



**THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY (TRIENNIAL) SESSION**

(Videoconference, 12 July 2021)

**Agenda item 3:                    Presentation of ECAC President's triennial report**

**PRESIDENT'S TRIENNIAL REPORT 2019-2021**

(Presented by Ingrid Cherfils, ECAC President)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents the Presidential report on the main ECAC achievements and external relations activities during the triennium 2019-2021.

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

The Plenary Session is invited to note the content of this paper.

## **Introduction**

1. This paper presents the Presidential report on the main ECAC achievements and external relations activities during the triennium 2019-2021.

## **ECAC's main achievements**

### ***Elections to the ICAO Council 2019***

2. As in the past, Europe has continued to be represented in the ICAO Council by eight ECAC Member States. The eight European candidates elected during the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly in September/October 2019 were France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands (on behalf of the ABIS rotation group), Finland (on behalf of the NORDICAO rotation group) and Greece (on behalf of the CERG rotation group). As is customary, the list of European candidates for the 2019 elections to the ICAO Council was communicated to ECAC's sister regional organisations, ACAO, AFCAC and LACAC, as part of our close cooperation and coordination, and in accordance with the *status quo* principle.

3. At the same time, ECAC acknowledged that the increase in the number of ICAO Member States and the significant air transport development in certain regions was raising a demand for an increase in the representation of certain regions in the ICAO Council and the Air Navigation Commission (ANC). Consequently, ECAC Member States supported the amendment to Article 50 a) of the Chicago Convention with the objective of increasing the number of Council Members from 36 to 39 and the amendment to Article 56 of the Chicago Convention with the objective of increasing the number of ANC members from 19 to 21. The ratification process by ECAC Member States is well advanced with 35 ECAC Member States having ratified the Protocols, while a further nine have initiated their national ratification process. Support was also offered to share ECAC experience in ratifying the Protocols with its counterparts in sister regional organisations, through letters sent in March 2020.

4. 2019 also saw the election of Salvatore Sciacchitano, former ECAC Executive Secretary, to the position of ICAO Council President. He began his three-year term as President of the Council on 1 January 2020, succeeding Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu of Nigeria. Mr Nabil Naoumi (Germany) was also elected as President of the ICAO Air Navigation Commission for a first one-year renewable term in 2020, which was renewed in 2021.

5. Relations with sister regional organisations (ACAO, AFCAC, LACAC) were strengthened through regular contacts, meetings and exchange of documents: notably, several bilateral meetings were held in 2019 before and in the margins of the 40<sup>th</sup> ICAO Assembly. During the COVID-19 pandemic ECAC also exchanged information on the impact of the crisis on the aviation sector in Europe and the relief measures adopted in Europe to support the sustainable recovery of the sector. These meetings provided opportunities for an exchange of views on the main topics on the ICAO Assembly agenda and strategic cooperation between the organisations on domains of common interest.

### ***Contribution of ECAC Member States to ICAO activities***

6. In accordance with the ECAC Constitution, one of ECAC's objectives is to maintain close relations with ICAO to support the aims of the Chicago Convention. This relationship has continued to be implemented through close contacts with ICAO (e.g. contributions to the works of various ICAO Panels and groups as well as to ICAO Council's

Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART)) and through an increased and more effective coordination of ECAC Member States' contributions to ICAO activities (e.g. 40<sup>th</sup> Assembly).

7. In particular, a closer relationship has been established between Directors General of ECAC and the European members on the ICAO Council (presentations to DGCA meetings, access to ECAC documents, information sharing, regular updates, etc.). Additionally, the ECAC Secretariat together with the European Commission facilitates and supports the coordination of European experts and provides support to the European members on the ICAO Council, to the extent required. One field where the support provided by ECAC has been very active during the triennium is environment and, more precisely, on how to reduce the impact of aviation on climate change (e.g. CORSIA, LTAG).

8. The coordination of ECAC Member States for the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICAO Assembly and for other high-level ICAO events has proved to be very effective and will continue for upcoming events (e.g. the High-Level Conference on COVID-19 in October 2021). This coordination encompasses the preparation of European papers, exchanges with other regional organisations and bilateral partners, coordination during the events, and relevant follow-up actions. Among the European contributions to the 40<sup>th</sup> ICAO Assembly, fifteen papers were presented on various topics such as sustainable aviation, support for the ICAO No Country Left Behind initiative, assistance to aircraft accident victims and their families, fostering the implementation of the Global Aviation Security Plan, interference-resilient satellite-based CNS systems and enabling integrated cross-border oversight.

