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ECACNEWS

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#78

Post-COVID – better prepared for the next pandemic

Smarter borders – preparing for change under the new EU Entry/Exit System

Initiatives to assist air travellers with reduced mobility

Improving the assistance provided to aircraft accident victims and their families

ECAC Spotlight
Legal Task Force

SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY

How facilitation can deliver for the passenger



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The aviation sector has faced one of its most tumultuous periods of recent years. Following unprecedented disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic, we now face new – and different – challenges on the road to recovery. The new circumstances are also pushing the sector to change. There is a need to respond to heightened social and economic pressures in some States, and to demonstrate aviation's global commitment to become more sustainable and reduce its carbon footprint.



Alessio Quaranta
President of ECAC

One of the effects of this turbulence has been that facilitation has rapidly grown in importance. This is not surprising when we recognise that the challenges faced by the industry often have direct impacts on the way passengers engage with aviation. Consideration of the “passenger journey” is a substantial factor for political, regulatory and operational decision making. This is true whether it is new travel health requirements, changes to border control systems, or impacts due to disruption and rising travel costs. The creation of a safe and secure environment is a responsibility that regulators share with their industry partners, and it is often a complex one.

The ECAC facilitation work programme continues to address the diverse nature of facilitation with both the monitoring of ongoing issues and the identification of new topics to target for improvement. For example, this year's work programme includes a focus on the ECAC Quality Assessment Programme for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM), the EU Entry/Exit System, and provisions for the support to air accident victims and their families.

In this edition of the ECAC News, we discuss what the past years have taught facilitation experts, as well as shining a light on ongoing issues within the field. Our contributions also give a snapshot of initiatives that have been rolled out to enhance the assistance that passengers receive, particularly those who fall into the category of PRMs. Taking a look ahead, we hint at some of the topics we expect to see more of in 2024.

I am delighted to present this edition of the ECAC News as part of ECAC's commitment to increase cooperation and to promote continued development across the critical domain of facilitation. ●

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Post-COVID – better prepared for the next pandemic



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EASA public health-related actions

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has a strong track record of taking decisive action to mitigate aviation crises, working with the relevant stakeholders to ensure a timely and meaningful response.

The COVID-19 pandemic was not, per se, an aviation crisis. And yet it very quickly had an unprecedented impact on the sector that far exceeded the effect of any crisis to date from within the industry. This meant we needed to act rapidly to come up with an effective response, particularly with respect to passenger operations but also across many other domains, such as cargo operations.

EASA was proactive from an early stage. Our medical experts contacted and worked closely with their counterparts in the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). As a result, we were able to publish the first set of recommendations to counter the spread of the disease in the form of a Safety Information Bulletin on passenger and crew management on 27 January 2020 – at around the time the first cases were being reported in Europe.

Once the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020, the European Commission and the EU Council mandated EASA, working with ECDC, to develop recommendations to reduce the risk of contamination for air travellers, aviation personnel and European citizens in general as a result of air travel.

EASA responded to this by forming an internal cross-domain team, which included medical and operations experts as well as experts from aerodromes, air traffic management/air navigation services, certification, international cooperation and stakeholder management. The team was tasked to lead the “Return to Normal Operations” (RNO) project and facilitate a harmonised approach: ensuring the health safety of passengers and aviation workers while limiting the operational impact of the

measures as far as possible, and promoting safe recovery to pre-pandemic conditions and traffic levels as soon as it was safe to do so. EASA relied on the RNO Task Force to bring together Member States’ representatives as well as major stakeholders representing the aviation industry. The RNO Task Force was able to provide valuable guidance at strategic level as well as sound technical suggestions and advice during the consultation of the various documents issued by EASA and its partners.

EASA developed Safety Directives and Safety Information Bulletins as well as protocols and guidelines providing guidance and support for the industry and Member States. This involved working with various partners including ECDC, WHO, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), EUROCONTROL, European Aviation Crisis Coordination Cell (EACCC) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The work of EASA and its partners focused on multiple layers, from health risk mitigation for passengers and aviation personnel to facilitating the transport of medical equipment, medication, medical staff, protective equipment and, later, vaccines. All of this was essential for the healthcare sector to be able to provide proper healthcare and limit the number of deaths caused directly or indirectly by COVID-19.

The Aviation Health Safety Protocol (AHSP) was the central document encompassing the full range of recommendations regarding the health safety of passengers and crew. It was developed jointly by EASA and ECDC at the request of the European Commission and the European Council. The AHSP



CRISTIAN PANAIT

Medical Expert, European Union
Aviation Safety Agency
(EASA)

“The European Commission and the EU Council mandated EASA, working with ECDC, to develop recommendations to reduce the risk of contamination for air travellers, aviation personnel and European citizens in general as a result of air travel.”

was designed from the outset to cover the entire passenger journey, from arrival at the airport until leaving the terminal on arrival, and to provide recommendations for each step of the journey.

AHSP recommendations focused on the main preventative measures (also referred to as non-pharmaceutical interventions) both onboard the aircraft and in the airport, as well as the border entry measures and vaccination. Among the recommendations of the AHSP was the mutual recognition of measures and the use of the one-stop principle. The AHSP was adopted by the ICAO European and

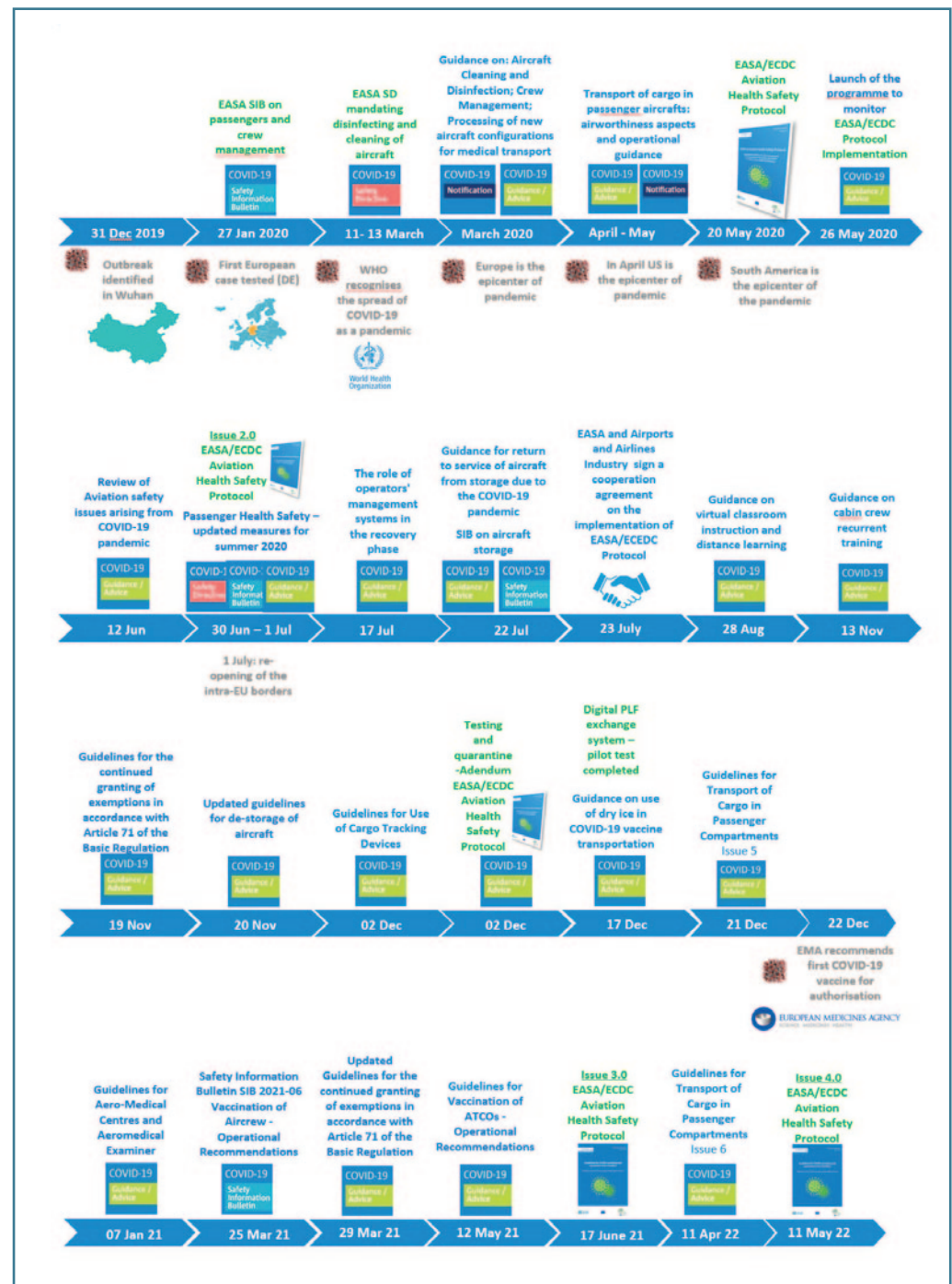
North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Regional Office as a means of compliance with ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART) recommendations.

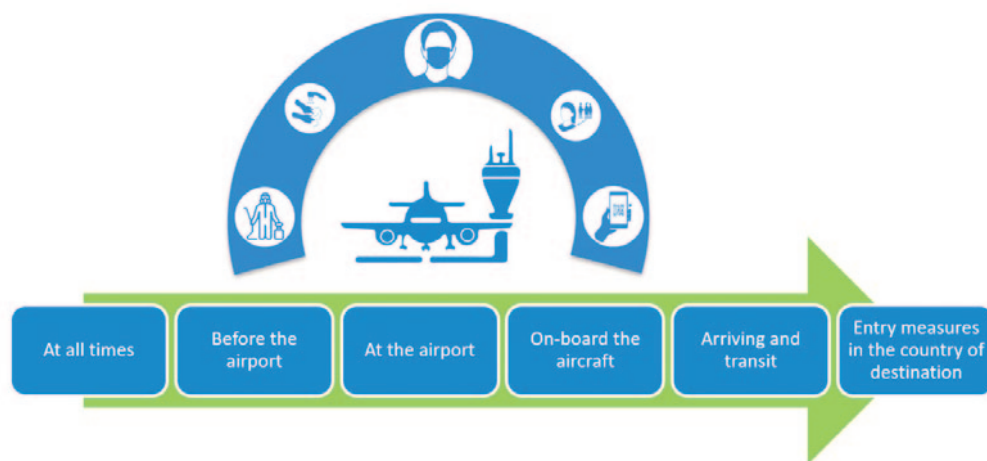
Once the AHSP was in place, EASA launched an implementation monitoring programme to collect data that allowed us to assess the effectiveness of certain recommendations in the real operational environment. In this context, we offered the aviation industry the possibility to sign a charter as a commitment to implement the recommendations of the EASA/ECDC AHSP. The charter signatories covered more than 60% of the European aviation

“

The aviation sector showed, during the COVID-19 pandemic, that it has the capacity to properly implement preventative measures as long as they are well communicated, mutually recognised and harmonised at global and European level.”

RNO timeline





AHSP scope

industry and went beyond this, also including industry stakeholders from other continents.

Contact tracing is one of the main tools used by the public health authorities to limit the spread of infectious disease in any outbreak. It was used in most, if not all, outbreaks before the COVID-19 pandemic. It was used in many settings throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as well as for other outbreaks such as Ebola, Monkeypox and Marburg virus disease.

Contact tracing posed many challenges in an international aviation environment. Early in the outbreak it was reported that many Member States, even if they had electronic Passenger Locator Forms (PLF) in place for contact tracing, were using national platforms without any possibility of exchanging this data with other States to allow for better monitoring of travellers. This was not a passenger-friendly situation: some passengers had to fill in two, three or even more PLFs for one journey if they had multiple connecting flights. It also meant the data gathered could not be used to full effect.

This problem was never fully resolved during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with the European Commission and EU Healthy Gateways, EASA developed and put in place a platform to allow the Member States that were using electronic PLF systems to exchange information to increase the effectiveness of the system. However, the uptake was slow – limited by the fact that health is a national competence, making agreement on adoption of a common system slow. Data protection issues also proved challenging. Once the number of cases had increased dramatically, the value of contact tracing decreased anyway: the resources required for such a high level of contact tracing were not available and the benefits of contact tracing when an infectious disease is circulating on a large scale are limited. For this reason, the use of the PLF decreased and was slowly replaced by the verification of vaccination and testing certificates, reflecting also the fact that vaccinations and reliable testing were by that stage widely available. The European Commission

developed the EU Digital COVID-19 Certificate (EU DCC) that was used to certify whether travellers had been vaccinated, recovered from COVID-19 or tested negative. The certificate was built on the basis of mutual recognition and over time fully replaced the use of PLFs.

Considering the fact that infectious disease outbreaks of different severities will continue to exist in the future, and that large scale testing usually requires time to be implemented, contact tracing will remain one of the main tools to limit the spread of disease while keeping the borders open in future scenarios. In this regard, the aviation regulators and aviation industry need to work together with public health authorities to find an effective way of exchanging passenger information across borders during future public health emergencies. This will allow the public health authorities to limit the spread and gain time to develop and implement other large-scale measures, while at the same time allowing the aviation industry to continue with as little operational disruption as possible.

