resilience.

Ticket Handling	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025
VATSIM Support Tickets	14	27	15	21
Community Discord Tickets	231	406	690	483
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>504</b>

VATSIM Community Server	October	November	December	Σ
Total Members	31,615	32,541	33,431	32,529
Total Visitors	10,978	10,281	13,184	11,481
Total Messages	16,783	20,673	22,505	19,987
Total Voice Minutes	68,212	57,048	0	62,630

## 6 Other Business

None

## 7 Meeting Closure

The meeting was closed by Don Desfosse at 2324 UTC.