

MAY 2021



ECAC's Strategy for the Future

A Policy Statement



Adopted by ECAC Directors General of Civil Aviation
at DGCA/156





ECAC's Strategy for the Future

The role of ECAC

As Europe's largest and longest-standing aviation organisation, ECAC has a unique status in the region and a key role to play in supporting its 44 Member States as they address issues affecting the European civil aviation sector, in particular in relation to safety, security, facilitation, environment, air navigation and economics.

It fulfils this role in cooperation with other key international organisations of the European civil aviation community, such as the European Union (including the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)), EUROCONTROL and industry associations.

Thanks to the trust and solidarity among its Member States, on which ground their relations are based, ECAC strives to take its decisions by consensus.

ECAC's priorities in discharging its role are:

1. to act as a pan-European think-tank;
2. to support its Member States in developing and promoting harmonised pan-European positions and solutions; and
3. to serve as a centre of expertise for its Member States.

① A pan-European aviation think-tank

ECAC's provides an excellent opportunity for free and open discussion between its Member States on key strategic issues, without binding implications.

This also offers the European Union (including EASA) and EUROCONTROL views and suggestions where and when the governing bodies of these organisations do not have a similar opportunity.

ECAC represents a think-tank for many new concepts and innovative matters, not only during DGCA meetings but also through the organisation of European Coordination Meetings (ECM), the ECAC/EU Dialogue with the air transport industry and the annual ECAC Forum.

The unique pan-European dimension of ECAC creates a bridge between EU and non-EU ECAC Member States. ECAC acts as a facilitator and supports the adoption and implementation of EU standards in all its Member States and cooperates, where appropriate, with other pan-European bodies.

② Support to ECAC Member States

ECAC supports the coordination between ECAC Member States, notably in case of a crisis situation [or in extraordinary circumstances].

It supports its Member States in the development and promotion of harmonised pan-European positions in all areas of aviation policy and practice for delivery at ICAO and in other important international fora.

This work is done in close coordination with the European organisations, bringing to the task ECAC's unique European-wide membership. Additionally, the cooperative relationship developed over the years with other regional aviation organisations is an asset to explain and try to secure global support for European policies.

The coordination of pan-European positions at major ICAO meetings (Assembly, High-Level Conferences, as well as ICAO Panels and Committees) contributes to the promotion of European priorities and sharing of good practices with the wider international community.

Thanks to joint EU/ECAC coordination, the 44 ECAC Member States develop common positions on issues of common interest and can speak with one single voice.

③ To serve as a centre of expertise

ECAC support to Member States is delivered through the work of several working groups which elaborate measures, recommendations, guidelines and good practices, perform analyses and draft position papers and policies, also taking into consideration the need to prevent overlaps and duplication with other European aviation organisations.

In this sense, ECAC performs these activities when there is a clear added value for all ECAC Member States.

① Safety and air navigation

In the field of safety and air navigation, ECAC will promote the sharing of experiences and best practices, taking full advantage of the high level of harmonisation already provided by EASA and EUROCONTROL to develop a pan European approach as well as promote European standards worldwide.

ECAC will focus its activities where and when there is an added value for ECAC Member States. To achieve that it will concentrate on the actions in the areas where there is no overlap with the activities of EASA and EUROCONTROL in order to take maximum advantage of complementarities and synergies.

ECAC will continue to place particular emphasis on the sharing of experiences and good practices within the Group of Experts on Accident and Incident investigation (ACC) to the benefit of aviation safety and the industry.

② Aviation security

Alongside the continued delivery of its security policies and guidelines, and in discharging its role as the centre of expertise for Europe on aviation security, ECAC will further develop and refine its Audit and Capacity Building Programmes to reflect a more risk-based approach.

By identifying the most critical areas, ECAC establishes the basis for the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, focussing on the main risks. The sharing of information on risks between ECAC Member States is critical to the implementation of such mitigation measures.

Through security audits, vulnerability assessments and a wide range of capacity building activities ECAC will continue to support its Member States in their implementation of European security requirements. The promotion of the One Stop Security concept between EU and non-EU Member States will also be continued.

International cooperation with key partners, whether regional/ sub-regional organisations or individual States, will remain a priority with the objective of building partnerships and sharing experiences with other regions.