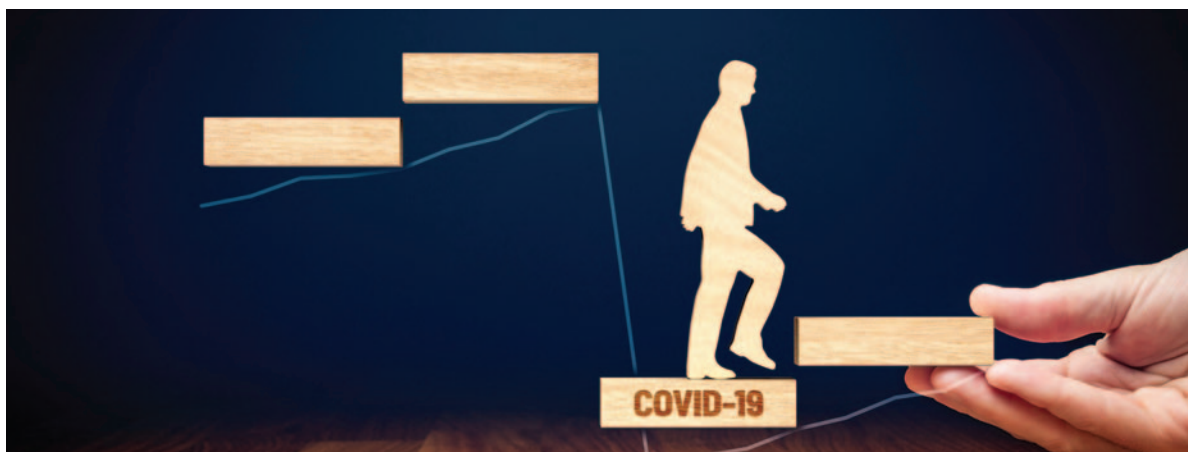
EASA is considering research activities to identify suitable chemical or physical options to reduce even more the spread of viruses and bacteria on board an aircraft – for example through further enhancement of air filtration, self-cleaning surfaces, low transmission surfaces, inflight disinfection of frequently touched areas.

The aviation sector showed, during the COVID-19 pandemic, that it has the capacity to properly implement preventative measures as long as they are well communicated, mutually recognised and harmonised at global and European level. It is essential that we all learn from this dramatic experience and prepare better for the next public health emergency. Plans need to be based on cross-domain collaboration and include the cultivation of relationships and procedures for cross-domain working relations between appropriate focal points. This will facilitate a faster and more effective response in case of future crises. ●

Cristian Ionut Panait is a medical doctor specialising in family medicine and aviation medicine. He has been EASA's medical expert since 2015.

Cristian began his career in aviation medicine in 2008 as an aero-medical examiner (AME), becoming a medical assessor for the Romanian CAA in 2011. In 2015, he joined EASA as medical rulemaking officer.

He was involved in the aftermath of the Germanwings flight U9525 accident, including the provisions on peer support programmes and as EASA's main rulemaking officer in the field of aero-medical certification of pilots and air traffic controllers. Recently, Cristian provided medical technical expertise to the RNO project set up by EASA during the COVID-19 pandemic



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Challenges – a look back on the biggest collapse in aviation history

We have put behind us an extremely difficult period for aviation, and I am glad to be able to talk in retrospect about the changes that have finally turned to the advantage of civil air transport.

It is now well known that on 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the emergence of the COVID-19 virus a public health emergency of international concern, and for the first time in its history, civil aviation worldwide encountered the global scourge of such a kind.

Only 40 days later, on 11 March 2020, a global pandemic was declared, and already in May of the same year, the health authorities of Serbia, with the active involvement of the Civil Aviation Directorate of Serbia, started to develop national anti-COVID guidelines to be distributed to all international airport operators and air carriers in Serbia. The active implementation of these guidelines, which in the meantime had been harmonised with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) measures and recommendations, began in June 2020.

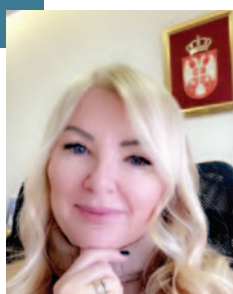
We were all first-hand witnesses of general chaos, insufficient information, and great anxiety and fear due to constantly rising mortality, resulting in countries' introduction of independent restrictive measures at the initiative of their national health authorities. Faced with the paralysing fear of the future, in the first half of 2020 we were confronted with an almost total suspension of air traffic, the closure of borders (even within the European Union), and the introduction of stringent quarantine and testing measures. At that point in time, nearly all countries allowed only repatriation flights for their own citizens.

Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that WHO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the relevant European Union (EU) institutions never stopped providing guidance and recommendations that Serbia also followed back then. And while the international airports in our country were closed for a very short period, we fully accepted and implemented all operational measures. And by operational measures, I mean mandatory wearing of face masks on a plane and in all closed spaces, measuring the temperature of crew and passengers, then mandatory passenger testing, enhanced disinfection measures, quarantine and isolation measures, allocation of special areas for isolating infected passengers, and so on.

From our perspective

Serbia felt the benefit of the specific anti-COVID harmonisation measure that occurred in mid-2021 (14 June 2021), when the EU made a significant step towards facilitating air services by introducing uniform and interoperable digital COVID certificates, which enabled relevant State authorities to easily gain insight into the vaccination status of any passenger.

The introduction of digital COVID certificates eventually balanced the air passenger handling procedures, and non-EU countries also experienced gradual improvement as they were in a position to introduce and issue the same – or similar – type of digital green certificates, accepted by the EU.



MIRJANA ČIZMAROV

Director, Civil Aviation Directorate,
Serbia

During this period, we witnessed the partial recovery of international air services, and Serbian citizens benefited from the fact that EU travel requirements became harmonised, very clear, transparent and achievable, which contributed to rebuilding passengers' confidence in air travel.

But next to the benefits, our citizens also encountered obstacles in the sense that a high percentage of them used the vaccine produced by manufacturers not officially accepted and authorised by the EU, so the acceptability of our certificates varied. It is true that even within the EU there was no common position on this issue, so some Member States did accept such vaccines (Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Slovenia), while some did not (Austria, France, Germany, Italy), which, to some extent, brought legal uncertainty and made air travel more complicated.

By the end of 2021, ECDC introduced a very useful and comprehensible tool and criteria for controlling the epidemiological situation at a regional level: the so-called “traffic light” map, where regions were represented by different colours (from green to dark red), depending on the level of the virus circulation, vaccine uptake and testing rate.

Seeing it as a very useful tool, Serbia aligned its own policy with that of the EU by limiting and restricting only the flow of those passengers coming from the territories marked as dark red, with a very high level of infection, thus demonstrating our readiness to treat the passengers coming to/from Serbia – a non-EU Member State – in accordance with those criteria.

International organisations, such as WHO and ICAO, but also the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and EASA, should take on the task of synchronising measures in the future. They should be the institutions to adopt and monitor the application of the globally enforceable measures, mandatory for all countries.



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We supported the “traffic light” map system, which we considered very fair and objective because the restrictions and limitations of passenger flows from certain areas depended solely on impartial and easily verifiable criteria without any political, economic or regional connotations.

And last but not least, ECDC made a major step in combating infection and restoring international air transport services by introducing a digital Passenger Locator Form (dPLF), a very important and irreplaceable tool that was also accepted by Serbia. This tool enabled the rapid exchange of essential data between the competent authorities of EU and non-EU countries and significantly contributed to traffic operability and suppression of the pandemic.

It is evident that we are now at the very end of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a large number of countries have almost completely liberalised their regulations. We are not faced with any traffic restrictions (except in the United States) and no digital vaccination certificates are required to access air services. Most countries have fully liberalised even the operational prevention measures, such as the obligation to wear face masks indoors, or “green corridors” at airports.

Endangerment of air transport is an indivisible category

I believe it is of crucial importance to learn lessons from an aviation crisis of such a proportion, and, while working together, consider them as milestones for a better future for international civil aviation. Some of those lessons should be:

- The implementation of separate restrictive measures by each country leads to nothing but the suffocation and collapse of air transport.

The international operational cooperation among States must be raised to a significantly higher level, ignoring regional borders. Procedures must be harmonised and clearly defined.

Mirijana Čizmarov
Director of the Civil Aviation Directorate of Serbia, is the first woman to be elected as a member of the JAA TO Foundation Board, and a motivator for improvement of regional cooperation in the search and rescue area, establishing the Regional Search and Rescue Advisory Committee (RASARAC). She implemented the One-Stop Security Project, and throughout the nine years she has been director of the Civil Aviation Directorate, Serbia has achieved outstanding results in the International Civil Aviation Organization in two major areas of aviation – safety and aviation security.

- All restrictive measures must be justified, harmonised, unambiguous and transparently announced in advance. International organisations, such as WHO and ICAO, but also the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and EASA, should take on the task of synchronising measures in the future. They should be the institutions to adopt and monitor the application of the globally enforceable measures, mandatory for all countries, regardless of their membership in different economic or political organisations. Thus, any form of groundless discrimination in the air transport sector would be significantly reduced.
- We must all realise that any danger in air transport is common for the whole world. There is no safe zone, even in the most regulated aviation systems, if you have infected passengers arriving from other parts of the world that don't take the right course and don't manage the pandemic in a mutually defined, clear and transparent way.

And of course, the need for continuous prevention imposes itself as a final conclusion. The likelihood of the spread of severe outbreaks, such as this one with COVID-19, is more and more definite and realistic in the modern world. The flow of passengers in air transport is fast and extremely large, and special attention should be paid to this. Prevention and rapid response measures must be prepared in advance and immediately applied when necessary.

The international operational cooperation among States must be raised to a significantly higher level, ignoring regional borders. Procedures need to be harmonised and clearly defined to avoid any future collapse similar to the one we all witnessed at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, which threatened an almost complete suspension of international air transport operations, with all the tragic consequences that may result from such a collapse in the 21st century. ●



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Building back better after COVID-19

Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was an existential crisis for aviation, dwarfing the many other external shocks it had experienced since 1945. It resulted in a near standstill for air traffic. Between 2020-2021, Airlines for Europe (A4E) airlines lost over 500 million passengers compared to 2019 and a combined 150 000 employees lost their jobs. And while 2022 saw a remarkable recovery, the number of flights in Europe was still at just 83% of 2019 levels⁽¹⁾.

The primary driver of the dramatic drop-off in traffic and passenger numbers stemmed from the roll-out of drastic and uncoordinated travel restrictions. This compounded the significant hit to Europe's economy and devastated tourism in particular.

This devastating shock and the rapid recovery the airline industry experienced reinforced just how valuable aviation and airlines are for Europe and its citizens. What it underlined is the desire of people to travel, connect and see the world, and the sector's role in making this possible. This was perhaps best highlighted by Iceland's culture and business minister during the recent A4E Aviation Summit (Brussels, 29 March 2023), when she referred to the many beliefs that demand for air travel would remain low after the pandemic. We have in fact seen the opposite trend emerge: people want to travel more, not less but they may also want to travel better⁽²⁾. For Icelanders as for a majority of Europeans, access to air travel is not just a means of transport but a social service they value dearly.

As these needs and desires propel airlines closer to or, in some cases, above their traffic levels from 2019, it is important to keep in mind several key lessons to ensure that European aviation capitalises on the recovery and builds back better.

Lesson 1: Coordination versus going it alone

Of the many images etched in our memories following the pandemic, one of the starkest was the sight of empty airports driven by border closures and travel restrictions. Today, the World Health Organization says that travel restrictions are an ineffective way to tackle the spread of a virus such as COVID-19. This is exacerbated when such restrictions are uncoordinated in a way such as what happened in Europe, where sudden and radical restrictions were put in place unilaterally by governments. The right of European citizens to move freely within the continent is a fundamental freedom and one that is often taken for granted. The restrictions severely hindered the ability of Europeans to exercise their fundamental rights and were mostly uncoordinated⁽³⁾.



LAURENT DONCEEL

Acting Managing Director,
Airlines for Europe (A4E)

(1) EUROCONTROL, "EUROCONTROL Analysis Paper: 2022 – The year European aviation bounced back", March 2022. Available at: <https://www.eurocontrol.int/publication/eurocontrol-analysis-paper-2022-year-european-aviation-bounced-back>

(2) Twitter, "How does aviation contribute to Europe's success?", March 2023. Available at: <https://twitter.com/A4Europe/status/1642840353920172032?cxt=HHwWgIC24aCmxcwtAAAA0>

(3) European Court of Auditors, "Special Report: Free movement in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic", 2022. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eca/special-reports/free-movement-13-2022/en/>

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We call on the EU Council to prioritise negotiations around both the SES and EU 261 proposals.

As illustrated by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a thorough re-evaluation of the aviation regulatory landscape has become an absolute necessity. We need to draw on all the lessons learned following this pandemic; only then can we restore passenger confidence in air travel and begin our path towards recovery.”



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A4E believes that the European Union's role on Schengen and border policies should be reinforced in order to limit the uncoordinated proliferation of border restrictions in future crises. Should restrictions be deemed absolutely necessary, they should be effectively coordinated and based on a common set of criteria by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) is a great example of the type of successful coordination facilitating air travel and restoring passenger confidence as well as freedom of movement.

Lesson 2: **Providing clarity on passengers' rights in times of crisis is essential**

Another key learning is the need for practical and proportionate regulatory obligations during a systemic crisis. Regulation (EC) 261/2004 on air passenger rights (EU 261) was conceived to protect passengers impacted by short-term, local disruptions affecting individual flights or a series of flights. It was not designed for mass cancellations caused by a global pandemic, wide-ranging travel restrictions and border closures.

The obligation to refund customers within seven days functions well in normal circumstances, but it proved highly challenging for airlines in this unprecedented situation. The volume of claims and customers needing to be reimbursed at the same time, while the industry was deprived of revenue from new bookings, put pressure on liquidity. According to the industry's own estimates, the value of potential refund claims (“unflown tickets”) during the period from March to May 2020 was USD 10 billion (approximately EUR 9.2 billion). However, there were also practical difficulties. Like other busi-

nesses, airlines had to send staff home, including customer services. Moreover, while airlines can normally deal with thousands of refunds per month, there was a backlog of millions of claims when operations gradually resumed in June 2020. Claims took on average two to three months to process.

COVID-19 demonstrated the need for a dedicated regime in exceptional cases of prolonged and widespread travel disruptions, such as an extended refund period. In crisis situations, airlines need clarity fast, in turn enabling them to inform passengers in a timely fashion. The pandemic also underlined the need for EU Member States to conclude negotiations on the pending European Commission proposal to update EU 261. For example, a definition and list of extraordinary circumstances, including epidemics/pandemics, would have been helpful during COVID and the Commission would not have had to specify in its March 2020 guidance that the pandemic qualified as an extraordinary circumstance. A revised EU 261 will be essential for preparing for future crises.

