

Date: Tuesday, June 16
Time: 8:00 AM – 10:00
Session: Annual Business Meeting
Location: Rosen Shingle Creek, Panzacola F/G

Acceptance speech Mathis Menzel

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow EASA members

Thank you, Barry.

It is a tremendous honor to wear this chain of office. A chain that carries the names of 93 remarkable leaders who shaped this association before me.

And if I understand correctly, I may be the first non-native English speaker, the first German, - yes, that's the little accent you may have detected by now - and one of the very few Europeans ever to stand here as Chairman of EASA.

To me, that says something very important about this organization. It says that EASA has never been about where you come from. It has always been about shared values, shared commitment, and mutual respect.

In a time when the world sometimes feels like it is drifting further apart, I am deeply grateful for the trust you place in me today.

I come from the other side of the Atlantic. But standing here, this room does not feel divided by oceans or borders. It feels united by friendships, by professionalism, and by a genuine passion for our industry.

My first EASA Convention was 17 years ago. That year, my friend and mentor David Griffin served as Chairman.

I was a young guy from Germany attending his very first Convention, trying to understand how this association worked... and sometimes, honestly, simply trying to follow the conversations around me.

I still remember Past Chairman Brian Gibbon and his wife inviting me to dinner during that convention. There I was, sitting among all these experienced EASA people trying to figure out the rules of the game.

Looking back now, it feels like yesterday.

But from that very first evening, I felt one thing clearly: I felt welcomed.

What I discovered quickly was this: EASA is more than an association. It is a community. A place where competitors help each other. Where friendships cross borders. Where experience is shared generously. And where people genuinely want each other to succeed.

That experience shaped me — personally and professionally.

And it is the reason I chose the theme for my year as Chairman:

"Stronger Together."

Because no matter whether we come from North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, or New Zealand, we face the same challenges.

We are searching for skilled people and trying to inspire the next generation to join our trades. We are adapting to new technologies - automation, AI, digitalization. We are dealing with rising costs, supply chain disruptions, and raw material shortages. We are navigating environmental responsibilities and a world that feels more complex and faster moving than ever before.

But alongside every one of these challenges, we share the same opportunity: to learn from one another.

As a European Chairman, I especially want to listen and bring ideas home from every region in this room. And I invite every region of the EASA world to connect more closely with us in return.

Because none of us become stronger alone. We become stronger when knowledge is shared. When experience is exchanged. When trust is built across countries and cultures.

That spirit has helped my own company enormously over the years. Without the advice, the ideas, and the network of people in this association, we would not be where we are today.

And speaking of that, I want to thank my family.

At first my Wonderful Wife Maria and my Co-CEO Dirk – both support me every day and allow – thank you so much!

My father is here today. Papa, thank you for your trust, your generosity, and your guidance. And also for your patience. Even if it has not always been easy with me. Perhaps it still isn't.

I will take my defense from Albert Einstein, who once said: "More than the past, I am interested in the future — because that is where I intend to live."

And that future is what EASA is about.

A future built on education. On innovation. On craftsmanship. On relationships. And on the understanding that we achieve more together than we ever could alone.

So, as we begin this new administrative year, I feel humbled and honored to serve this organization.

I invite all of you to join me in the spirit of "Stronger Together."

Let us keep learning from one another. Supporting one another. And building an even stronger global EASA community for the generation that comes after us.

Thank you very much.

Now, as my first official act as your chairman, I would like to call Barry Bullard back to the podium so I can present him with a plaque and past chairman's pin.

(BARRY COMES TO THE STAGE. TAKE PICTURE WITH PLAQUE AND HAND HIM THE PIN.)

Thank you, Barry, for your great service as chairman of EASA.

Thank you, everyone. Be sure to stay in this room, as very shortly we will hear from Economist Chris Kuehl, and I know you don't want to miss that. I'll see you in the Solutions Expo at 10:30!

Our business meeting is now adjourned.