The performance of security projects by ECAC, such as the one funded by the European Union for the benefit of Africa, Asia and the Middle East will contribute to strengthening international working relationship with other regions.

ECAC will continue to serve as a centre of expertise for Europe on the development of technical specifications and common testing methodologies for security equipment, and the conduct of laboratory tests under the Common Evaluation Process of security equipment. This expertise is also widely recognised by ECAC's international partners.

Furthermore, by avoiding any duplication with the European Union it will maintain its high profile in developing recommendations in areas of common interest (e.g. digitalisation, cyber security, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, behaviour detection) and in elaborating guidance material.

③ Facilitation

Facilitation supports the efficient and sustainable development of air transport.

Being the only European organisation dealing with all aspects of facilitation (e.g. immigration, customs, persons with disabilities, health), ECAC will continue to pursue the development of efficient, effective and uniform aviation facilitation measures (e.g., for persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities) on a pan-European basis, and will support ECAC Member States in their harmonised implementation of such measures, notably in response to health crisis such as pandemics.

4 Environment and sustainability

The environmental impacts of the aviation sector are, and will continue to be, of primary importance for the aviation community.

ECAC's activity on environment matters, in particular on the issue of climate change (e.g. implementation of CORSIA, a Long Term Aspirational Goal, Sustainable Alternative Fuels) will continue to be performed in close cooperation with the European Commission.

In particular, ECAC will focus its activities where and when there is an added value for ECAC Member States, in particular from the pan-European perspective.

An efficient collaboration amongst European aviation organisations is of the utmost importance in order to prevent overlaps or duplication with their respective activities, and create complementarities and synergies.

5 Aviation and economics

ECAC is a valuable forum for pan-European consideration of the economic dimension of international air transport, including future trends and challenges (e.g., global competition).

The annual ECAC Forum and periodic ECAC/EU Dialogues with the air transport industry are important vehicles for debating economic issues.

ECAC will support mutual understanding and cooperation on economic matters of interest to ECAC Member States, such as European air transport competitiveness and connectivity as well as other issues such as social issues.

⑥ Training

Training and capacity building in issues such as safety, security, facilitation and environment are important to create an aviation culture.

ECAC will continue to promote aviation training and capacity building with the objective of creating conditions to share best practices amongst its Member States, notably through its capacity building programmes, and by offering encouragement to its associated body (JAA TO) to develop training courses which meet the demands of ECAC Member States and the needs of the wider aviation community.

7 Innovation

In a period of potentially fundamental change, ECAC will focus on innovation and areas of future opportunity and risk in aviation.

These areas may include developing thinking on common models in the fields of UAS to manage the challenges of safety, and security and investigation while maximising the opportunities for urban mobility of goods and people, medical and emergency services, agricultural support and environmental monitoring.

Other aspects may include knowledge-sharing on cyber risks, artificial intelligence and the development of new or adapted approaches to space and the emergence of suborbital flights.

ECAC will use its role as a pan-European think tank for aviation as a means of horizon scanning for future challenges of innovation across all existing and emerging aviation disciplines.

⑧ External relations

To date, ECAC has signed a series of formal agreements with international and regional organisations (e.g., ACAO, AFCAC and LACAC), and with a number of individual States.

Generally these agreements focus on a comprehensive cooperation based on the exchange of information and mutual participation in meetings and events, while a few agreements have a more limited scope focussing on aviation security.

ECAC has established and actively maintains a framework of relations and dialogue with external partners, including major emerging aviation States.

ECAC's external relations serve the following objectives:

- To promote pan-European positions and priorities at ICAO and at other major international events, ensuring that they are well represented there; and
- To learn from and influence selected major aviation States and regional organisations through the establishment of new cooperative relationships and the strengthening of those with existing partners, within and beyond Europe.



The background of the page features a large, stylized logo. On the left, the letters 'ECAC' are written in a large, light blue, serif font. On the right, the letters 'CEAC' are written in a large, white, serif font. Behind the text is a circular emblem containing a map of Europe. The emblem is flanked by olive branches and has a banner across it. The entire design is split vertically by a dark blue band.

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