Lesson 3: **The recovery must be sustainable – environmentally and economically**

As airlines continue to bounce back from their worst crisis in history, we now need to ensure our industry's recovery is firmly focused on the future. The biggest long-term challenge that European aviation is facing is the drive to turn Europe's skies into the greenest in the world. A4E together with the wider European aviation industry have set out a roadmap to reach net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050. To deliver on our commitments to decarbonise, our sector must work together with European decision-makers and build towards a “competitive sustainability” model⁽⁴⁾.

(4) European Commission, “Communication: The Single Market at 30”, March 2023. Available at: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/Communication_Single%20Market%20at%2030.pdf

Countries such as the United States, through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), are willing to throw their full weight behind increasing the use and production of clean energies. An effective and supportive policy, financial and regulatory framework is therefore more important than ever to ensure European aviation remains competitive and to help accelerate its journey towards Net-Zero. One core area where Europe will need to focus its efforts is the development of a European sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) industry including hydrogen power. Failure to do so could see European raw materials and investments diverted to other regions around the world, and subsequently impact the price of the energy transition for European passengers.

Lesson 4: Accelerating digitalisation and airspace reform

Modernising our sector is of vital importance and aviation will not be immune to the rapid digitalisation of our society. Prioritising funding for initiatives such as the full SESAR cycle is essential for kick-starting investment in the digitalisation of aviation, realising the ambition of delivering a European Digital Sky⁽⁵⁾ and reaping its significant economic, social and environmental benefits.

The Single European Sky (SES) can also play a crucial role in stimulating digital innovations and enabling the modernisation and decarbonisation of the EU aviation system. Now more than ever,

there is an urgent need for European institutions to find a compromise on the new SES regulatory framework and fast track its adoption after years of delay. The implementation of the new SES structure will bring an improvement in safety performance, a reduction of up to 10% in CO₂ emissions, a major reduction in the cost of ATM services to airspace users, and a three-fold increase in capacity⁽⁶⁾. European decisionmakers must work to realise a vision for airspace that is seamless, automated, digitalised, rationalised and resilient, integrated and interoperable, safe, environmentally friendly, and cost efficient.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the European aviation sector to its core. However, in the midst of every crisis lies great opportunity. Today airlines have an opportunity to build back more efficiently, with greater resilience than ever before.

Airlines are recovering because flying is a fundamental part of what makes Europe great. There is an opportunity to build a stronger, more efficient and more resilient industry. We cannot forget the global context.

But with political determination, there is no reason Europe cannot continue to lead the aviation world for decades to come. ●

Laurent Donceel

is acting managing director, also in charge of sustainability and climate policies, at Airlines for Europe (A4E). A4E is Europe's largest airline association, based in Brussels. In 2019, A4E members carried more than 720 million passengers via a fleet of over 3000 aircraft – accounting for more than 70 per cent of the continent's journeys. A4E is one of the initiators of European aviation's Destination 2050 decarbonisation roadmap, with a pledge to reach net-zero CO₂ emissions from all flights within and departing from Europe by 2050. Prior to A4E, Laurent advised a number of governments and international companies in devising and implementing global strategies in the field of climate, energy and trade.



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(5) SESAR, "Digital European Sky Blueprint", 2020. Available at: <https://www.sesarju.eu/sites/default/files/documents/digital%20European%20sky%20blueprint.pdf>

(6) IATA, "Single European Sky", 2020. Available at: <https://www.iata.org/en/about/worldwide/europe/single-european-sky/>



Smarter borders – preparing for change under the new EU Entry/Exit System



New European Entry/Exit System will replace passport stamps and streamline external border control procedures

Introduction

Europe will soon introduce a new system at external border controls, the “Entry/Exit System” (EES), to increase the efficiency of border crossings of third-country nationals, facilitate and speed up crossings of “bona fide” third-country travellers, while at the same time strengthening the fight against identity fraud and irregular migration by creating individual files and recording all cross-border movements of third-country nationals.

While work has been underway for some years, its entry into operation has been postponed several times for various reasons. Efforts to be ready for the introduction of the new EES before the end of 2023 are now accelerating. Member States and operators must therefore work even more closely together in the final preparations of the EES for its successful introduction, including at European airports where foreign travellers enter the country using the EES. This will help people travelling, with faster and easier procedures, making the individual travel experience more pleasant and border crossings simpler.

What are the objectives?

There are an increasing number of border crossings in and out of the Schengen area with around 300 million border crossings of third-country nationals expected by 2025. Achieving a more effective border management and better oversight of who is crossing the EU’s external borders is therefore crucial. The EES was introduced with the objective of:

- facilitating border crossings with the possibility to introduce automation of border checks;
- reinforcing internal security with an improved detection of document and identity fraud;
- preventing irregular migration with a better monitoring of unauthorised stays of non-EU nationals with an automatic detection of the so-called “overstayers”.

The EES will also help to further reinforce the fight against international crime, terrorism and other external security threats.

What is the EES?

The Entry/Exit System is part of the “Smart Borders” initiative. The EES is an automated large-scale IT system for registering entries and exits of non-EU nationals each time they travel across external borders of the European countries using the system. This concerns travellers coming for a short stay who require a short-stay visa, as well as those who do not need a visa. Refusals of entry will also be recorded in the system.

The main advantage of the EES is **saving time**. The EES replaces manual passport stamping and automates border control procedures, making travelling to European countries using the EES more efficient and pleasant for the traveller.

The EES will be part of a wider automated smart border control system. EES will work together with the new European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) created to identify security, illegal immigration or high epidemic risks of visa-free travellers (which are currently nationals from over 60 countries) before they travel to one of the European countries requiring an ETIAS. ETIAS, which is a travel authorisation system (similar to the United States’ Electronic System for Travel Authorization – ESTA, or the Canadian electronic Travel Authorization – eTA), will enter into operation a few months after EES on which it will rely for some data provision. From the moment ETIAS is operational, it becomes a requirement for visa-exempt travellers. Applications for ETIAS will be made online, before travelling, at a EUR 7 fee and will be valid for three years.



FILIP CORNELIS

Director for Aviation,
European Commission
(DG MOVE)

“ Gradually,
the travel
experience
will improve.”



“
Emphasis on
the efficiency of
travelling to
Europe thanks
to improvements
to the border
management
system brought
by the Entry/Exit
System.”

Digitalisation of the
process, no more stamps
in passports (with a few
exceptions).

To whom will the EES apply?

The EES will apply to non-EU nationals travelling to a European country using the EES for a short stay of up to 90 days within any 180-day period calculated as a single period for all European countries using the EES.

EU citizens, as well as EEA and Swiss nationals, are not within the scope of the EES when travelling back into the EU and the European countries using the EES from abroad. Nothing will change for them and EU Member States are obliged to have special lanes for arriving EU/EEA/CH nationals.

What data will the EES collect and how will automated border checks work in practice?

The EES will collect and store the following data:

- data listed in the travel document (full name, date of birth, etc.)
- date and place of entry into and exit from a European country using the EES
- facial image and fingerprints (i.e. “biometric data”)
- refusal of entry, where relevant.

The data will be collected in full compliance with the data protection rules. In most cases, individual files containing personal data and records of entries, exits and refusals of entry will be stored in the system for three years from the date of the last recording, whereafter it will be automatically erased.

If a non-EU national travelling to the EES area refuses to provide his/her biometric data, the person will be denied entry into the territory of European countries using EES.

The EES legal framework allows Member States to implement certain optional tools for the facilitation of border crossings, including self-service systems such as kiosks or a mobile app where a non-EU national can record his or her data at border cross-

ings. For instance, after using a kiosk the traveller can then go to a border control lane where the passport control officer will already have received data from the self-service system, including confirmation of identity and of the remaining duration of authorised stay. This automation of the border checks before reaching the passport control officer will gradually help reduce queues and waiting times once a sufficient number of travellers have been recorded in the EES.

Which European countries will be using the EES?

Twenty-nine European countries will be using the EES. These are 25 EU Member States (all except Cyprus and Ireland where passports will still be stamped manually), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

When will the EES be ready?

The EES is not yet in operation. The system has been in development since 2017 but its entry into operation has been delayed several times. The final timeline should be decided in the coming months by the Justice and Home Affairs Council, with the aim of having the EES operational by end 2023. The European Council of February 2023 reiterated the importance of the EES becoming operational as soon as possible.

The Commission will adopt a decision on the date from which the EES is to start operations once a number of conditions have been fulfilled. One of those conditions is that eu-LISA – the agency responsible for the development of the EES central IT systems – has declared the successful completion of a comprehensive test of the EES to be conducted in cooperation with the Member States.

A comprehensive EES information campaign will be launched three months before the date of entry into operation of the Entry/Exit System.

More automation,
less stress,
greater passenger
satisfaction.



© European Commission

What should Member States and aviation stakeholders do now?

During the pandemic and also when passenger traffic at European airports recovered rapidly in the summer of 2022, which is expected to be repeated this coming summer, it was considered by many stakeholders that the timing and operational environment for introducing the EES was too challenging. As neither the central IT systems nor all border crossing points of the Member States were ready, the entry into operation of EES was postponed. Yet, the entire European aviation sector supports the introduction of the EES, seen by many as a game changer, as it will gradually improve the travelling experience by speeding up border checks and at the same time increase efficiencies and security at Europe's external borders. It is therefore important that all work together to finalise preparations for its entry into operation later this year.

Member States are responsible for implementing all the requirements laid down in Regulation 2017/2226 in order to be able to operate the EES at their external borders. Preparations – both by Member States and aviation industry stakeholders – need to continue at a fast pace.

Member States need to move forward with the necessary adaptations of the border crossing points, installing the basic equipment for EES, ensuring sufficient staff, training the staff, considering the use of national facilitation programmes, etc. Aviation stakeholders must support Member States

in these efforts and help find solutions to inevitable final challenges in the process. And there will certainly be challenges when implementing such a new system.

There will be the possibility to implement the EES progressively over time. I believe it is important to make use of this possibility, particularly in those arrival points where airports and authorities are not yet fully equipped to deal with the massive number of initial registrations. It can make the difference between a smooth and a disruptive start-up, and help to prevent long queues and missed flights. The Commission is also looking for different options to facilitate the registration process, such as the development of a virtual kiosk in the form of a mobile app.

This is going to be a big project. I invite European and all other international airports and airlines to continue engaging constructively with the relevant responsible EU and national authorities in the preparations, and to cooperate closely to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and EES functionalities are being implemented as required and that operations are adapted to a new reality. We should all not forget that having the EES is not only a legal requirement but also a way to better protect the European borders, modernise the procedures applied at those borders, support the EU digital transition and, at the end of the day, ensure a smoother travel process that will benefit travellers, airlines and airports alike.

The EES Regulation was adopted by the Council and the European Parliament more than five years ago. It is now time to start reaping the benefits of it. EES will be good for air travel. ●

Filip Cornelis has been director for aviation in the European Commission (DG MOVE), in charge of aviation, since October 2017. He joined the European Commission in 1994. After a posting abroad, he worked in the Task Force for Accession Negotiations. He then led the Commission team drafting the Treaties of Accession for the 12 new EU Member States. In January 2006, Filip moved on to transport policy by joining the office of the director-general for energy and transport, Matthias Ruete. He was the leading member of the office from 2008. He was then appointed head of unit for Aviation Safety from December 2012 until October 2016. He subsequently became head of unit for Aviation Policy until his appointment as director for aviation.

A more secure space
to travel to.

Official websites:

EES: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en
ETIAS: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en

Getting ready for the Entry/Exit System in France

Air traffic is back in French and European airports as the COVID-19 pandemic recedes. This is good news for our sector – but a true challenge for facilitation!



MAXIME MILLEFERT

Facilitation and Air Passenger Rights Focal Point, French Civil Aviation Authority

“This uncertainty about the EES timetable must not, however, distract us from our objective: to ensure that France, the world’s leading tourist destination, is able to welcome travellers and sports fans from all over the world to our country in 2023 and 2024.”

The situation in France is made even more challenging by a very sporting schedule: France will host the Rugby World Cup in autumn 2023 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in summer 2024.

At the same time, we know that the European Union is planning a major change in the control of the external borders of the Schengen area with the implementation of the Entry/Exit System (EES) and, six months later, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). At the time of writing this article, the timetable for deployment of the whole system is being redefined with one certainty: technical deployment in 2023 will be challenging. Should deployment be in 2024, France has officially requested that the Olympic Games be taken into consideration and that deployment does not take place before September 2024, in order not to unduly impact passenger flows at that time.

This uncertainty about the EES timetable must not, however, distract us from our objective: to ensure that France, the world’s leading tourist destination, is able to welcome travellers and sports fans from all over the world to our country in 2023 and 2024.

This is the meaning of the charter of commitment to quality of service signed on 25 November 2022 by Minister of Transport Clément Beaune with several French air transport stakeholders. The main objective? Draw all the necessary lessons from summer 2022 and ensure that our air transport system stands ready for the seasons to come. The fluidity of the passenger journey is naturally a central component of this, and with the expected entry into service of EES, border crossing emerges as a major aspect. France is therefore already working on all the levers likely to meet the challenge. These include:

- the deployment of 467 pre-registration kiosks in 12 French airports. Tests of these kiosks have already been carried out in Paris and Nice airports to improve their ergonomics and potential. In this respect, France supports all technical and operational solutions that promote the use of these tools to make border crossings as smooth as possible;
- an increase in the number of nationalities eligible to use e-gates (PARAFE). On exit, the aim is to extend access to holders of e-passports whose States have filed their public keys with the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD). On entry, five new nationalities will be able to benefit from the e-gates. In addition, these e-gates will be upgraded to match EES requirements for subsequent entry/exit;



Testing future EES kiosks at Paris Orly Airport

- the use of a mobile pre-registration application. The European Commission indicated that it wanted to develop such an application at European level, which would allow third-country nationals to use their mobile phones to pre-register in EES. France stands ready to support this key work and has already signalled its possible contribution thanks to a pilot project for a mobile application organised in cooperation with Frontex in the Normandy port of Saint-Malo, which includes completing a form relating to the conditions of entry and residence in the Schengen area.

