



**FORTY-SECOND PLENARY (TRIENNIAL) SESSION**  
(Strasbourg, 9 - 10 July 2024)

**Agenda item 4. Presentation of the Focal Point reports**

**REPORT ON ECAC ACTIVITIES ON COMMUNICATION**

(Presented by Alessio Quaranta, President of ECAC)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents the report of the activities on communication, and in particular the activities of the ECAC Network of Communication Specialists (NETCOM).

**ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements in the communication field for the period 2022-2024.

## Introduction

1. This paper presents the report of the activities on communication, and in particular the activities of the ECAC Network of Communication Specialists (NETCOM).
2. The ECAC Network of Communication Specialists (NETCOM) was established in July 2021, with the objective of fostering cooperation and enhancing the effectiveness of ECAC Member States' communication capabilities through the sharing of knowledge, experience and good practices in the field of communication for civil aviation.
3. To achieve these goals, NETCOM promotes information-sharing between communication specialists in ECAC Member States, including through the development of guidelines and good practices in the field of communication for civil aviation (e.g. managing media inquiries, spokesperson guidelines, crisis communication, intercultural communication, communication training needs, etc.).

## ECAC Communication Strategy

4. The ECAC Communication Strategy focuses on external communication and includes several sections such as: communication principles to be followed, key messages to be delivered, and communication channels and tools to be used. The latest amendment to the ECAC Communication Strategy was adopted by Directors General on 11 May 2022.

## Organisation

5. NETCOM currently brings together more than 52 communication specialists or other experts with responsibilities in internal and/or external communication for civil aviation, from 31 ECAC Member States.
6. ECAC Directors General appointed Ms Alexandra Kaufman (United Kingdom) as chair, and Ms Loredana Enăchescu (Romania) as deputy chair, each of them for a first mandate of three years, starting on 9 April 2022. The position of the NETCOM chair became vacant after Ms Kaufman resigned from the UK Civil Aviation Authority; Directors General then appointed Ms Enăchescu as NETCOM chair for a first mandate of three years, starting on 2 March 2023, and Ms Francesca Miceli (Italy) as deputy chair for a first mandate of three years, starting on 4 April 2023.

## Activities 2022-2024

7. Although not included in the 2022-2024 work programme, the activities of NETCOM are defined in an annual work programme, which is noted by Directors General at their December meeting each year.
8. In 2022-2024, NETCOM focused its activities on a wider range of topics including:
  - **Promotion of civil aviation.** NETCOM drafted a series of best practices through which ECAC Member States can promote civil aviation, including encouraging people to choose a career in aviation, promoting success through leaders, internship and traineeship programmes, promoting women in aviation, and developing national programmes that finance young people, in order for them to access and advance in an aviation career. In developing this guidance material, NETCOM members identified the main ways through which the promotion of civil aviation can be performed within and outside the aviation sector, irrespective of

the communication channels chosen to promote activities, as they might be different from one country to another.

- **Media relations.** NETCOM members discussed some options that could help the ECAC Member States in all areas of media engagement and drafted a communication best practice document on media relations. An internal workshop on media relations will also be organised in the second part of 2024.
- **Training in communication.** While recognising that successful communication can bring significant benefits to organisations and having trained and skilled communication specialists can therefore be a benefit for States, NETCOM drafted a series of guidelines for communication training. A survey on training needs among members was launched in 2024 and will lead to some follow-up actions in the coming years. The United Kingdom agreed to provide details on CAA communication training open for participation to ECAC Member States.
- **Presentation of case studies and exchange of information on national activities.** Every year NETCOM discusses case studies on various topics of interest during the triennium, these have included the following:
  - crisis communication following a paragliding accident;
  - communication activities due to the failure of Thomas Cook including repatriation;
  - crisis communication after an aviation accident and during the December 2019 air traffic control services' strike in France;
  - the reorganisation of the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) into one single civil aviation regulator for Ireland, and an example of the Irish crisis strategy and response planning model with action plans;
  - the staysafe.aero safety promotion initiative in Switzerland, and change management approach, including staff engagement and achieving an equilibrium between strategic and tactical participation;
  - people-centric internal communication strategy (TAP Portugal);
  - airport communication and the importance of stakeholder coordination (ANA Aeroportos de Portugal);
  - the key role of communication in air safety investigations, and a case study on helicopter landing in a gas station in Romania;
  - therapy dogs initiative at Istanbul Airport;
  - communication campaigns on drones.
- **Survey on the role of communication.** NETCOM created an online survey on the role of communication that was sent out to ECAC Member States on 23 October 2023. The main goal was to gain an overview of the communication needs and expectations in civil aviation administrations. All replies received were anonymised by the ECAC Secretariat, and the consolidated results were analysed by NETCOM with the purpose of drafting new communication guidelines in 2024.
- **Best practices documents.** The following documents were either created or reviewed by NETCOM in the period 2022-2024, and formally adopted by Directors General:
  - Good practices on promoting civil aviation - November 2022
  - Guidelines on cooperation between ECAC Member States on communication matters - November 2022
  - Communication best practices on media relations - November 2022

- Good practices for crisis communication in civil aviation, including steps to be followed during and after a crisis, useful tips to manage the crisis communication, guidelines for drafting a rock-solid communication plan, as well as guidance for crisis communicators - November 2022
- Guidelines on intercultural communication focusing on intercultural awareness and on a set of communication principles that should be followed so that the messages are well received and understood - November 2022
- Guidelines for delivering communication training in ECAC Member States - November 2022
- Good practices for addressing communication with the media following aircraft accidents – December 2023. It includes a set of suggestions and guidance on managing media queries, striking the right balance between openness and privacy, and safeguarding the credibility of accident investigations during communication activities.
- Best practices for communication during a pandemic (revision of existing document) – December 2023
- Guidelines on the use of ECAC name and logo by third parties (revision of existing document initially prepared by the Legal Task Force) – December 2023.
- In addition, the following two new documents are under review by Directors General of civil aviation until the end of June 2024:
  - The role of communication in change management
  - Digital communication channels
- **Table-top exercise.** In October 2023, NETCOM organised a table-top scenario-based exercise focused on crisis communication, business continuity and disaster recovery. The exercise simulated a plane fire following a landing gear failure at Lisbon Airport (Humberto Delgado Airport) and culminated in a debriefing session where all participants shared their experiences, insights, and lessons learnt.

### Action to be taken

9. The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements in the communication field for the period 2022-2024.