



THIRTY-NINTH PLENARY (TRIENNIAL) SESSION

(Videoconference, 12 July 2021)

Agenda item 4: Presentation of the Focal Point reports

REPORT ON ECAC ACTIVITIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

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SUMMARY

This paper presents a report on the environmental activities of ECAC during the triennium 2019-2021, underlining the main achievements.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements in the environmental domain for the period 2019-2021.

Introduction

1. This paper presents an overview of the implementation of ECAC's environmental activity during the 2019-2021 triennium, highlighting the main achievements against the following objectives and deliverables set in its work programme:

- a. To promote internationally European policies and practices in relation to aviation and the environment, and to coordinate positions and interventions in close cooperation with the European Commission for ICAO major events,
- b. To work towards further harmonisation of European environmental policies and practices, and to monitor achievements and technical developments, aimed at:
 - fostering debate and sharing best practices throughout Europe, including by developing guidance material and their update
 - supporting the harmonised submission of 44 European State action plans for emissions reductions (SAP) to provide evidence of the European determination against climate change
 - supporting the implementation of CORSIA in application of ECAC's Bratislava declaration, and organising feed-back from experience
- c. To actively contribute to the enhancement of international environmental policies and technical developments in aviation, and the determination of future environmental priorities for Europe
- d. To build capacity in ECAC Member States and other partner States of particular interest for ECAC, aiming at fostering dialogue with European stakeholders from the industry and the environmental NGOs and maintaining and developing the experts' knowledge to increase the availability of European expertise.

International promotion of European policies and practices in relation to aviation and the environment

2. In this triennium, the European Aviation and Environment Group (EAEG) and EAEG (Expanded) have maintained the momentum of their collective effort on the preservation of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (**CORSIA**), including the completion of CORSIA Standards and Recommended Practices and supporting documentation, the assessment work on the COVID-19 impacts on CORSIA, and the CORSIA review. EAEG has ensured consistent European inputs to CAEP work, notably at the CAEP/11 meeting (4-15 February 2019) and the annual CAEP12 steering group meetings in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

3. Also, EAEG, with the support of EUROCONTROL, has provided ECAC's Directors General and the European members of the ICAO Council with thorough analysis and assessment of the implications of the various options for the update of the CORSIA baseline, to inform a recommendation on a 2019 baseline for the pilot phase.

4. EAEG (Expanded) has also coordinated elements of replies to CORSIA-related ICAO State letters deemed of high strategic interest for Europe. These have included the Establishment of a Technical Advisory Body (TAB) and developments on the emissions unit criteria (EUC), on CORSIA eligible fuels, and on the CORSIA Sustainability Criteria for CORSIA Eligible Fuels. This enabled the objective set by ECAC's Directors General of encouraging as many European replies as possible to be met. EAEG also coordinated and promoted the notification to ICAO by individual ECAC Member States of their voluntary participation in the pilot phase of CORSIA, to ensure the implementation in practice of the 2016 Bratislava Declaration principles.

5. The European work on CORSIA was carried out in very close coordination with that on **Sustainable Aviation Fuels** (SAF) and Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels (LCAF), to preserve the integrity of CORSIA. This SAF coordinating work of EAEG was also targeted at ensuring that in the longer term, the use of SAF provide effective CO₂ emissions reduction, based on a Life Cycle analysis (LCA).

6. EAEG provided briefing to European members of the ICAO Council on the sustainability criteria for SAF, to inform their support for endorsement of the criteria.

7. Since December 2019, EAEG (Expanded), EAEG and the Environmental Forum have dedicated a large part of their activities to work in support to the assessment of the feasibility of, and identification of options for, a **Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG) for CO₂ emissions reduction of International Aviation**. In particular, EAEG (Expanded) developed a living document for the DGCA/154 meeting in December 2019, and two updated versions successively presented at DGCA/65(SP) in August 2020 and DGCA/156 in May 2021, in order to feed ECAC Director General's discussions on the LTAG with updated information on developments in ICAO, in the aviation industry, and a proposal for a plan to guide European contribution towards the adoption of an LTAG at the ICAO A41 Assembly. This successively contributed to maintaining unity and momentum on this matter, across ECAC States, over the triennium.

8. EAEG has ensured consistent input to CAEP work on the LTAG, notably for the three CAEP 12 Steering group meetings, and provided information to the European members of the ICAO Council, notably on the CAEP proposal for an ICAO process for addressing the feasibility of an LTAG, to support its adoption.