All these initiatives demonstrate France’s commitment to be ready to make those unique sporting events a success, and to welcome the world! ●

Maxime Millefert joined the French Civil Aviation Authority (DGAC) in April 2011 having previously worked for the Ministry of Defense for six years as a legal advisor in international law. Within the DGAC, Maxime was responsible for air traffic rights negotiations, before joining the French delegation to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal in 2014 as alternate to the permanent representative of France to the ICAO Council. Since 2019, he has been responsible for facilitation and passenger rights. Maxime is a member of the ECAC Facilitation Working Group and the ICAO Facilitation Panel.



Initiatives to assist air travellers with reduced mobility



Raising the bar for assistance to persons with reduced mobility through the ECAC Quality Assessment Programme

Back in 2019 (see [ECAC News #70](#)), ECAC wrote in detail of the new programme being piloted under the ECAC capacity-building activities – and specifically “to foster equal access to air transport for the steadily rising number of [persons with reduced mobility (PRMs)].”

Clearly the aviation sector has changed since 2019 and priorities have shifted in some areas, but the rationale for the ECAC Quality Assistance Programme (QAP) remains at least as strong – if not stronger – for facilitation experts in 2023. The industry and regulators continue to see the need for improving delivery standards when it comes to passenger journeys: this firmly includes meeting the needs of a growing number of passengers with disabilities and of persons with reduced mobility in States looking to live up to their promises on diversity and inclusion.

The second programme, which like the first phase was developed by the ECAC Secretariat with support from a range of ECAC Member States, began in February 2020 with a workshop and training session for nominated national experts. Whilst the programme had to be suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were delighted to restart this phase of the programme with an assessment of Frankfurt Airport in Germany in 2022. The next assessment was of easyJet Switzerland (at Geneva Airport), which took place on 22-24 March 2023. This was the second assessment of an airline under the programme, giving an opportunity for further learning and to reflect on specifically how best to assess air carriers and to observe how they discharge their responsibilities for persons with reduced mobility. The assessment focused on five topics featured under ECAC's Document 30 Part I – *Facilitation* as guidelines on PRM inspections: website information, booking/prenotifications, training, assistance given, and complaints handling.

Switzerland supported the process as the national coordinator. Experts from five ECAC Member States participated in the assessment team – including observers to support the process and provide continuity with previous assessments. The ECAC Secretariat also seconded Vesna Pavlov (North Macedonia) to take part in the assessment and to help develop proposals for future decisions on this capacity-building programme.

The chief consideration for the ECAC Secretariat beyond the March assessment will be to develop proposals for the future. This process will consider assessments to date, as well as reflections from ECAC experts and the Secretariat on how the programme has evolved over its pilot phases. This includes changes that have been introduced to the original handbook and methodology as a result of:

- direct learning from the experiences of the QAP assessment teams;
- national coordinators' and assessment team members' practical experiences of engaging with the participating airlines and airports; and
- observations in carrying out assessments under different national facilitation frameworks.

ECAC has the additional benefit of being able to consider the best practice from its more established capacity-building programmes in the domains of security and the environment, and to draw on the members of its dedicated Facilitation Sub-Group on the Transport of Persons with Reduced Mobility, whose mandate includes promoting the development of guidance material and best practices on the handling of persons with reduced mobility, including on training issues.

The ECAC Secretariat will report to the Facilitation Working Group on the Quality Assessment Programme in the autumn, as an important deliverable under the facilitation work programme 2023. ●



ANGELA LYNCH

Policy Coordinator, European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)

View from the team leader

In Denmark, I am responsible for facilitation in the Danish Civil Aviation and Railway Authority, and in particular for persons with reduced mobility (PRMs). There are many authorities and ministries with different responsibilities when it comes to facilitation issues, and I often act as the link between them and, for example, ECAC and ICAO; however, I am the main person in charge of PRM issues.

I have been working in the field of aviation for three and a half years and as such am relatively young within this area! I count myself lucky to belong to such talented and knowledgeable groups as the ECAC Facilitation Working Group and the PRM sub-group. I am always eager to learn and that is why I applied to join the Quality Assessment Programme (QAP) in Frankfurt last year as an observer. I believed it would be a way for me to learn from my more experienced colleagues and to better implement a new and hopefully improved audit programme in Denmark, since the QAP is not only a means for the air carrier/airport to develop and enhance their services but also a way for Member States to learn from each other and ensure a better job within their own audits/inspections.

As I found the QAP in Frankfurt very fruitful, I was ready to progress further within the programme and therefore applied to be a team member for the assessment of easyJet in Geneva. Due to some challenges within the team, I opted for the role of team leader not really knowing what I was getting myself into... jumping from an observer to a team leader – oh boy! Luckily, however, the team already comprised two previous team leaders and the role was split with the ECAC Secretariat and the National Coordinator, which carried out a lot of the practical and preparational work, thus allowing me as a team leader to concentrate on the actual assessment. I therefore felt safe and could depend on them, which made the role and my learning curve very steep – but educational.

As we have not performed any audits or inspections in Denmark for the last couple of years (mostly due to COVID but also to other priorities), my role as a team leader in the QAP was totally new to me. However, I now feel more secure in carrying out inspections – and even on my own – as I have now experienced every step of the QAP teamwork (except that of National Coordinator, but that might come sooner or later).

Participating in the QAP is a way to gain more experience as well as self-confidence in an area that could be perceived as a bit frightening when you haven't performed an audit/inspection before. It is very intense to carry out such thorough assessments within a short period of time, but being with other experts makes it all worthwhile.

I can only highly recommend that other Member States participate in the QAP. It is a very effective programme, worth participating in, and everyone could gain from it – the insight is priceless!

If I were to take away one (or two or three) thing(s), it would be the opportunity to learn from my colleagues, and to have gained an invaluable insight into the “engine room” of an airport and an air carrier. Everyone can participate in the QAP, no matter how experienced you are! ■



Camilla Bloch-Egendal,
Special Advisor, Danish
Transport, Construction,
and Housing Authority,
and team leader for the
easyJet Switzerland
assessment

View from an ECAC secondee



Vesna Pavlov,
ECAC Facilitation
Secondee, and Aerodrome
Services Inspector,
Civil Aviation Agency,
North Macedonia

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT THE CAA IN NORTH MACEDONIA?

I am an aerodrome services inspector and I joined ECAC on 30 January 2023. I graduated as an engineer in air traffic and transport, and have been working in aviation since 2006. My main job at the CAA is aerodrome safety oversight in accordance with the standards and other norms of the European Union, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). This includes preparation, management and administration of auditing processes for aerodrome certification and Safety Management Systems (SMS), certification of the ground handling service providers, approval of aerodrome professional training programmes for the local training provider, and investigating reported occurrences.

WHY DID YOU COME TO ECAC ON A SECONDMENT?

The CAA of North Macedonia encouraged staff to apply for the position at ECAC. I wanted to work in an international organisation that through its coordination activities helps to develop standardised practices in the aerodrome domain, so I decided to apply to expand my professional development. It is an opportunity to work with aviation experts in various fields (including facilitation, security and environment), to see these from different perspectives, and to share and gain valuable experience. Working as a member of an international assessment team also offers a chance to broaden my experience, challenge myself and see different practices that I would not have been able to observe in my country.

I believe the perspectives and insights I am gaining from ECAC are a unique opportunity to learn invaluable lessons that I will take back to my work and share with colleagues in North Macedonia.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT ECAC?

I am working on pilot phase II of the Quality Assessment Programme (QAP) on the Assistance to Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility. This includes improvements to the ECAC assessment methodology, the ECAC handbook for the assessment team and ECAC training material, and also an assessment of an air carrier's operations in line with ECAC Doc 30, Part I, Section 5 recommendations. The assessment focuses on website information, booking and prenotification, assistance given, training, and complaints handling.

Based on the results and best practice observed on the ground, as a consequence we will be able to improve the quality of the programme for future capacity building in the facilitation domain in ECAC Member States.

I am delighted for this chance to bring my specialised expertise and skills to assessing air carrier operations and to improving ECAC material for the success of the QAP project as a whole. ■

Angela Lynch joined the ECAC Secretariat as policy coordinator in December 2022. Her responsibilities include facilitation, economic and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) matters, and she is secretary of the ECAC Legal Task Force. Prior to joining ECAC Angela worked for six years at the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority (UK CAA), within its Strategy and Policy Unit and most recently as an emerging policy specialist focusing on advanced air mobility and electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. Angela's professional background before joining the UK CAA was in research, policy and trade promotion.

QAP assessment of
easyJet Switzerland
at Geneva Airport





Promoting accessible tourism at Bologna Airport

Bologna Airport, located in a strategic position in the centre of the peninsula, has a high number of passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs) due to the excellent local healthcare and hospital network that attract patients from all over Italy. The strong cultural component typical of the Emilia-Romagna region of which Bologna is the regional capital, which has always had a strong sense of social solidarity and integration that permeates institutions and society, certainly also has an influence on the service offered. These are the two exogenous reasons that contribute to adding value to the service. Every month, Bologna Airport monitors the passenger satisfaction rate of the PRM service, and the overall results have been at levels of excellence for many years.

What do we do that is special, and how did we change our approach? The most important step was the decision to actively involve local stakeholders in our service. In 2018, the service was already at levels of excellence, and we were also receiving commendations from passengers about our staff. We believed this was the opportunity to take things a step further through comparison and active listening. We started almost from scratch because there was no open channel of communication with any specific association, despite the numbers of PRMs. The first meetings led to signing a memorandum of understanding in November 2018 with the municipality of Bologna and in collaboration with the Disability Forum of Bologna (representing local associations) to promote accessible tourism. The memorandum of understanding, one of the first to be signed in Italy, provided a shared framework with stakeholders on the projects in progress, and future projects, and provides for a series of good practices on inclusion, promotion of autonomy and information. The memorandum considers several actions, including sharing the airport's service quality standards and performances and the projects dedicated to disabled passengers, as well as opening up staff training on PRM awareness raising, which is mandatory for all frontline staff, to the local associations.

Practical examples of how this collaboration was applied at the airport

From the very beginning, we shared development of the internal and external tactile paths. These were standardised and, after inspections and tests, some improvements to the material and the high visibility colouring for the visually impaired were requested. During the inspections, it was also suggested that a direct ramp access to the taxi lane for wheelchairs be created, and that the height of the monitors be improved to facilitate reading for the visually impaired or persons in a wheelchair. Another requested improvement was to the colour of the trays on the security conveyor belts to increase the contrast: we therefore introduced some dedicated trays for high contrast on each line.

Just before the outbreak of the pandemic, we shared information with the associations on the project for the area reserved for guide dogs for visually impaired passengers, and were given suggestions regarding accessibility, the tactile path as well as the drinking fountain.

This structured listening process, which was resumed as soon as the pandemic allowed, gave us the opportunity to seize an idea stemming from an interesting regional social cooperative: the Tellis service for deaf passengers. Tellis is a remote video interpreting system in LIS (Italian Sign Language), through which deaf people can communicate with airport staff via a link on the Bologna Airport website and a specific app. When a deaf person calls the airport, the video call reaches a remotely connected LIS interpreter who automatically sees the phone number to be contacted and starts an audio call to Bologna Airport. When the staff member answers the phone, a conversation of three people is activated: via audio between the staff member and the LIS interpreter, and via video between the LIS interpreter and the deaf person. At the airport, the deaf person can contact a LIS video interpreter and communicate with the airport operators both from the dedicated link on the airport website and from the Tellis app. ●



CLAUDIA CASTAGNOLI

Quality Manager,
Bologna Airport

Claudia Castagnoli is quality manager at Bologna Airport with a long experience covering various roles. Her current focus is on combining attention to service and knowledge of the passenger experience and the processes, with an emphasis on inclusion and accessibility.

Assisted travel at Manchester Airport Group airports

As the number of persons with reduced mobility (PRM) and other travellers requiring assistance is on the rise, how are airports adapting to meet their needs? Manchester Airports Group's (MAG) Stephanie Putt, Christopher Drury and Ed Kibblewhite discuss some of the innovations the United Kingdom's leading airport group has adopted to meet this growth.



STEPHANIE PUTT

Accessibility Manager,
London Stansted Airport

MAG airports have seen a significant increase in passengers requiring assistance, and we expect to receive over 750 000 requests this year across the group's three airports, Manchester, London Stansted, and East Midlands.

With this growth in mind, we have been working alongside consumer and disability groups to improve every component of the consumer journey, considering each passenger's specific needs.

All three airports have developed accessibility forums whose members, often with lived experience of living with disability, can offer expert advice on customer service, training, and innovation to improve accessibility.

We also engage with the whole airport community regularly, including the PRM service provider, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), social media and customer feedback teams, ground handling agents, Border Force, airport police, United Kingdom airlines, and retail partners, to maintain a welcoming and accessible journey through all parts of the airport experience.

To complement each airport's own approach in delivering its core assistance service, the accessibility managers from each airport adopted a collaborative approach and established the Assisted Travel Working Group in December 2022 to share best practices and explore new technology and innovation to improve accessibility and enhance the customer experience.

At MAG, we believe that all customers should have equal access to travel. We want all passengers to enjoy their experience of travelling through our airports and no one should ever feel excluded from accessing any of our services or facilities.

Some of the innovations, which were thought up during these working groups, were relatively simple to introduce, but they have been extremely effective in removing barriers to travel.

One example is our partnership with Sign Live. In February, we joined forces to offer deaf and hard-of-hearing passengers the opportunity to com-

municate via British Sign Language (BSL) when using and contacting the airports in advance of travel or on the day. The new service allows customers to communicate in BSL with a certified interpreter via video who provides two-way translation between the customer and airport staff.

As part of the group's commitment to the customer, other innovations are regularly being trialled and launched to give customers greater choice and independence when it comes to how they travel.

A recent example is a WhatsApp scheme introduced at East Midlands Airport in 2021 as an alternative way to communicate with their assistance team.

Complimentary electric mobility scooters were also introduced recently to enable more people to self-mobilise to the boarding gates, improving the opportunity for independence through the airport journey.

