

Speech by His Excellency Khalid Cherkaoui,
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Session 3 – Developing a comprehensive blueprint to strengthen European resilience in 2027 and beyond

**Your Excellencies, Directors-General and Directors,
Distinguished Representatives of the European Union and the
European Air Transport Industry,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to attend this high-level dialogue and to take part in this important discussion on “Resilience in the Aviation Sector.”

The first half of the decade 2020 / 2030 has been marked by major crises, including natural disasters, pandemics, geopolitical tensions and economic coercion. These events have highlighted the vulnerability of economies worldwide and the need to strengthen resilience in the aviation sector.

In this context, in the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) we remain convinced the importance of enhanced strategic coordination to reduce vulnerabilities and promote cooperation based on market openness, transparency, trust, reliability and sustainability.

The Arab countries occupy a strategically important position in international air transport, at the crossroads of major global air corridors linking East and West, and North and South. This geographical advantage has contributed to the development of international aviation hubs and airlines that play a significant role in global connectivity.

Despite this strategic position and these advantages, the Arab civil aviation sector remains particularly exposed to geopolitical tensions, characterised by armed conflicts, rising fuel prices, and increasing operating costs.

Recent conflicts in the Gulf region have led to significant flight cancellations and disruptions. In response, regional aviation authorities have activated crisis management mechanisms and strengthened coordination to reorganize air traffic flows, facilitate flight rerouting and maintain air connectivity despite repeated airspace closures.

These measures have also helped manage airspace more efficiently and prevent congestion in neighbouring countries.

Cooperation in addressing cybersecurity threats, drone-related risks and attacks against airport infrastructure has become another essential topics of aviation resilience.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that aviation can absorb geopolitical and other crises indefinitely. The repeated occurrence of tensions and crises can progressively undermine the resilience of the sector, ultimately resulting in substantial economic costs and a loss of competitiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Air transport must therefore be recognized as a strategic economic asset that needs to be protected and supported to preserve global connectivity and ensure that air travel remains accessible to the widest possible population.

The resilience of aviation also depends on sustained demand for air transport. Key drivers include :

- the expansion of middle classes in emerging economies, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region and parts of Africa,
- the resilience of tourism sector,
- the growth of air cargo supported by e-commerce.

In addition, technological advances offer opportunities to reduce operating costs and improve the passenger experience, while creating new opportunities for cooperation across the sector.

The resilience of the aviation sector also depends on analytical efforts to monitor emerging risk factors and ensure the availability of the resources, mechanisms and tools needed to manage these risks.

Adequate investment in aircraft fleets, airport infrastructure and related services is equally essential to accommodate growing demand and ensure operational continuity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, the challenge is not simply to respond to crises, but to develop an aviation ecosystem capable of anticipating risks and adapting to different crisis scenarios. Since disruptions can quickly extend beyond regional borders and affect global air traffic, international cooperation must remain a priority, as it was essential during the periods of crisis.

A permanent framework for dialogue and the exchange of best practices is essential to improve the collective understanding of emerging threats, mobilize the necessary resources and build a more resilient, competitive and accessible aviation sector.

Thank you for your kind attention and wish you success in your efforts.