9. ECAC's work on other environmental matters has been maintained notwithstanding the strong focus on CORSIA, SAF and LTAG work. EAEG kept under close review the CAEP exploratory study on **supersonic air transport** (SST), and coordinated European elements of reply to the US NPRM on an LTO standard for SST, reaffirming the positions expressed by Europe at ICAO Assembly in 2019. More generally, on each of the above subjects, European papers to the ICAO Assembly A40 were coordinated by EAEG (Expanded), and to support European interventions and defend European environmental priorities.

Sharing best practices and developing guidance material aimed at further harmonisation in Europe, promoting them, and determining future priorities

Harmonised method for the computation of aircraft noise contours

10. The European standard method for harmonising the computation of noise contours around civil airports in ECAC States is set out in the fourth edition of ECAC Doc 29 developed and maintained by the EAEG Task Group on Aircraft Noise Modelling (AIRMOD). Also, it provides a methodology and the corresponding tools to assess the validity of models against this ECAC Guidance. The updates to ECAC/CEAC Doc29 were successfully incorporated into the legislation of the European Union, and the developments were brought into CAEP. Major development work has also been undertaken in this triennium to develop a standard methodology for helicopter noise computation.

Support to ECAC States for the promotion of European mitigating action

11. The acknowledgement by the ICAO Secretary General of the validity of the European approach to the submission to ICAO of State Action Plans on CO₂ Emissions Reduction (SAPs), providing for the inclusion of a European common section, was a main achievement by ECAC in 2019. This meant that ICAO reported to the 40th ICAO Assembly in 2019 that 44 updated SAPs had been submitted by ECAC States, containing the common section endorsed by ECAC Directors General, providing quantified evidence of the benefits of coordinated and coherent mitigation policies against climate change throughout the region. In 2020/2021, the EAEG Task Group on Action Plans for Emissions Reduction (APER-TG) updated the ECAC/EU common section and the associated ECAC/EU guidelines, which were endorsed by ECAC's Directors General on 2 June 2021, and provided to ECAC States for incorporation into their SAP, alongside their national section.

12. As recommended by ECAC Directors General at DGCA/153 (December 2019), the close relationship between ECAC and the European Focal points for SAP designated to ICAO has been effectively reactivated after the recruitment of a capacity-building officer on climate change: three SAP Information seminars were organised in 2021 under the banner of ECAC Environmental Forum, allowing for their better ownership of the ECAC/EU common section, and a better understanding of how to incorporate it with the national section of the SAP.

CORSIA, Sustainable Aviation fuels and LTAG

13. The third and fourth ECAC Environmental Forums (in October 2019 and January 2021) contributed to the objectives of fostering dialogue, sharing best practices, and informing the determination of future European environmental priorities. More specifically:

- feed-back from experience of CORSIA implementation was shared by many regions, providing a good understanding of the level of CORSIA implementation, the potential improvements, and the identify cation of capacity building needs;
- strong signals of the feasibility of an ambitious LTAG were sent to the 180 participants of the fourth Forum, with updates on a large variety of innovative SAF experience and supporting policies, including hydrogen, and e-fuels, and the presentation of various commitments regarding an LTAG and decarbonisation by States and the aviation industry.

14. In addition, meetings of EAEG and EAEG (Expanded) were organised with European stakeholders from European industry and environmental NGOs, to maintain a close dialogue with them.

To build capacity in ECAC Member States and other Partner States

15. The third and fourth ECAC Environmental Forums provided updated scientific and technical information to European experts on the climate impacts of non-CO₂ emissions, and the mitigating measures. Promising innovations were presented by the industry, and presentations by key international partners resulted in fruitful exchanges and allowing for enhanced mutual understanding of aspirations and concerns on this matter. Most of the presentations delivered at the 4th Forum formed the basis for items in ECAC News Edition 72.

16. The incorporation of the climate change and capacity-building officer in December 2020 has enabled the development of an enhanced capacity building programme, which was approved in DGCA/156. The programme will support ECAC States' own efforts to fulfil environmental requirements such as CORSIA and State Action Plans, and will also strengthen the competencies and knowledge of relevant officials and promote policy awareness in ECAC States. The implementation of the programme has started in early 2021 with direct interaction with States' appointed focal points, promotion of State partnerships and the organisation of capacity-building events such as information seminars and familiarisation webinars.

Action to be taken

17. The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements in the environmental domain for the period 2019-2021.