### ***Legal and administrative separation from ICAO***

9. Following the ICAO's decision to no longer provide administrative support to ECAC in 2019, and the significant shortage of staff it created in the Secretariat in 2020, Directors General unanimously agreed that the legal and administrative separation of ECAC from ICAO should be completed as soon as possible. After several rounds of negotiations in 2019 and 2020, the separation became effective in August 2020.

10. Additionally, it was agreed that the Agreement between ICAO and ECAC regarding Secretariat Services of 12 July 1969 would cease to have effect, through an exchange of letters between the ECAC President and the President of the ICAO Council and Secretary General. This was completed in August 2020.

### ***New ECAC-EUROCONTROL Agreement***

11. On 26 March 2020 a new ECAC-EUROCONTROL Agreement on the provision by EUROCONTROL of administrative services to ECAC was signed by the ECAC President and the Director General of EUROCONTROL, Mr Eamonn Brennan. This agreement entered into force on 1 April 2020, and since then has been implemented to the full satisfaction of both parties. While preserving the independence of ECAC and its activities, this Agreement has been an extremely valuable example on how EUROCONTROL supports European aviation.

12. The implementation of the Agreement enabled the recruitment of new staff members in the ECAC Secretariat, and the transition of seven staff members from the previous ICAO regime to the new EUROCONTROL system. Three positions remain to be filled.

13. On financial matters, the implementation of the Agreement led to a change of accounting system: a transition from IPSAS, which is used by ICAO, to IFRS which is used by EUROCONTROL, and the modification of ECAC financial rules and procedures. 2020 was a year of transition: however, all financial transactions were included in the new accounting

system, and the financial statements were produced two months earlier than had been done in the past. This has also enabled a change of external auditor, and the new auditor was able to deliver the external audit of ECAC 2020 accounts in June 2020, whereas in the past this was done at the end of August. Finally, the new Agreement also enabled some cost reductions (e.g. staff costs).

## **External relations**

### ***Relations with other regional organisations and ECAC's bilateral partners***

14. The relations between ECAC and the other regional and sub-regional organisations, i.e. ACAO, AFCAC, LACAC, and WAEMU, continue to be excellent. The coordination before ICAO high-level events, the exchange of information, the participation in reciprocal events and the joint organisation of events (e.g. workshops under the security CASE I Project) form part of these close relations.

15. Similarly, ECAC continues to have an excellent relationship with the United States government authorities, organising regular meetings between the Coordinating Committee and the US authorities that normally include the State Department, the Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration.

16. Regular meetings, both in person and online, have also been organised with the Ministry of Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore on topics of common interest such as ICAO matters, travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to support the recovery of the air transport sector.

17. A new Agreement was signed with the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of Kazakhstan on 7 December 2020 to cooperate in promoting the safe, efficient and sustainable development of civil aviation in Kazakhstan and Europe, through the exchange of information, participation in international events and meetings, and organisation of training activities.

18. Relations with other key international States with whom ECAC has either a Memorandum of Understanding or a Cooperation Agreement (e.g. Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand) remain very fruitful and foster the exchange of information on areas of common interest such as security, accidents investigations and economic matters.

19. The ECAC-ACI EUROPE cooperation agreement was signed on 10 December 2019 in the margins of the 12th ECAC Forum, to strengthen the organisations' collaboration in matters of mutual interest. The main areas of cooperation include sharing information in the economic domain, discussion on issues related to supporting and facilitating the passenger experience (e.g. passengers with reduced mobility), enhancing cooperation in airport-related security matters, and promoting ECAC's Environmental Programme and the Airport Carbon Accreditation programme developed by ACI EUROPE.

### ***Relations with the European aviation organisations***

20. ECAC continues to maintain very fruitful relations with the European Commission and other European aviation organisations, namely EASA, EUROCONTROL. In particular, all the European coordination groups established for the preparation of ICAO events are co-chaired by ECAC and by the European Commission.

21. Cooperation with the European Commission in the field of aviation security continues on the basis of the Cooperation Agreement signed in December 2012 and the

annual rolling programme. During the present triennium, ECAC has been entrusted by the European Commission with the implementation of three capacity building projects in the field of security:

- the Civil Aviation Security in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula (CASE) Project, which was completed in March 2020;
- the Civil Aviation Security in Africa, the Middle East and Asia (CASE) II Project, which was launched in January 2020; and
- the security element of the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia Project (EaP/CA), whose main part, on safety, is implemented by EASA.

