

For the pilots of Air Transat, 2010 brought challenges as the group's future hinged on the outcome of collective bargaining efforts that produced a 13-month roller-coaster ride and kept negotia-

tors for both the pilots and management hanging in the balance.

After some unexpected curves along the way, the pilots ratified a collective agreement in October 2010. The Air Transat Master Executive Council (MEC) credits the pilots' commitment to solidarity and their resolve to hold firm on an unbreakable strike mandate.

"Together we worked to develop the strongest possible position to achieve the best outcome for our pilots and for management: a viable, profitable, and sustainable airline," says Capt. Sylvain Aubin, the pilots' MEC chairman. "We will remain a unified group as we now work to implement the details of the ratified contract in 2011."

The new collective agreement brought wage increases and significant improvements to job safety and security. The pilots successfully negotiated for improved working conditions that include a new bidding and fatigue risk management system, and they anticipate that more pilots will be hired in the spring. In a letter of understanding, Air Transat pilots also negotiated for the possible integration of narrowbody aircraft into their current fleet. "We have a respectable contract that reflects the priorities of our pilots," says Capt. Brad Small, the pilot group's Communications Committee chairman and a member of ALPA's Canada Board. "The pilots of Air Transat stood

solidly behind our highly experienced Negotiating Committee, and the unity we showed and our resolve to stick together paid off for all of us," Small says.

"Our experience within the ALPA family leaves us optimistic that contract implementation will move along smoothly because of the resources and support available to our MEC," says Aubin. Throughout the negotiations process, Air Transat pilots were backed by a \$1 million grant from ALPA's



F/O Pierre-Alexandre Senechal.

Major Contingency Fund (MCF), which provides pilots with the necessary resources for responding to threats to their jobs and to the airline piloting profession.

In addition to contract implementation, the issue of pilot fatigue and the need for revised flight- and duty-time legislation are top priorities for the pilots. Using the Association's experience as a participant in last year's FAA Aviation Rulemaking Committee, the group is working with other Canadian pilots to bring about much-needed change to current flight- and duty-time rules that push the limits of pilot exhaustion. Capt. Martin Gauthier, chair-

man of the ALPA Flight Time/Duty Time Committee for Canada, believes the time is right for Canada to amend its flight- and duty-time regulations. "We need a level playing field for everybody, and the Canadian aviation regulations need to fix that." The MEC remains committed to working with management to establish a fatigue risk management system on the property in 2011.

The pilot group anticipates many more challenges in the coming year—Open Skies agreements, carbon taxes, and fleet renewals are among the most pressing. "Since we are in the middle of an international market, we must always look forward and be ready to work with our management as partners," says Aubin.

Air Transat is largely an international charter operator with approximately 14,000 flights per year from gateways across Canada. The airline specializes in both scheduled and chartered flights from several Canadian cities to global vacation destinations including the Caribbean, the company's main business during the winter months. The pilots transport 3 million passengers annually to nearly 60 destinations in 25 countries including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. 

TSC at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1999
Number of Pilots: 360
Headquarters: Pierre E. Trudeau International Airport, Montreal, PQ.
Pilot Bases: Montreal, PQ.; Toronto, Ont.; and Vancouver, B.C.
Fleet: 18 A310s and A330s

Air Transat

Air Transat Pilots Steer Roller-Coaster Bargaining to Safe Ground and A Solid Contract

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