ABSTRACT

The Aviation Psychologist in the Italian Air Force: a model of professional qualification and accreditation

The growing centrality of the human factor in complex aeronautical and space systems and the evolution of the international regulatory framework require professionals with highly specialized competencies in the assessment, selection, training, and psychological support of personnel employed in aviation operations. In this context, the Italian Air Force has initiated a process to structure the role of the Aviation Psychologist, aimed at defining its professional profile, access requirements, training pathway, methods of employment, and criteria for maintaining competencies in a systematic manner.

The presentation will introduce the model developed by the Italian Air Force as an organizational response to the need for the qualification and enhancement of the profession, in accordance with the most recent guidance issued by ICAO, EASA, and ENAC concerning Human Factors, Pilot Support Programmes, and the assessment of the mental fitness of aviation personnel. The qualifying elements of the professionalization pathway will be illustrated, with particular reference to the processes of selection, training, awarding of the qualification, continuous updating, and prospects for accreditation of the professional role.

The proposed model aims to ensure that activities pertaining to psychology are carried out exclusively by appropriately trained and qualified professionals, promoting the protection of specialist competencies, alignment with international standards, and the consolidation of the Aviation Psychologist's contribution to flight safety and aerospace medicine processes. The experience of the Italian Air Force is therefore presented as a possible reference for the definition of shared professional standards within the military sphere and for the promotion of a culture of quality and accreditation in a sector of strategic importance to aviation safety.

Keywords:

Aviation Psychologist, Italian Air Force, Professional Accreditation, competencies, ENAC/ICAO/EASA Regulations