The airport was voted "Best in Europe" for assisted travel provision at airports in 2022 and is a finalist in an upcoming "Disability Smart" award.

For passengers wanting to make their own way through the airport journey, London Stansted created low-level wayfinding lines to help them navigate between the landside areas and the dedicated assistance lane. These lines are currently being extended further throughout the landside departures area and the arrivals route in response to positive feedback from customers and airlines.

Help Points have also been upgraded to the latest technology to ensure better connectivity and re-wrapped in a high-visibility yellow colour.

The airport is also investing heavily in specialist vehicles, increasing its fleet of Ambulifts from eight to twelve for summer 2023, making it the largest fleet of Ambulifts in the airport's history.

Manchester Airport has improved promotional materials for self-mobilisation in reception areas, an option not widely known to passengers. In support of this initiative, the airport has deployed a permanent stock of self-service wheelchairs at high-volume Help Point locations.



CHRISTOPHER DRURY

Customer Services Manager,
East Midlands Airport



ED KIBBLEWHITE

PRM Contract Manager,
Manchester Airport



London Stansted Airport landside assistance passengers' reception

All three airports have developed accessibility forums whose members, often with lived experience of living with disability, can offer expert advice on customer service, training, and innovation to improve accessibility.

Accessibility remains a priority for new infrastructure too, with the airport recently opening its third Changing Places facility in Terminal 2 and reducing the distance between Help Points around the site.

As we move forward, all three airports will continue to work in partnership with each other and the wider airport community.

We are also preparing to review and refresh training with local accessibility forums, according to ECAC Doc 30, and we're working on video content that will help passengers prepare for different parts of their journey through the airport. This video will help customers understand what is available to support

their accessibility needs, such as the security process, wayfinding, equipment, and resources available.

These initiatives will assist customers in planning their travel and we hope that they will reassure them that there are options and assistance available before they travel through our airports.

Even as the numbers grow, our aim is to ensure all passengers with reduced mobility, disability and hidden disabilities get the best possible experience every time they travel through our airports, and we recognise that reaching that standard is an ongoing process as we strive to improve even further in the future. ●

Stephanie Putt has worked at London Stansted Airport for seven years and has been in the role of accessibility manager since September 2022. She previously worked as a security duty manager and change implementation manager and is really enjoying bringing her knowledge and skills to the role of accessibility manager. Stephanie is passionate about people and making small changes that make a big difference.

Manchester Airports Group (MAG) is a leading UK airport group and owns and operates three UK airports: Manchester, London Stansted and East Midlands.

Ed Kibblewhite's career in aviation spans 20 years with direct experience in ground handling, airline and airport operations. Ed joined Manchester Airport in October 2022 following five years in a similar role at another UK airport. He enjoys the many challenges that PRM operations present and considers insight-driven decision making using good quality operational data as the key to improve the airport's assistance product.

Christopher Drury has held a variety of roles at East Midlands Airport over the last eight years. Starting on the front line as an assistance agent in 2015, and now heading up the overall customer service operation at the airport, he has previously been the commercial operations manager and an airport duty manager. Chris is a strong advocate for progressive accessibility and inclusion strategies within aviation and believes that consultation between senior leadership and disabled customers is crucial to producing meaningful action.

Support to passengers travelling with assistance dogs



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MARIE HAUEŘOVÁ

Senior Officer, Ministry of Transport, Czech Republic, and Chair of the ECAC Sub-Group on the Transport of Persons with Reduced Mobility

Marie Hauerová

has worked in the Civil Aviation Department at the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic since 2001. In the field of facilitation, she is responsible for ICAO Annex 9 - Rights of passengers. She coordinates the National Facilitation Committee in the Czech Republic and also cooperated in developing the National Civil Aviation Facilitation Programme. Marie has been a member of the ECAC Sub-Group on the Transport of Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRMs) since 2002 – from 2016 as deputy chair and since February 2021 as chair, and is a member of the ECAC study group on amendments to ECAC Doc 30, Part I - Facilitation.

The topic of assistance dogs has been mentioned many times at the meetings of the ECAC Sub-Group on the Transport of Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM) and in meetings with PRM experts. The following issues were repeatedly raised.

The lack of a uniform definition and terminology

In ICAO Annex 9, the term “service animal” is used.

In ECAC Doc 30, Part I - *Facilitation*, the terminology has been harmonised with ICAO Annex 9 but with the additional reference: “*Service animal means recognised assistance dog in the ECAC/EU context, which is a narrower definition than the one which appears in ICAO Doc 9984.*”

In European legislation (Regulation (EC) No. 1107/2006), the term “recognised assistance dog” is used. However, even here there is no definition of a recognised assistance dog or any requirements for its certification, which adds to the confusion.

Training of assistance dogs

Which organisation can train assistance dogs? Who will guarantee the quality of these organisations? What document will guarantee to the airline that the assistance dog is fully trained?

We all know that this fragmentation and the lack of any universally accepted legal definition of assistance dog can have an impact on persons with reduced mobility who use assistance dogs, as well as on air carriers’ transport conditions.

We should remember that an assistance dog is a practical helper for a person with a disability; a great support for self-care, self-sufficiency and independence, and a partner in discomfort. It can partially replace the help of a personal assistant or family member and our aim should be to ensure that transporting people with reduced mobility with an assistance dog is as smooth as possible.

Following a discussion on this topic at the PRM sub-group meeting in February 2023, it was agreed that the sub-group should work more actively on this issue. As a first step, a survey was developed to better understand the national legislation on assistance dogs in ECAC Member States.

The number of countries that responded to the questionnaire (32 Member States) demonstrated the importance of this issue and States’ interest in sharing information. At the same time, it highlighted the considerable diversity of national legislations.

The encouraging news in this area is that the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), two international non-profit organisations, are working on the standardisation of this issue, in particular through the CEN Technical Committee 452 (Assistance dogs) whose Business Plan from December 2021 states: “*The priority of CEN/TC 452 is to publish European standards that will result in the training of assistance dogs to consistent and high standards (both guiding and assistance skills), which will secure and maintain freedom of movement for assistance dog users both within and between European countries. The first milestone in creating consistent standardization in the field of assistance dogs is to develop a common and harmonized terminology.*”

At the last meeting of the PRM sub-group, it was agreed that the ECAC Secretariat and sub-group chair would contact CEN/CENELEC to ask for an update on the work of CEN Technical Committee 452 and to express interest in cooperation. We look forward to engaging with CEN representatives and the sub-group will continue to move forward on this topic with the help of such stakeholders, including at the planned PRM experts meeting in September 2023. ●



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IATA guidance to improve safe transport of mobility aids

Passengers with disabilities travelling with their mobility aids face risks to their health and safety if their wheelchair or mobility equipment is lost or damaged.

In 2021, IATA launched a global Mobility Aids Action Group to improve the transportation of mobility aids for travellers with disabilities. Uniquely, the action group brought together the full range of stakeholders involved in this area, including accessibility organisations (representing travellers with disabilities), airlines, ground service providers, airports, and mobility aids manufacturers. During consultations with the action group and further analysis, it became clear that airlines needed a “real” and practical guidance that would facilitate everyday assistance to passengers – but then that is the benefit of an inclusive initiative that involved all relevant stakeholders, including most importantly the people that the guidance is meant to help.

The action group therefore identified several issues that work against airlines’ ability to transport passengers travelling with mobility aids safely and without risk of damage or injury to loading staff:

- The size and dimension of some mobility aids can create significant operational challenges during the process of navigating airports, loading, and off-loading.
- The weight of such devices can present risk of injury to ground staff who must perform the loading and unloading of these devices, often manually.
- The lithium-ion batteries that provide power to mobility aids can cause severe safety hazards if not properly handled during transport.
- The design of some airports is not fit to transport the mobility aids from the airport to the ramp and this operation often happens manually to the detriment of the safety of the mobility aid and the airport/airline personnel.
- The design of many mobility aids and the design of the aircraft cargo compartment on the types of single aisle and regional aircraft typically used in domestic service are incompatible. Many of these mobility aids cannot be configured to fit through the cargo compartment door and are difficult to secure once loaded.
- Lastly, there is often an information gap. The airline may not have the necessary information regarding the dimensions of a mobility aid that a passenger is using. And there may not be an easily accessible or dedicated channel for the passenger to communicate that information, including whether any special tools may be required to partially disassemble the device to facilitate loading.



LINDA RISTAGNO

Assistant Director of External Affairs, International Air Transport Association (IATA)

“ [...] it became clear that airlines needed a “real” and practical guidance that would facilitate everyday assistance to passengers.”



Guidance on the Transport of Mobility Aids

First Edition



Linda Ristagno is assistant director of external affairs at the International Air Transport Association (IATA). In her role, Linda is responsible for developing global advocacy positions and fostering multilateral dialogue on the relevant topic of accessibility for passengers with disabilities and the ageing population. She also acts as the liaison with the tourism industry by engaging with international actors to promote the relevance of aviation as force for good in the global tourism development. Linda joined IATA in 2010 and since then has covered various positions, holding operational, regulatory and cargo security responsibilities. She has a vast maritime background, having led for over 15 years numerous projects within the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), the largest shipping company in the world.

The [IATA Guidance on the Transport of Mobility Aids](#) provides the following recommendations:

- 1 | Modern mobility aids and wheelchairs are miracles of technology and innovation but if too little thought is given during their design and construction as to how they will accompany their user during an air journey, we will be unable to move out of our current predicament. This would be an opportunity for regulators to use the regulatory process to facilitate this development on the part of device manufacturers.
- 2 | Better communication between users, airports and airlines is vital. The guidance provides indications to passengers on what information should be shared about their mobility aids well in advance of the flight so that aircraft operators can be prepared. And industry should ensure that passengers can share this information through channels that are highly visible, reliable, and easy to use.
- 3 | The safe loading of mobility aids is vital. The guidance contains dedicated sections and related job aids as well as processes for handlers and airline operators to load and secure mobility aids.
- 4 | Recommendations are also provided for accessibility to be considered in any airport design process. Airport authorities are encouraged to follow the IATA international guidelines that have been established around airport design. They should also determine if specific regulatory requirements apply to them or if any guidance or information is provided by their national or local authorities.
- 5 | The guidance indicates how to properly isolate the lithium-ion batteries to avoid the potential for damage to the mobility aid when loaded in the cargo compartment and the risk of fire to the aircraft and its passengers.
- 6 | Finally, educational toolkits are included for use by operators and passengers on how to best prepare their equipment for flight, such as by protecting or removing all parts that could be easily damaged (e.g. footplates, operating sticks or anything that could break loose or be easily buckled and carried into the cabin with them).

The IATA Guidance on the Transport of Mobility Aids is published with the objective of improving the safe transportation of mobility aids.

The guidance reflects the best current practice available, as of its drafting. It will continue to be revised and expanded as iterative practices become possible and are developed into future standards. While airlines continue working to drive accessibility enhancements, progress in the development of mobility aids designed to support air travel should continue apace, with the support of all stakeholders including wheelchair manufacturers, purchase-funding entities, aircraft and aviation equipment manufacturers, airlines and the accessibility advocacy community. A great example of such collaboration are the RESNA (Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America) standards and the Open Doors Organization (ODO) work referenced elsewhere in the document, which IATA gratefully recognises here.



Improving the assistance provided to aircraft accident victims and their families

Improving assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families: key takeaways from the joint ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT regional workshop (Milan, 20 February 2023)

The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) EUR/NAT Regional Office held a joint workshop in Milan on 20 February 2023, the International Day Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families. The event brought together 80 aviation experts from 29 States who discussed effective ways to better address the needs of those impacted by aircraft accidents.



SIMONA WIST

ECAC Communications
Specialist

The objective of the workshop was to promote the sharing of information and experience on key aspects related to assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, particularly on the development and oversight of air operators' and aerodrome operators' family assistance plans.

Before the workshop, a questionnaire aimed at assessing States' capabilities to oversee/supervise their air operators' and aerodrome operators' family assistance plans was developed and sent to all participating States. This allowed for an extensive sharing of examples of States' oversight of family assistance plans. It also allowed to clearly identify challenges and opportunities for effective State oversight related to assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.

“The insights gained from the workshop will be used to take action to improve the quality of assistance provided to aircraft accident victims and their families, both in Europe and beyond.”

The questionnaire was composed of the following seven questions:

QUESTION 1	Has your State established legislation, regulations and/or policies in support of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families?
QUESTION 2	Has an organisational structure been established at the State level depicting the authorities with functions related to the oversight/supervision of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families?
QUESTION 3	Has each authority in charge of the oversight/supervision of air and aerodrome family assistance plans established and implemented a training policy and a training programme for its personnel?
QUESTION 4	Has your State provided appropriate facilities, comprehensive and up-to-date technical guidance material and procedures, tools and equipment, and transportation means to the personnel to enable them to perform their oversight/supervision of air and aerodrome family assistance plans?
QUESTION 5	Does your State – and if yes, how – approve family assistance plans developed by the air operators and aerodrome operators in your State?
QUESTION 6	Has your State established a documented process to take appropriate actions, up to and including enforcement measures, to resolve identified deficiencies in the delivery of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families?
QUESTION 7	Has your State used lessons learned from the past (e.g. “DO’s and DON’Ts”) to update/strengthen parts of its system regarding air operators’ and aerodrome operators’ family assistance plans, and the oversight by the State authorities?



ARNAUD DESJARDIN

ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Officer,
Safety



Twenty-two of the twenty-nine participating States provided their responses to the questionnaire, and the results showed that although most States consider their regulations and organisations regarding assistance to accident victims are established, or making good progress towards being established, further progress is still needed, in particular in the following fields:

- **training (policy and programme)** for the personnel responsible for the oversight/supervision of air and aerodrome family assistance plans;
- **technical guidance, procedures, tools and equipment** for the personnel to enable them to perform their oversight/supervision of air and aerodrome family assistance plans;
- **State approval of family assistance plans** developed by the air operators and aerodrome operators; and
- **documented process to take appropriate actions**, up to and including enforcement measures, to resolve identified deficiencies in the delivery of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.

