

ICAM!

Anthony Wagstaff, M.B.Ch.B., BAO, Ph.D., Dip.Av.Med., MBA

As we look forward to the next important event in aerospace medicine this year, I would like to share some background and perspective on the importance of international collaboration in our field. The International Congress of Aerospace Medicine (ICAM) 2026 in Istanbul, Türkiye, (October 1–3), is the third ICAM congress. The two previous ICAMs, in Paris in 2022 and Lisbon in 2024, were both very successful, drawing around 800 participants from all over the world. Even more international than the AsMA Annual Scientific Meeting, the ICAM conference has its own merit and complements the AsMA conference both regarding content and participation. I would like to share some history and some thoughts regarding this conference, which is not only a story of success, but also of innovation, collaboration, and friendship.

ICAM is a biennial congress which has a very interesting history, where AsMA has played—and still plays—a major role. This is a story of successful collaboration between the central organisations of aerospace medicine and with the host country's national aerospace medical organisation.

Historically, the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine (IAASM) has organised the International Congress of Aviation and Space Medicine (ICASM) as an annual event, usually in the autumn (to avoid competing with AsMA). This congress has by tradition been organised every year, alternating between Europe and another continent.

In 2006, the European Society of Aerospace Medicine (ESAM) was formed as an umbrella organisation for Europe's national aerospace medical organisations. It rapidly became a large organisation comprising over 40 constituent national organisations. The European Congress of Aerospace Medicine (ECAM) was founded as a congress to be held in Europe each year. ICASM was organised

in a non-European destination. The ECAM was at first a small conference, but in Oslo in 2016 it passed 400 participants, helped by a new collaboration with AsMA.

Are you confused? Well, if we go 10 years back in time, a group of people decided to join forces. I wouldn't say they were confused, but some felt that these conferences were possibly competing with each other, albeit unintentionally. In an unprecedented move, representatives of the three organisations—AsMA, IAASM, and ESAM—decided to make a shared effort by creating a European conference together. The new conference was to build on ECAM, involving the local national organisation, with the ICASM conference also having a similar tradition. ICAM was born, with the name being a blend of ICASM and ESAM (collaboration means compromise!). Paris was chosen as the first venue, easily agreed upon. However, it turned out to be a tough start for the new ICAM conference, as we are now talking 2020. The COVID pandemic brought the first plans to a grinding halt, so 2021 was the new date. Again, the conference could not be organised due to pandemic issues. Finally, in 2022, the Paris ICAM was held and was a huge success.

This is a story of pulling together, finding common solutions. Aerospace medicine was never “grounded,” but even if our ideas fly high, collaboration is king.

See you in Istanbul?



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CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: President@asma.org • **Website:** <https://asma.org/> • **Facebook:** Aerospace Medical Association • **X:** @aero_med_1929 • **YouTube:** @aero_med_1929