

# Aviation and Occupational Medicine: EUROCONTROL, Belgium

Meet Roland Vermeiren, a Belgian medical doctor who concentrates on many issues in his work at EUROCONTROL, but also in many other scientific and rule-making aerospace medicine realms. Read more about his experience to see if aviation or occupational medicine may be right for your future career.

**Profession:** Head of the medical service of EUROCONTROL, as occupational medicine physician, social insurance medical advisor, aviation medicine physician for fit assessments of controllers, and also responsible for emergency care and overseeing the doctors at our various sites.

**Workplace:** EUROCONTROL is the European Agency for the Safety of Air Navigation (ATM), with centers at Brussels (HQ and pan-European Flow Control), Paris (experimental and simulations), Maastricht (ATC over four countries) and Luxemburg (ATCO school).

**Education:** The medieval university of Leuven, Belgium, with specialization in family medicine, occupational medicine, insurance medicine, aviation medicine and radiation protection.

**Years in practice:** 15 years as General Practitioner, 10 years as SABENA airline medical doctor and 27 years at EUROCONTROL.



**My typical day:** I have no typical day due to the mixture of my tasks and activities! Sometimes I will be at my office to do occupational medical examinations or see patients with long lasting medical problems for which I can support a reintegration at work or organize an invalidity procedure. On other days I will be on mission to another center of EUROCONTROL, or for medical invalidity boards at clinics or practices. At different locations in Europe there are several meetings of EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency), of ESAM (European Society of Aerospace Medicine) and the CMO forum (chief medical officers of the Civil Aviation Authorities of all European countries) in which I participate.

**My challenges and rewards:** At my EUROCONTROL job the challenges come from the different interests and views of staff members and management in certain cases and my reward is to find an optimum solution which is acceptable for both. In my activities in aviation rulemaking the challenges are mainly political which we try to overcome with good aeromedical evidence from our scientific associations.

**How the combination of occupational, insurance and aviation medicine is different:** It is the variety of an integrated approach to a case which facilitates seeing a medical problem from different angles. The case will also never leave you until there is a final solution. International expertise and access to worldwide specialists for advice and support is very important in this multi-national context.

**Skills I need for aerospace medicine:** Having an open mind for other opinions and being able to communicate easily is essential in my job. Also the ability to speak a few different languages helps to do that smoothly. Aerospace medicine is a horizontal specialization where all clinical medicine areas are present, and meet legal and regulatory issues.

**Book I recommend:**

*Pilot Mental Health Assessment and Support* by Robert Bor, Carina Eriksen, Margaret Oakes and Peter Scragg, published by Routledge in 2017

**Online resources:**

[www.esam.aero](http://www.esam.aero)  
[www.asma.org](http://www.asma.org)  
[www.IAASM.org](http://www.IAASM.org)