



FORTY-SECOND PLENARY (TRIENNIAL) SESSION

(Strasbourg, 9-10 July 2024)

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 2022-2024, 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 2022-2024.

Introduction

1. This paper presents an overview of the implementation of ECAC's environmental activity during the 2022-2024 triennium.

Summary

2. The 2022-2024 period was most visibly characterised by efforts to deliver European objectives across a range of global events designed to create the basis for a meaningful response to the challenges of climate change and to ensure the consistency of aviation activities with the Paris Agreement's temperature goal. In this context, highly visible progress was made at the global level, with the adoption by ICAO in 2022 of the Long-Term Aspirational Goal for international aviation CO₂ emissions reductions, and in 2023 the adoption of a quantified goal for CO₂ emissions reductions achieved from the use of sustainable aviation fuels and other cleaner energies.

3. This period also saw the new ECAC capacity building programme for environment, adopted in 2021, move to the delivery stage, with activities organised for the benefit of ECAC Member States and its benefits extended to other regions.

4. ECAC continued with its work of promoting harmonisation of environment approaches through the development of recommendations and guidance, and through information-sharing events such as the Environmental Forum.

Coordination of European positions and promotion internationally

5. In 2022-2024, the coordination of European positions and promotion internationally, carried out by the European Aviation and Environment Group in its two formats, (EAEG(Expanded) and EAEG-EAEP)), was substantially focused on the 41st ICAO Assembly (27 September – 7 October 2022), on the third Conference on Aviation Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3, 20-24 November 2023) and on the cycle of meetings that began with the twelfth Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP/12, 7-17 February 2022) and will lead to CAEP/13 in February 2025.

41st ICAO Assembly

6. In the context of the 41st ICAO Assembly (A41), there was a substantial lead-up including a series of Global Aviation dialogues (GLADs) that took place in March and April 2022, the High-level Meeting on the feasibility of a Long-Term Aspirational Goal for international aviation CO₂ emissions reductions (HLM-LTAG), which was convened in Montreal from 19-22 July 2022, and a Special Council session on Climate change in August 2022.

7. Throughout this, ECAC's work was focused on two objectives: (i) the preservation of CORSIA to contribute to the mid-term goal of carbon-neutral growth from 2020, and (ii) the adoption of a Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG), in line with temperature goals in the Paris Agreement.

8. In the regional GLADs, a key role was played by the European experts with leading responsibility in CAEP for the promotion of the LTAG report, noting that its public availability was key for the positive A41 outcome. EAEG(Expanded) actively promoted European participation in the regional GLADs, which also helped the development of lines to take on the CORSIA review (and ETS/CORSIA) for use in Member States outreach activities towards the Assembly.

9. EAEG(Expanded) developed two European working papers to the HLM-LTAG, (i) on the level of ambition and monitoring of the LTAG, and (ii) on the means of implementation of the LTAG. This work contributed to broadly successful conclusions of the HLM-LTAG, which achieved progress towards the 41st Assembly, agreeing to “encourage States to work together to strive to achieve a collective LTAG for international aviation of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, in support of the Paris Agreement’s temperature goal, recognizing that each State’s special circumstances and respective capabilities will inform the ability of each State to contribute to the LTAG within its own national timeframe”. The need to facilitate access to LTAG financing was acknowledged.

10. Following the Special Council session on Climate change, which endorsed the conclusions of the HLM-LTAG while preserving a delicate balance with CORSIA objectives, which in turn allowed for wide support of the draft resolutions of the Council, EAEG(Expanded) carried out its preparatory tasks for the 41st Assembly. Three European working papers were submitted to ICAO, on the CORSIA review, the LTAG, and the financing of its implementation, and information papers on European SAF policies and the 2022 European Aviation Environmental Report. EAEG(Expanded) was consulted on ECAC’s and the EU’s endorsement of the working paper of the International Aviation Climate Ambition Coalition. All these efforts contributed to the successful achievement of the European objectives mentioned above.

Third Conference on Aviation Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3)

11. The third Conference on Aviation Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) was the first major environmental event following the adoption at ICAO A41 of an ambitious Long-Term Aspirational Goal (LTAG) of net zero CO₂ international aviation emissions by 2050, in line with the temperature goals in Paris Agreement.

12. EAEG developed a strategy for the European approach to CAAF/3, which was agreed by Directors General in May 2023. The adopted strategy supported outreach activities, also helping to provide consistent approaches in the ICAO events paving the way towards the CAAF/3, including the regional seminars during spring 2023.

13. This strategy also formed the basis for a Statement to the pre-CAAF/3 outcomes consultation in September 2023 and the four working papers to CAAF/3 itself, respectively presenting (i) European views on monitoring and accounting of SAF, LCAF and cleaner energies, (ii) policies in support of a global, collective and aspirational quantified objective for SAF, LCAF and cleaner energy, (iii) assistance and capacity building to support SAF development, production and use, and (iv) financing cleaner energy.

14. EAEG developed a briefing note for each of these events, and an online DGCA briefing was organised to present existing briefing material on 16 November 2023. This supporting work, together with the active outreach activities undertaken in Montreal and in Dubai, which were also facilitated by the IACAC initiative, led Europe to a satisfactory outcome at CAAF/3, including on the European top priority of a quantified ambition, which is expected to send a strong signal to the market to leverage the necessary financial resources for SAF development and deployment all around the world.