During the workshop, participants shared their insights and experiences on a range of topics related to aircraft accident victims' assistance. They discussed challenges and opportunities for enhancing existing support mechanisms, and shared best practices for providing immediate and long-term support to victims and their families. This included looking at: the implementation of national family assistance plans; enabling effective regional cooperation; the handling of media enquiries; and psychological and emotional support to aircraft accident victims and their families.

“Participants agreed on the need for States to develop national action plans to achieve a comprehensive system for providing assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.”

The workshop also focused on ways to improve coordination and communication between the various stakeholders involved in responding to an aircraft accident, including airlines, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations, such as family associations. Participants explored the challenges of providing support in different cultural and linguistic contexts, as well as the importance of respecting the dignity and privacy of those affected.

This event was an important opportunity for aviation experts to share their knowledge and expertise and to learn from one another. The insights gained from the workshop will be used to take action to improve the quality of assistance provided to aircraft accident victims and their families, both in Europe and beyond.

States gained a better understanding of how to adopt legislation and adapt practices and guidance for use at a national level. Information was exchanged and discussed to enable them to establish and implement effective mechanisms for the oversight of air operators' and aerodrome operators' family assistance plans.

Participants agreed on the need for States to develop national action plans to achieve a comprehensive system for providing assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families.



Participants attending the workshop in Milan, 20 February 2023

Simona Wist is a communication professional with over 12 years of experience across diverse industries, including civil aviation, healthcare, management consulting, and advertising. Currently serving as a communications specialist at ECAC, she is responsible for delivering strategic communications, providing guidance and support on communication matters to internal stakeholders, defining key messages and identifying target audiences and communication channels. Simona also oversees two ECAC groups: the Network of Communication Specialists (NETCOM) and the Air Accident and Incident Investigation Group of Experts (ACC).

Arnaud Desjardin has a first-level university degree in aeronautical engineering, 27 years of work experience, including 16 in a State civil aviation authority and six in the private sector in the United States, developing air traffic control systems for the Federal Aviation Administration. He worked as an aircraft accident investigator for the French safety investigation authority (BEA) for 12 years and is now a Regional Officer, Safety for the ICAO EUR/NAT Office.

This joint ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT regional workshop on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families is **a significant step forward to improving the aviation industry's collective response to aircraft accidents.** It demonstrates the industry's commitment to ensuring that those affected by aircraft accidents receive the best possible care and support.

These action plans would include the following **key steps**, as necessary:

- ensure that the primary aviation legislation, specific operating regulations and/or policies establish family assistance plans that address the scope, responsibilities, roles and coordination necessary to provide assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families;
- ensure that air operators and aerodrome operators have established family assistance plans;
- periodically review family assistance plans of the State and of service providers.
- ensure that air operators have arrangements with aerodromes in which they operate to implement the family assistance plans;
- designate an agency to coordinate the timely and appropriate delivery of assistance.

In their closing statements, the Executive Secretary of ECAC, Patricia Reverdy (below left), and the Regional Director of the ICAO EUR/NAT Office, Nicolas

Rallo (below right), acknowledged that the workshop had created a positive momentum and resulted in concrete action points to support progress made by States and to pave the way for follow-up activities.

They noted the difficulties faced by States in establishing a comprehensive system of assistance to accident victims and families, but recognised that, collectively, valuable solutions could be found. They identified key areas for improvement in communication, the legal framework and facilitation.

This joint ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT regional workshop on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families is a significant step forward to improving the aviation industry's collective response to aircraft accidents. It demonstrates the industry's commitment to ensuring that those affected by aircraft accidents receive the best possible care and support. ●



Polish policy on assistance to air crash victims and their families



The common knowledge that aviation is the safest transport mode results from the endeavours of many generations of experts and engineers, who have made, and continue to make, efforts for safe and efficient travel for millions of passengers every year. Even though tragedies such as air accidents happen very rarely, they are dramatic events of a large scale, entailing much uncertainty, human suffering and chaos. This must be managed, and the victims helped properly, and this should be a priority for everyone dealing with crisis response in such situations.

The international civil aviation community continues to raise the level of safety by applying new technologies and solutions in the area of legal standards. Having experienced unavoidable air disasters over the years, it has also introduced several instruments whose primary purpose is to help victims of aviation accidents and their families. The most important of these include the Montreal Convention of 1999 and Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention.

Bearing in mind the need to provide assistance as efficiently as possible, and the recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) resulting from Annex 9, Poland has developed a National Plan of Assistance to Victims of Civil Aviation Accidents and their Families, which is attached to the Crisis Management Plan of the minister responsible for transport. The aim of this plan is to ensure, in the first place, effective procedures, their follow-up and eventual improvement, and a harmonised approach to the provision of assistance to victims and their families.

At the same time, the plan itself does not stipulate any new element to the legal system because the role and tasks of entities reacting in crisis situations have been described in Poland in several legal acts, such as the Crisis Management Act or the Aviation Law Act. The plan compiles the knowledge and obligations resulting from dozens of normative acts.

The plan developed by Poland therefore performs three main functions: *informative* – it is a vademecum of definitions, basic concepts, competences and skills of those providing assistance, and the basic scope of needs of the recipients of assistance; *supervisory* – includes periodic audits of airline operators' plans; *coordinating* – contains the division of duties and the rules for coordinating the activities of air carriers, airport operators, the air traffic management authority, State authorities, services and non-governmental organisations in the event of a mass air accident.

The Polish plan describes five groups of people who may require support from the involved entities in the event of an air accident. It also describes those entities whose tasks and active participation are necessary to provide comprehensive assistance. It is important that the plan indicates both the responsibilities and the capabilities of State sector entities and non-governmental organisations that may have a real impact on improving operations during a crisis situation.

As each of the above-mentioned actors may, in accordance with their competences, carry out several activities that may benefit both the victims and their relatives, the national plan also indicates this aspect of providing assistance.

At the same time, the plan is not unified to one type of tragedy scenario, so the assistance provided also depends on the location of the incident and the aircraft involved. The plan includes six potential assumptions, which include accidents that may occur at the airport, within a State territory or, for example, in the search and rescue area.

To facilitate the decision-making process and the distribution of tasks amongst people involved in providing assistance, task matrices containing all the aforementioned elements have been prepared for each of the scenarios as an appendix to the plan, and which in a crisis situation are to be instant reference material and a kind of checklist for the units involved in providing assistance.



ROBERT PRZYBYLSKI

Director, International Affairs Department, Polish Civil Aviation Authority

“Poland has developed a National Plan of Assistance to Victims of Civil Aviation Accidents and their Families, which is attached to the Crisis Management Plan of the minister responsible for transport.”

The creation of the plan itself, however, does not yet mean the implementation of a comprehensive support system. **Further work is required to ensure an effective, updated and supervised system, which cannot be achieved without an amendment to Polish law on auditing individual units.**

Robert Przybylski is a graduate of European studies and defence studies with a postgraduate degree in crisis management from the National Defence University of Poland. He has been working for the Polish Civil Aviation Authority since 2014, where since 2021 he has been director of the International Affairs Department. Robert is a member of the EASA Committee, an alternate member of the EASA Member States Advisory Board and the EASA Management Board, and a member of the delegation to the EUROCONTROL Provisional Council and Permanent Commission.

The creation of the plan itself, however, does not yet mean the implementation of a comprehensive support system. Further work is required to ensure an effective, updated and supervised system, which cannot be achieved without an amendment to Polish law on auditing individual units. This amendment will have to contain a defined scope and way of carrying out an audit, as the applicable regulations do not provide any details for the National Assistance Plan audit. At present, audits performed within the scope of the Safety Management Manual (SMM), inclusive of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP), and which are similar to some issues contained in the National Assistance Plan, are performed on the basis of Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012. However, the stipulations of this regulation are terse and refer mainly to the shape and content of the ERP; they do not mention the National Assistance Plan and therefore do not allow for a detailed definition of the audited issues. An evaluation of the requirements' compliance with the actual situation is performed based on an analysis of the operator's concept of

completeness and the coherence with the ERP and the SMM. A final form of this division, compliant with ICAO standards, i.e. also covering audits of the aerodrome operators, can only be adopted *after* the necessary amendments to the Aviation Law Act within the scope of assistance to air accident victims have been introduced.

In addition, it should be noted that if similar supervision is introduced, due to the highly diverse business profile and the size of airlines in Poland some operators may have problems ensuring well-functioning victim and family support systems within their structures. While airlines such as LOT Polish Airlines can provide a functioning team consisting of several experts, and use them to participate in exercises and develop competences in this area, smaller operators may have problems ensuring the functionality of a similar system. The solution may be to introduce agreements between operators, which will enable the use of forces and resources of other enterprises in the event of a crisis situation. ●



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The disappearance of Swissair flight 111: a permanent trauma for us all

The unthinkable event of 2 September 1998

Although the crash of Swissair flight 111 occurred off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada, on 2 September 1998, Geneva Airport played a significant role in the aftermath of the tragedy. As the aircraft was en route to Geneva, the airport operator had to handle the logistics of accommodating the families and loved ones of the victims, as well as dealing with the broad media attention that came with the disaster, especially because Swissair had been considered as one of the most successful and safe airlines in the world for many years.

The attention of the public was very high; almost every family living in Geneva and its suburbs, including in France, had a friend or relative concerned by the accident. The region is indeed very cosmopolitan (more than 150 nationalities) as several international organisations and non-governmental organisations have their headquarters there.

The pilots of the SR111 were also regular fighter pilots in the Swiss Air Force and that gave a further national dimension to the tragedy. Like 11 September 2001, every inhabitant of Switzerland remembers what he was doing on the day the accident occurred.

The pace of information at that time

To put things into perspective, we have to remember that back in 1998, mobile phones were not as common as today. Most people did not own one, or if they did, it had no internet connection. If you wanted to have information about an event, the only way to get it was through the television or telephone switchboard. Regarding the status of flights, friends and families could only find information at the airport, on interrogating the staff at the airline counter. The airline was still communicating between stations with teleprinters, and stations were

still sending documents to each other on paper. That said, the main international news channels streamed live for a good 12 to 18 hours due to the fact that over 100 passengers were American citizens. Swiss TV relayed the news published on CNN because no Swiss journalists were on-site until 24 hours after the event.

Emergency plan in place

Geneva Airport put in place a crisis centre with a switchboard to answer the numerous calls, and it opened its conference centre for those families that wanted to come to the airport. The plane was bound for Geneva and news of the accident was already published during the night. Staff were ready to welcome the families straight into the conference centre where a long waiting time for confirmation began. It was necessary for the airport authority to isolate them from the rest of the public and from the press.

Areas had to be protected by the police to keep journalists and curious spectators away. Geneva Airport had practised this set-up for the first time a few months prior to September 1998, triggered by the crash of TWA800 in 1996. However, it was definitely not the first time Geneva had been at the centre of worldwide attention. Several international “famous” conferences were held in Geneva in the eighties and nineties, and some hijacked aircraft landed safely at the airport as well.

The set-up deployed therefore involved one central phone number with 16 lines and as many volunteers, who were swapped every 90 minutes. The emotional feeling was very high; people were calling to ask if their families were on board the flight. Geneva Airport did not have a certified passengers’ name list so it was impossible to confirm anything until the police had validated the list. Until this validation, the main objective of the phone line was to be able to link a passenger with their next of kin so that the police could proceed with their investigations and information according to Swiss law. Many spiritual and psychological professionals were brought in with whom relatives could talk.

The organisation of the entire support system was also carried out in close cooperation with the handling agent operating Swissair flights, which was a member of the airline group.



JEAN-LUC PORTIER

Head of the Passenger
Department, Geneva Airport



GAËL POGET

Head of External Affairs,
Geneva Airport

“
Every inhabitant of
Switzerland remembers
what he was doing on the
day the accident occurred.”



Geneva Airport today

“

Within 12 hours of publishing the phone number, Geneva Airport had already received hundreds of calls.”

“

Without doubt we have learned humility, solidarity and commitment.”

The voluntary air transport community

The first volunteers answering the phones had been trained, but rapidly the trained resources proved to be inadequate: within 12 hours of publishing the phone number, Geneva Airport had already received hundreds of calls and needed more volunteers. At this point, many airport and airline staff showed up to volunteer. After 90 minutes on duty, a psychologist – who decided if each volunteer was ready for a second 90-minute shift as the pressure from families and relatives was extreme – debriefed all volunteers.

It finally took 36 hours to gather all the contacts needed by the police. We then handed over the set-up to the airline to organise the follow-up with the families. Most families stayed until the list was officially communicated at 15:00 on 3 September.

During this period, emotion among the staff was rising; at that time, every employee considered

himself part of the aviation family and felt concerned by what was happening, no matter which company you worked for. Everybody was committed. And that is what makes the air transport industry around the world so unique, with a similar sense of community, regardless of which airport you work at.

From a personal point of view as a young head of the passenger terminal, it was a steep learning curve that brought all the staff together in overcoming an event which was, for all of us, dreadful.

More than twenty years later, we still use the principles we learned during that emergency, and we still hold in our memory the event and the sadness many of us experienced. Without doubt we have learned humility, solidarity and commitment. It is always important to remember those principles when today we face serious adverse weather conditions and the evacuation of people fleeing war or pandemics. ●



Geneva Airport in the 1990s

Jean-Luc Portier started in the airport business in 1985 as a flight watch agent. Over the years, Jean-Luc has worked for various airlines in the operation and customer service fields. In 1998, he was appointed as head of the passenger division for Geneva Airport Authorities. This position led him to be responsible for all landside matters relating to the passenger's journey through the airport. He now stands in the ACI World Facilitation Committee.

Gaël Poget joined the legal and international affairs department of the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation in 2006. He led several international negotiations on behalf of Swiss civil aviation and attended several ECAC meetings as an expert. Since 2015, he has been head of external affairs at Geneva Airport reporting directly to the CEO. He supports the latter in strategic and political matters. He is the current chair of the ACI EUROPE Policy Committee and a regular lecturer at the *École Nationale de l'Aviation Civile* (Toulouse). Gaël is also a commander in the Swiss Air Force and holds a private pilot licence.