22. EUROCONTROL also supports ECAC's activities in the field of environment, in particular the implementation of the newly established in 2021 capacity building programme. This programme not only aims to support States in their efforts to deliver their environmental obligations such as State Action Plans for emissions reductions or CORSIA implementation, but also aims to further promote the development of environmental expertise in the civil aviation authorities of all ECAC Member States, so that they would be best prepared to respond and meet the various challenges associated with sustainable aviation.

#### **Other important initiatives undertaken by ECAC during the 2019-2021 triennium**

23. Among the many other initiatives undertaken by ECAC during the 2019-2021 triennium, it is worth mentioning the ECAC/EU Dialogue with the air transport industry organised in November 2020, the ECAC Forum on "What policies to address aviation's environmental challenges" held in December 2019 and on "COVID-19 crisis – from survival to recovery" held as videoconference in December 2020.

24. In 2020 and 2021, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, ECAC Member States and the European aviation industry were confronted with exceptional circumstances calling on the global community to cooperate and act rapidly, efficiently and flexibly to unfolding developments. Europe, like the rest of the world, was at a complete standstill with almost no traffic except for cargo, repatriation and medical flights. The entire aviation system was (and still is) deeply impacted by the crisis with layoffs and unemployment. The main challenge for the ECAC Member States remains to keep the aviation system afloat and enable the sector to recover from the crisis in a sustainable manner.

25. From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, ECAC was committed to supporting its Member States during this unprecedented crisis and has been hosting 37 European coordination meetings via videoconference since 17 March 2020, bringing together the Directors General of the 44 ECAC Member States, the European Commission, EASA and EUROCONTROL. Held every three to four days at the beginning of the crisis and recently, once every three to four weeks, the main objective of these meetings is to exchange on latest developments, explore relief measures for stakeholders and the industry at both national and European levels, and look at challenges and solutions that need to be addressed for the benefit of the Member States and the aviation sector. A key message reiterated at these European coordination meetings, and which also echoes the feedback of the aviation industry, is the strong need for cooperation among all stakeholders, civil aviation authorities, public health authorities and industry, to ensure a fully coordinated approach and mutual recognition of measures regionally and eventually globally.

26. On the occasion of the Aviation Day conference organised on 3 May 2021 under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the [Lisbon Declaration](#) on the recovery of European aviation, which had been endorsed by all ECAC Member States, was presented.

27. For the first time, an ECAC risk register was created in 2019, to identify the different categories of risks to the organisation, given the mitigation measures already in place. The risk register was endorsed by Directors General in December 2019 and subsequently updated in August 2020 to take account of the separation from ICAO.

28. In August 2020 Directors General adopted a series of measures to be taken by the ECAC Secretariat to contain and/or reduce costs. Additionally, given the financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Member States, Directors General established a temporary "ECAC COVID-19 solidarity fund" to support the participation of Member States in ECAC activities. For 2021, 10% of ECAC regular annual budget has been reserved for this fund, and to be used by Member States in the course of the year.

29. In December 2020, two amendments to the ECAC Constitution (8<sup>th</sup> edition/August 2019) were adopted at the 38<sup>th</sup> ECAC Special Plenary Session, convened to incorporate recent decisions taken by Directors General, in particular regarding the legal and administrative separation of ECAC from ICAO. The Session adopted an amendment to Article 13 of the Constitution to insert a reference to the ECAC-EUROCONTROL Agreement. The second amendment adopted referred to the Terms of Reference of the ECAC Focal Point for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), which are included in the ECAC Constitution. The term "Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems" was replaced by "Unmanned Aircraft Systems" throughout the Terms of Reference.

30. Finally, several positions within the ECAC Secretariat were redefined in 2020 to better respond to the needs of Member States and to efficiently ensure the implementation of the work programme. In addition, secondments of national experts from ECAC Member States take place on a regular basis (e.g. Finland on Facilitation, Iceland on Communications, Italy on economic matters, United Kingdom on aviation security), giving national experts the opportunity to develop their skills and competencies in an international environment and ECAC an opportunity to benefit from the experience of a national expert.

### **Action to be taken**

31. The Plenary Session is invited to note the content of this paper.