

Flying in a global sky

BY ALESSANDRA BRUNI



ENAV, the Italian company managing air traffic control extended its strategic excellence and innovation capacity in the current tricky business of international air traffic management

It is a privilege to introduce the Company I am honored to represent – and to highlight the invaluable contribution of air traffic controllers, who safeguard our skies every day with exceptional professionalism and responsibility.

Metaphorically speaking, I will open the doors to our airspace to illustrate the complex dynamics behind the **ENAV** system.

To understand the legal entity we are dealing with, it is essential to revisit its origins and evolution.

The Company's mission is to provide air navigation services and to design, develop, produce, and market advanced systems and solutions worldwide in this field. **ENAV** operates by ensuring the highest levels of safety and efficiency.

In brief, looking back at our history, air traffic control services were established in the late 1930s under the Italian Air Force. It was only in 1979 that the process of demilitarization began, leading to the creation of an autonomous organization. It later evolved first into a public entity and then, in 2001, into a joint-stock company, within the broader liberalization and privatization of the air transport market.

Since 2016 the Company has been listed on the stock exchange and is currently the only air navigation service provider in Europe (and, as far as we know, worldwide) to be publicly traded. Its stock is considered a reliable investment, marked by low volatility and stable returns over time, also due to the regulated nature of its core business.

From a legal perspective, I often like to describe **ENAV** somewhat informally, as a "strange animal": it certainly falls within the perimeter of the modern public administration – not the traditional model, but one that pursues the public interest through private law frameworks. **ENAV** is, therefore, a legal entity with complex characteristics.

This hybrid structure allows the Company to align its public-interest mission with the managerial efficiency and eco-

nomic sustainability typical of a private enterprise. Today, **ENAV** is recognized as a European and international leader in efficiency and innovation.

Our new Industrial Plan sets a clear path for growth, focused on innovation, sustainability, and global competitiveness. We plan investments of approximately €570 million, aimed at modernizing infrastructure, introducing new digital platforms for air traffic management, and developing cloud- and AI-based solutions.

Among the most advanced projects is the digitalization of control towers. **ENAV**, a pioneer in this sector since 2016, inaugurated the first fully remote tower in 2022. The goal is to transform two centers into hubs for the remote operation of up to 26 Italian control towers by 2033, thereby increasing flexibility, operational continuity, and benefits for the mobility of people and goods.

Technological innovation goes hand in hand with a strong commitment to sustainability. **ENAV** was also a pioneer in implementing systems that allow airlines to reduce flight times and fuel consumption – such as Free Route, enabling direct crossing of Italian skies without the need to follow traditional route networks (above 6,500 meters), and AMAN, which optimizes arrival sequences at airports. Thanks to new operational capabilities in route management, in 2024 airlines achieved significant fuel savings, resulting in lower CO₂ emissions.

Important challenges also arise from unconventional traffic, looking at new low-altitude and unmanned air mobility – namely drones. The potential for mobility and business development associated with unmanned vehicles is vast and significant, encompassing cargo transport, infrastructure monitoring, agricultural spraying, and even passenger transport such as air taxis.

To effectively support the growth of this sector, regulation must keep pace with technological progress. **ENAV** is already playing a leading role in this emerging sce-

ENAV has recently installed its remote digital tower

Data Stampa 1031

Data Stampa 1031



nario: through its subsidiary D-Flight, it was the first operator in Europe, and currently the only one in Italy, to obtain certification as a service provider for common drone traffic information services and for digital services within the so-called U-space, the suite of digital services enabling and regulating these new uses of European airspace.

Our plan envisages expanding in the drone sector, including potential M&A transactions. We have also launched the Digital Academy, an e-learning platform dedicated to air traffic management and advanced air mobility, leveraging ENAV's technological expertise to train new generations worldwide.

Although ENAV's core business remains largely tied to the regulated sector of civil air traffic control in Italy, the Company has

long operated in the open market, delivering its highly specialized services in over 100 countries worldwide.

The Industrial Plan includes an even more ambitious international expansion. Among upcoming goals, by 2026 **ENAV** plans to open new offices in India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia, thereby consolidating its presence in strategic regions such as the Indo-Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East, in line with several of Italy's current national strategic directions.

ENAV's strategic choices are already paying off: 2024 closed as a record year for operating revenues and net profit. Beyond business, we are deeply committed to social responsibility through our nonprofit Foundation, which I am proud to have created. Among its flagship initiatives for 2025 is a project with Cattolica University and

Gemelli Hospital in Nairobi, focused on advanced clinical training and telemedicine – consistent with G20 priorities and national policy directions.

In conclusion, I believe it is my duty to thank all **ENAV** personnel – controllers and non-controllers alike – whose teamwork has been crucial to our success. The human factor remains decisive: competence, professionalism, and responsiveness are essential to shaping the future.

Fully aware of the challenges ahead, **ENAV** is well positioned to keep flying high – ensuring that Italy remains at the forefront of global aviation.

ALESSANDRA BRUNI is an Italian outstanding lawyer and **ENAV** president.