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Assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families

Pursuant to ICAO Resolution A41-14 on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, the ICAO Secretary General invited Member States to host the second ICAO Symposium on Assistance to Aircraft Accident Victims and their Families in 2024, to reaffirm their commitment to support the victims of civil aviation accidents and their families.

In this regard, Member States are required to establish laws, regulations and/or policies and a family assistance plan to support victims of civil aviation accidents and their family members, as required by ICAO provisions in Annex 9 (Standard 8.47), the ICAO policy on this matter (Doc 9998), and in accordance with Article 28 of the Montreal Convention of 28 May 1999 and Resolution No 2 adopted at the Montreal Conference, and the provisions of Annexes 13 and 14.

Recalling the main ideas of the resolution adopted by ICAO – which are highlighted in the invitation letter – is important, and essential to maintain a continuous positive pressure on Member States to encourage them to be more involved in, and committed to, this dynamic initiative from ICAO.

Indeed, this initiative seeks to roll out the establishment and implementation of ICAO provisions on assistance to accident victims and their families as well as the related resolutions. This is the main reason protocol question PQ 6.838 on assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families was highlighted at the joint ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT regional workshop on assistance to aircraft accident

victims and their families, held in Milan on 20 February 2023. It would enable ICAO auditors to examine these aspects at the forthcoming ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) continuous monitoring approach (CMA) audit, and to check and assess the progress and implementation against the questions discussed at the workshop.

Member States should therefore, among other things, adopt the legislation and/or regulations, designate an appropriate structure for the approval of plans, and establish a training and qualification programme for civil aviation authority personnel to ensure implementation oversight and regular and continuous improvement of the plans.



MBAREK LFAKIR

Head of Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Bureau,
Morocco

The EUR/NAT region States should work together and share their experiences and best practices to increase the compliance rate in this area – or at least reach an acceptable level that would allow them to provide honourable assistance to accident victims and their families.

A mechanism must be put in place to insist that aircraft operators and aerodrome operators ensure fair treatment regardless of the number of victims.

Mbarek Lfakir is an aeronautical engineer who graduated from Riga Civil Aviation University in 1994. He has almost 27 years of experience in the civil aviation field, holding several positions, including: acting director of the Civil Aviation Authority of Morocco, head of the Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Bureau, and head of the Search and Rescue/Navigation Department, the Aircraft Airworthiness Department and the Aircraft Operations Department. Mbarek is an ICAO USOAP/CMA auditor in the accident investigation field, a safety investigator, safety inspector and a "Training Plus" instructor.

In the workshop takeaways, the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Office underlined that Spain has a very high compliance rate on this issue. The EUR/NAT region States should therefore work together and share their experiences and best practices to increase the compliance rate in this area – or at least reach an acceptable level that would allow them to provide honourable assistance to accident victims and their families.

Achieving this objective relies mainly on the following three essential pillars at the level of each State, all of which should be united in adopting a comprehensive approach to addressing the concerns and the needs of these families in a timely and efficient way:

- 1 | Government with its two departements:
 - a) aircraft accident investigation service
 - b) civil aviation administration.
- 2 | Non-governmental organisations:
 - a) air operator
 - b) airport operator.
- 3 | Family associations.

These three components must take two scenarios into consideration in their policies on providing assistance in this matter, namely:

- 1 | Family associations of victims of aviation accidents
- 2 | Families of "unassociated" victims.

When accidents cause a high number of victims, the families usually organise themselves into an association so that their actions are unified when dealing with airport authorities and air carriers. This is not the case for victims involved in general aviation accidents where the number of victims is minimal. In this scenario, the regulation and policies adopted by States should be the same in terms of assistance to accident victims and their families, as well as in the investigation process, particularly regarding responsiveness.

The pain and suffering of families certainly remains the same for both categories. A mechanism must therefore be put in place to insist that aircraft operators and aerodrome operators ensure fair treatment

regardless of the number of victims, and whether individually or as part of an association.

In the same vein, the ICAO resolution relating to the organisation of symposiums every three years dealing with this subject (following the same cycle as the ICAO Assembly) is a means of drawing Member States' attention to the importance and relevance of this subject.

Finally, to be sure all these provisions are implemented by Member States, it is judicious to address protocol question PQ 6.383 to the civil aviation authorities, as the entities in charge of establishing legislation, regulations and/or policies in support of assistance to accident victims and their families; other protocol questions should be addressed to Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA) and aircraft operations (OPS) fields regarding respectively aerodromes and air operators.

Protocol question 6.383 needs to be addressed to the CAA because the following items should be provided and performed by the CAA:

- an organisational structure established at State level depicting the authorities with functions related to the oversight/supervision of aerodrome and air operator family assistance plans;
- the oversight/supervision of air and aerodrome family assistance plans;
- a training policy and a training programme for personnel in charge of supervision;
- the appropriate facilities, comprehensive and up-to-date technical guidance material and procedures, tools and equipment, and transportation means for the personnel to enable them to perform their oversight/supervision of air and aerodrome family assistance plans;
- a documented process to take appropriate actions, up to and including enforcement measures, to address identified deficiencies in the delivery of assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families;
- to use lessons learned from the past to update/strengthen parts of its system regarding air operators' and aerodrome operators' family assistance plans. ●



News from ECAC and JAA TO:

- ECAC Spotlight
- ECAC in brief
- JAA TO

Legal Task Force



MACHTELD CAMBRIDGE

Coordinating Legal Advisor,
Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure
and Watermanagement, and
Chair of the ECAC Legal Task
Force

WHAT IS THE LEGAL TASK FORCE? WHAT ARE ITS OBJECTIVES?

The Legal Task Force is a permanent working group within the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC). Members of the group are legal experts delegated by ECAC Member States. The task force focuses on the study of a wide range of aviation matters emerging in the field of international public law, and on making recommendations on how to approach them in an international and national context. The primary tasks include advising the Directors General of Civil Aviation on legal aviation matters in general, and on matters regarding the ECAC organisation in particular.

The role played by the task force in preparing meetings of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is particularly important, as ICAO is a key forum for sharing information and facilitating a common understanding of legal requirements for aviation-related activities. This amongst others involves the preparation and coordination of (common) legal positions to be taken in the ICAO framework.

Since its establishment in 1996, the Legal Task Force has consistently developed its expertise role as the legal cornerstone of ECAC, with rules of procedure, for instance, prescribing the election of a chair and deputy chair. The task force is currently chaired by Machteld Cambridge (the Netherlands) and is in the process of appointing a deputy chair. Supported by the well-organised ECAC Secretariat, the task force meets three times a year with the intention of having both online and in person meetings. If necessary, the meeting schedule is also aligned with international legal meetings, in particular the agenda of the ICAO Legal Committee.

WHAT TOPICS IS THE GROUP CURRENTLY FOCUSING ON?

The Legal Task Force focuses on several items captured in the work programme, which is prepared annually and submitted to the Directors General of Civil Aviation. Currently the main topics include:

- The promotion of the Protocols to the Chicago Convention amending Article 50 (a) and Article 56 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. The protocols provide for enlargement of the Council and the Air Navigation Committee and are aimed at enhancing the efficiency of ICAO. The status of ratification in ECAC Member States is continuously monitored and legal support regarding the ratification of the protocols is offered, if requested, to both ECAC Member States and non-ECAC Member States.
- Contribution to ICAO meetings is an essential part of the work of the Legal Task Force. In this respect, a large portion of the work is aimed at discussing legal issues relevant to the work of ICAO, which are mainly scheduled in the ICAO Legal Committee, its subgroups and during the triennial Assembly in the Legal Commission. The development, implementation, and ratification of international legal instruments such as treaties, decisions or resolutions in the field of aviation are important items covered therein. To this end, common positions are discussed and subsequently included in key briefing documents.
- The items on the General Working Programme of the Legal Committee are actively followed and discussed. Currently the most important items on the programme are: review of the ICAO Rules for the Settlement of Differences; international legal aspects of unmanned (pilotless) aircraft operations and integration into civil aviation; processes and procedures for States to fulfil their obligations under Article 12 of the Chicago Convention; acts or offences of concern to the international aviation community, including cyber threats, that may not be adequately covered by existing air law instruments; and promotion of the ratification of international air law instruments.

So far, the Legal Task Force has benefitted from the fact that several of its members are actively involved in the ICAO legal organ-

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Since its establishment in 1996, the Legal Task Force has consistently developed its expertise role as the legal cornerstone of ECAC.”

isation with experience in co-chairing the Legal Committee and its groups.

- The Legal Task Force reviews agreements to be signed by ECAC. The working group recently advised on the latest Cooperation Arrangement between ECAC and Airports Council International (ACI) for the CASE II Project. This project is an EU-funded and ECAC-implemented project for delivery of aviation security capacity building in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.
- Finally, in discussing the strategy for its future work, the task force agreed to focus on actively exchanging national experiences in the implementation and application of aviation regulations, such as regulations in the field of reporting aviation occurrences, the analysis of which should lead to improving aviation safety.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE ARISING IN THE FUTURE?

Next to the items already enclosed in the agenda of the Legal Task Force, I see major challenges regarding building on the capacity of legal advisers in the field of civil aviation. In February 2023, legal advisers from different parts of the world, invited by ICAO, visited the second Civil Aviation Legal

Advisor Forum (CALAF) in Oman. An important topic during the Forum was the question of how to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of civil aviation legal advisers. The topic elaborated on efforts not only made during the first edition of the CALAF in 2019, but also during the 2022 ICAO Assembly.

The 2022 Assembly stressed the need to raise the quality of legal advisers and thereby contribute to the effectiveness of States to implement air law treaties and update national laws and regulations. One of the CALAF outbreak sessions attended by legal advisers from ECAC countries revealed large differences between experienced and inexperienced legal advisers, as many countries do not even have the possibility for specific academic training of their staff in the field of aviation law. Many of the participants strongly urged for capacity support in order to enhance their legal skills. So, lack of experience caused several attendees to call for the development of a guiding manual for legal advisers on aviation law, and at least a basic package for a training programme tailored to the concrete needs of different countries. Such a programme could be composed of modules offering different courses on demand. Furthermore, cross border assistance between States offering the experience, maybe mentoring services, of other aviation legal advisers could be very helpful.

The task force agreed to focus on actively exchanging national experiences in the implementation and application of aviation regulations.





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Meeting the indicated needs will be an important challenge in the coming years also within ECAC. In this regard, the already-developed competency framework for legal advisers in the field of civil aviation, which was submitted to the 2022 Assembly, can be helpful.

Another challenge arising in the near and distant future will be how to deal with the national implementation arising from international environmental decisions in the field of aviation. The exceptionally important policy decisions currently taken in the ICAO context on the environment will eventually also require legal integration on a national level. The legal consequences for long-term national implementation of the decisions will have to be worked out and might very well require the attention of the Legal Task Force.

WHAT MAIN CHALLENGES FOR ECAC MEMBER STATES DO YOU SEE EMERGING/BEING DISCUSSED BY THE GROUP AT FUTURE MEETINGS?

Partly due to limited resources, important legal matters in the aviation field, mainly scheduled in the ICAO Legal Committee, are discussed based on prioritisation. Where attention is currently being paid to the highest-priority subjects, (i.e. review of the rules for dispute settlement and the Article 12 Task Force), I expect that in due course more and more emphasis will be placed on discussing subjects such as the international legal aspects of unmanned (pilotless) aircraft operations and the legal consequences of acts or offences of concern to the international aviation community, including cyber threats.

Contemporary times are marked by several developments (COVID, the war in Ukraine, climate discussions) with major impacts also on aviation. A proactive, timely discussion of the legal consequences, although sensitive, is important. So, for instance the COVID pandemic has permanently changed the world order. The direct and indirect consequences on aviation requires continued legal attention. This not only concerns the pragmatic aspects such as whether or not to hold online meetings with legal consequences (i.e. voting) but also how to deal with the legal safeguarding of measures (such as health measures) that do not originate from the aviation domain.

| SOME FINAL WORDS?

In the past ten years, working with other experts in ECAC has proved to be very inspiring for my work as a legal aviation adviser. The professional environment with its challenging objectives and shared interests provides an important basis for the further development of the Legal Task Force and subsequently its continued contribution to the efficient functioning of ECAC as a whole. ●

Machteld Cambridge is coordinating legal advisor at the aviation section of the Legal Department of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Watermanagement in the Hague. She has been vice-chair of the ECAC Legal Task Force since 2019 and chair since 2022. Machteld has been working in the Dutch transport and infrastructure administration since 1987 in legal management, legislation, advising expertise, coaching and coordinating positions. In the last 20 years she has been dealing with legislative and advisory aspects of various national and international aviation matters, including regarding the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As coordinating legal advisor in international law, Machteld has experience in complex legal matters, as well as taking part in international aviation fora at both European and ICAO level. Machteld has a masters in public international law from the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.



From the left, Jaime Binder - LACAC Secretary General, Patricia Reverdy - ECAC Executive Secretary, Saeed Soueidi - ACAO, Coordinator of the Arab Group, ICAO Council, Abdennebi Manar - ACAO Director General, Haitham Misto - ACAO Chairman, Adefunke Adeyemi - AFCAC Secretary General, Gaetano Battagliese - LACAC President, Alessio Quaranta - ECAC President, Silas Udahemuka - AFCAC President, Mark Rodmell - ECAC Deputy Executive Secretary.

ECAC President and Executive Secretary meet with sister regional organisations in Paris

PARIS, 7 FEBRUARY

ECAC hosted the first-ever formal meeting of the leaders of all four regional civil aviation organisations, with the heads of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO), the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), and the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC), joining ECAC President Alessio Quaranta, Executive Secretary Patricia Reverdy and Deputy Executive Secretary Mark Rodmell in Paris on 7 February 2023.

The main objectives of this meeting were to strengthen relationships and cooperation among the sister civil aviation organisations and to agree on actions to support a safe, secure, and sustainable development of air transport in their respective regions and around the world, consistent with ICAO's strategic objectives.

The participants shared views and lessons learned on the main outcomes of the 41st session of the ICAO Assembly and on regions' ambitions for the ICAO Assembly in 2025. They also reiterated their commitment to the ratification of the two 2016 Protocols amending the Chicago Convention to increase the number of seats in the ICAO Council and the Air Navigation Commission.

All participants acknowledged that strong partnership and collaboration were critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the aviation industry, and that by working together and sharing information and good practices, regional organisations could develop and implement effective strategies to support the recovery of air travel for the benefit of the economies and citizens in each region.

The meeting also agreed a series of joint activities for 2023, including cooperation on safety, security, capacity building in different areas of civil aviation, and exchange of best practices on air transport. ●

Strong partnership and collaboration are critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the aviation industry.



Discussion with EUROCONTROL Director General

BRUSSELS, 28 MARCH

The Director General of EUROCONTROL, **Raúl Medina Caballero**, ECAC President, **Alessio Quaranta**, and Executive Secretary, **Patricia Reverdy** met in Brussels to discuss the implementation of the ECAC-EUROCONTROL Agreement, and to emphasise the good cooperation between the two organisations. This annual review of the implementation of the agreement was also the opportunity to discuss topics of common interest, such as sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), cyber security, and diversity, equity and inclusion, and to share information on initiatives taken by each organisation, and opportunities to work together to support European civil aviation. ●

ACC Workshop on the treatment of serious incidents

BRATISLAVA, 25 APRIL

The treatment of serious incidents in civil aviation was the theme of the last ECAC Air Accident and Incident Investigation (ACC) workshop that brought together 80 participants from 29 States and 14 organisations, including ICAO, the European Commission, EASA, safety investigation authorities, operators and manufacturers.

The aim of the workshop was to provide a platform for participants to share their experiences and perspectives, and to develop best practices on the classification of serious incidents and make informed decisions on safety investigations.

In his opening address, Piotr Samson, President of the Civil Aviation Authority of Poland and ECAC Focal Point for Safety, emphasised the significant advancements in technology and safety that the

aviation sector witnessed in the last decade. There have been many new technological developments (including drones and artificial intelligence), new types of aircraft have been introduced, and new safety regulations have been implemented. However, the need for aviation safety remained a top priority in the aviation industry.

During four workshop sessions, participants discussed eight case studies, and the importance of improving communication between the various stakeholders involved in safety investigations, as well as the need to facilitate data sharing and analysis to enhance the effectiveness of safety investigations. They also discussed the importance of applying a proactive approach to safety management, where incidents are viewed as opportunities to improve aviation safety. ●



ECAC presents first ECAC guidance on sustainable aviation fuels

VIDEOCONFERENCE, 9 MARCH

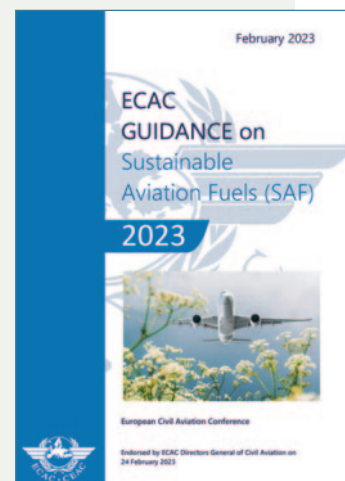
The first [ECAC Guidance on Sustainable Aviation Fuels \(SAF\)](#), published on 24 February 2023, was presented to over 100 participants from ECAC Member States and European organisations at the third ECAC workshop on sustainable aviation fuels organised within the framework of the [ECAC Capacity-Building Programme for Environment](#).

Opening the event, ECAC Focal Point for Environment, Rannia Leontaridi, Director General for Civil Aviation of the United Kingdom, highlighted that Europe is a global frontrunner in policy action to promote SAF. She said that the experience gained through pioneering initiatives is a key asset to support others, both in Europe and beyond. In that context, the ECAC SAF guidance, following its adoption by all ECAC Directors General, was an important milestone to promote sustainable fuels.

Inmaculada Gómez (Spain), ECAC co-rapporteur of the European Aviation and Environment Working Group (Expanded) Sustainable Aviation Fuels Task Group, introduced the content of the guidance. The introduction was followed by an overview by Daniel Rivas (EASA) of what sustainable aviation fuels are, and why they are needed. The ECAC Secretariat explained how this new guidance material will provide a basis for further ECAC capacity-building support to its Member States.

The guidance draws not only on policy initiatives in Europe, but also on work developed by others. This issue was addressed in a panel dedicated to examining recommendations for creating national SAF strategies. Ingrid Cherfils (Swedish Transport Agency and former ECAC President) talked about the International Transport Forum's work in 2022. Blandine Ferrier (ICAO EUR/NAT Office) referred to the ICAO Guidance on SAF Policies issued in June 2022, while Adrienne Gibbs (World Economic Forum) presented work developed by Clean Skies for Tomorrow, including its SAF Policy Toolkit issued in late 2021.

Sabine Cayre and Adelina Atanasova (EUROCONTROL) presented the [European SAF map](#), developed in cooperation with ECAC, which offers an overview of the SAF landscape in Europe. Several representatives of European States provided a brief update on their respective national SAF policies. The workshop also featured policy case studies from Henry Witt (United Kingdom Department for Transport) and Magnus Gislev (DG MOVE, European Commission) on respectively: updates on the United Kingdom SAF policy portfolio and the ReFuelEU Aviation regulation proposal. ●



ECAC pilot training course on diversity and inclusion in civil aviation

VIDEOCONFERENCE, 15 AND 31 MARCH

In December 2022, Directors General decided to organise an online pilot training course on diversity and inclusion for ECAC Member States, in response to the consolidated results of the ECAC diversity, equity, and inclusion survey conducted in summer 2022. In responding to the survey, several Member States had requested capacity-building activities on diversity matters to promote a better understanding of diversity good practices in the work environment.

To ensure the training course met the needs of the Member States, the ECAC Secretariat selected a dedicated training provider to deliver the pilot

course over three training sessions. The sessions were held on 27 February, 15 March and 31 March 2023, and attended by representatives of twelve Member States: Austria, France, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

The training course covered the topic of unconscious bias, as well as good practices to promote an inclusive workplace, and keys to define a successful diversity, equity and inclusion strategy. During the breakout sessions, practical examples were shared between the participants based on their experience in their own country. ●

News from the ECAC Secretariat



MICKAËL TEROSIER joined the ECAC CASE II Project team on 3 April. Prior to joining ECAC, Mickaël held various positions in France, including as deputy head of the security department at the French air transport gendarmerie headquarters, aviation security auditor for the French civil aviation authority, and instructor at ENAC – *École nationale de l'Aviation civile*, one of the ICAO training centres.

Throughout his career, Mickaël has focused on all aspects of aviation security, from developing, monitoring and teaching national, European and international AVSEC regulation. As an international aviation security specialist, he has provided technical expertise in France and over 15 countries in Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East.

calendar



JUNE

- 6-8** | 6th ECAC Environmental Forum (ENVFORUM/6), Paris/hybrid
- 7-8** | 35th meeting of the Behaviour Detection Study Group (BDSG/35), videoconference
- 9** | 4th Sustainable Aviation Fuels Workshop (ENV/SAF-WKSHP/4), Paris
- 14-15** | 38th meeting of the Study Group on Explosive Detection Dogs (EDD/38), videoconference
- 20** | 58th meeting of the Air Accident and Incident Investigation Group of Experts (ACC/58), videoconference
- 21** | 47th meeting of the Legal Task Force (LEGTG/47), Paris
- 21** | 20th familiarisation webinar on basic knowledge on aviation and the environment (ENV-FAMWEB/20), videoconference
- 21-22** | 85th meeting of the Technical Task Force (TTF/85), Bodø/hybrid
- 22** | 66th meeting of the ECAC Medium-Term Objectives Task Force (EMTO/66), Paris
- 26** | 39th meeting of the Security Forum (SF/39), videoconference
- 30** | 37th meeting of the Security Programme Management Group (SPMG/37), Stockholm

JULY

- 11-12** | 58th meeting of the Common Evaluation Process of security equipment Management Group (CEP-MG/58), Paris
- 12** | 21st familiarisation webinar on basic knowledge on aviation and the environment (ENV-FAMWEB/21), videoconference

Editorial

Dear readers of ECAC News,

Air travel is making a comeback. Recent air passenger forecasts by EUROCONTROL⁽¹⁾ paint a picture of strong demand and momentum moving into this year. For 2023, conservative scenarios predict an air traffic recovery up to 86% of 2019 levels (+5% YoY); the most optimistic scenarios forecast even 101% (+18% YoY) IFR (instrument flight rules) movements compared to 2019⁽²⁾. Despite these scenarios, world events such as rising inflation or geopolitical and natural disruptions to business – regardless of the statistical outcome trickle-down effects, especially for facilitation activities – can be expected.

As one of the European Civil Aviation Conference's (ECAC) strategic objectives, **facilitation** (as covered by ECAC Doc 30, Part I) governs all "national regulations concerning facilitation in ECAC Member States, detailing facilitation measures adapted to the European context and including implementation guidance in its Annexes". While COVID-19 moves to an endemic phase easing air traffic demand in general, the practical side of facilitation activities at airports needs to match that same recovery speed to ensure uninterrupted service.

Health issues (e.g. disinfection, Visible Digital Seals (VDS-NC)), immigration, staffing/capacity shortage, aviation security concerns, access to digital solutions (e.g. ICAO TRIP), and the handling of persons with reduced mobility (PRMs) pose renewed

challenges to the handling of services and processes in the facilitation realm given the likely recovery scenarios.

So, the question is: how to restore the confidence in and propensity for air travel? The ICAO Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) are the main reference for implementation guidelines, but equally as important are the coordinated efforts of harmonised implementation on pan-national levels providing guidance to States, authorities and industry partners. Finding the optimal balance between facilitation and security provisions, market dynamics and freedom of movement will become an important task in this year's aviation progress roadmap.

At the JAA Training Organisation (JAA TO), we started the year with full resources, adding new and revamped training courses to the portfolio (e.g. Aerodrome Inspector, IATA Dangerous Goods H.7.1) whilst delivering many important outside training courses to ECAC Member State civil aviation authorities in Q1/2023. More training news can be read in the updates below.

On behalf of JAA TO, I was pleased and honoured to welcome our new Foundation Board to our headquarters on 21 March 2023 and I thank the board members for their continuous leadership and support in enabling the organisation to achieve its mission.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of ECAC News. ●



PAULA V. DE ALMEIDA
JAA TO CEO

Sources:

(1) <https://www.eurocontrol.int/publication/eurocontrol-forecast-update-2022-2028>

(2) <https://www.eurocontrol.int/sites/default/files/2022-10/eurocontrol-seven-year-forecast-2022-2028-october-2022.pdf>



JAA TO launches new facilitation portfolio

In line with this issue's theme, JAA TO is supporting facilitation implementation and capacity building with the hosting of ICAO FAL and adding new facilitation training courses to the portfolio. Starting in Q2/2023, ICAO Annex 9 Facilitation courses, and PRM Assistance Management and CAA Inspector Training for PRM Matters courses are open for registra-

tion. These training programmes identify critical touchpoints, focus on overcoming operational issues, and cover the integration of PRM services with other stakeholders in accordance with European and international laws (ref. ECAC Doc 30, Annex 5-G). ●

JAA TO welcomes Foundation Board to Schiphol-Rijk – two new board members appointed



Since the 2020s, the aviation world has overcome unprecedented challenges in the aftermath of COVID-19: a virtual pause on global aviation, restart of operations, and the slow path to recovery. Three years after surviving the pandemic, JAA TO is looking to the future with its strongest portfolio and partner network to date. Entering its next phase of steady progress, the organisation is set for another successful year of aviation training.

Appointed by ECAC's Coordinating Committee, JAA TO welcomed its two newest members to the Foundation Board during an official visit on 21 March 2023. Koen Milis (Director General of Civil Aviation, Belgium) and Ana Vieira da Mata (ANAC board member, Portugal) were officially registered with the JAA TO Foundation Board in November 2022 and January 2023 respectively, joining interim

Foundation Board chair, Alessio Quaranta (Director General of Civil Aviation, Italy) and member, Mirjana Čizmarov (Director General of Civil Aviation, Serbia).

The newly constituted board met with JAA TO CEO Paula V. de Almeida and management staff to discuss strategy and organisational statutes. During a staff meeting, the board caught another glimpse of the enthusiastic and dedicated employees who characterise the JAA TO experience.

In a new interview, the board shares interesting insights on JAA TO's strengths and resilience, and how strong customer relationship management is paving the way for the organisation's goals in a post-COVID era. ●

Read here: <https://jaato.com/news/foundation-board>

JAA TO interview with flight dispatch faculty manager – new ICAO Doc 10106 implemented



The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has published a new document for flight dispatchers (FDs) / flight operations officers (FOOs) training, the all-new Document 10106. It replaces the old Document 7192, Part-D, which was the focal point of training for decades. With the new document describing various functions within operations control and more specifically their training needs, the Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) method is the logical consequence of an adequate development process fitting the modern state of air operations control.

This manual trains FDs/FOOs based on competency-based training and assessment, and on K-S-A – knowledge, skills and attitude programmes supporting the provisions outlined in the Procedures for Air Navigation Services - Training (PANS-TRG, Doc 9868).

JAA TO communications and faculty manager and FD subject-matter-expert, Tiago Ludgero, speaks about the additions and chances of this new facilitation and the effects for JAA TO's training course in a newly published interview/video. ●

Read here: <https://jaato.com/news/flight-dispatch-doc-10106>

Preferential seats programme for ECAC Member State CAAs

In an exclusive effort to drive harmonisation and support ECAC's objectives and functions with regard to training and capacity building, JAA TO has activated a preferential approach covering its listed training courses. The website can be found at <https://jaato-ecac.mailchimpsites.com/>.

By approaching JAA TO's customer service unit and referring to the privilege as an ECAC Member State CAA, preferential enrolment is activated. JAA TO is committed to adding value to ECAC's Member States and is very pleased to see an increasing number of interested professionals availing of this unique opportunity. ●



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