Committee on Aviation and Environmental Protection (CAEP)

15. Five EAEG papers were presented for the CAEP/12 meeting: on the LTAG, Supersonic Air Transport, Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), on Airports and Operations, and on future CAEP work. EAEG’s outreach achieved an unprecedented level of co-authoring by non-European States on LTAG. The adoption of the LTAG feasibility report by

CAEP was a key achievement, contributing to the successes mentioned in the sections above.

16. At the first steering group of the 13th CAEP cycle (CAEP/13 SG2022, 5-9 December 2022), European CAEP members presented two papers: the first one on “the role of fuel specifications in addressing impacts of non-CO₂ emissions” and the other one presented the European views on “the development of the LTO noise and CO₂ dual stringency”. This was an important meeting as it was the first CAEP Steering Group after the adoption of LTAG by the 41st Assembly, and was the starting point for CAEP for the preparation of CAAF/3 (see above). Perhaps most importantly, the work of the CAEP Steering Group supported the approach taken by Europe on metrics and levels of ambition at CAAF/3, which also contributed to the positive outcome at that meeting, noted above.

17. European CAEP members presented two papers for the second Steering Group meeting of the 13th cycle of CAEP (CAEP/13 SG2023, 16-20 October 2023), one of them on the monitoring and reporting of progress against the LTAG, and the other one on ICAO’s Integrated Dual Stringency Analysis (noise and CO₂ emissions). On the substance, CAEP/13 SG2023 involved fewer direct European initiatives but a stronger focus on reaching the necessary compromises ahead of CAEP decisions later in the current cycle, including on the dual CO₂ and noise aircraft standard and on issues regarding the Indirect Land Use Change methodology for SAF.

18. At the time of writing, EAEG’s preparations towards the third Steering Group meeting of the 13th cycle of CAEP are underway, and preparations for CAEP/13 in early 2025 will follow after that. Immediately after the second steering group of CAEP/13 and among many other tasks, CAEP continued its work on the Dual Stringency Analysis and on implementation of the LTAG by developing an initial methodology for the monitoring and reporting of progress against the LTAG to be presented in July 2024 at CAEP/13 steering group three. On CORSIA, work has continued in preparation of the next periodic review to take place in 2025.

Other activities

19. EAEG(Expanded) coordinated elements of replies to ICAO State Letters on “CORSIA Sustainability Criteria for CORSIA Eligible Fuels”, and on amendments to SARPs in Annex 16, on aircraft noise, aircraft engine emissions (nvPM), aeroplane CO₂ emissions, and CORSIA.

Promoting harmonisation in Europe

20. The SAF Task Group developed the first ECAC guidance on Sustainable Alternative Fuels, which was endorsed by Directors General in early 2023. A supporting capacity building programme was conducted to encourage each ECAC Member State to build its own SAF roadmap and incorporate it in its State Action Plan for CO₂ emissions reduction.

21. The AIRMOD Task Group supported harmonisation of aircraft noise assessment methods by maintaining ECAC Doc 29 4th edition and developing a methodology for helicopters, scheduled for endorsement in 2024.

22. The Action Plans for Emissions Reduction Task Group (APER TG) was reactivated in June 2023 and is carrying out its work to revise the ECAC/EU guidance for the submission to ICAO of State Action Plans for CO₂ emissions reduction. This includes the development of a common section of European Action Plans for emissions reductions presenting the mitigating measures taken collectively throughout Europe and their

expected benefits, for this new cycle of State Action Plans. This work is being harmonised with preparation of the European Aviation Environmental Report by EASA. Europe having promoted the use of State Action Plans as an important means of reporting on LTAG progress, it should be a priority for ECAC States to submit 44 updated State action plans by the end of 2024. At their April 2024 meeting (DGCA/162, 25 April 2024) Directors General endorsed the approach being taken by the Task Group in the use of the IPCC methodology within the common section, while encouraging compliance with the ICAO guidance (which at the time of writing had not yet been circulated) in the national sections of ECAC Member States' action plans.

Capacity building and information sharing

23. The ECAC capacity building programme for environment and its plan of activities was endorsed by Directors General in May 2021 (DGCA/156, 5 May 2021), including three overarching objectives and specific expected outcomes:

- To support ECAC Member States' own efforts to fulfil ICAO environmental requirements;
- To strengthen environmental competencies and knowledge of people;
- To promote and support information sharing and policy awareness on aviation and the environment.

24. The programme gained momentum in the 2022-2024 triennium, with 46 training activities being delivered to ECAC Member States. These have included 23 environment familiarisation webinars for all States and other participants on a range of topics supporting ECAC's work, often times so as to ensure the exchange of the most up-to-date information ahead of major events such as ICAO's high level meetings mentioned earlier in this paper. Four sustainable aviation fuels workshops, and four State Action Plan workshops were held, in person or online.

25. Following the development of the SAF guidance, in person tailored workshops were held in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine (hybrid format, jointly hosted in Warsaw), and the approach has also been presented in workshops and conferences held by other organisations such as the World Economic Forum.

26. In addition, through participation in the activities of Partner States and regions, the benefits of the ECAC capacity building programme for environment have been shared outside Europe. This has included training and presentation to groups of Lusophone and Francophone countries outside Europe, and participation in workshops organised by sister regional organisations such as LACAC and AFCAC.

27. The ECAC Environmental Forum has continued to be a valuable means of bringing together and sharing expertise among ECAC Member States and Partner regions, States and organisations, enabling the dissemination of information in support of many of the environment objectives mentioned above. The annual Forum focused on:

- The fifth Environmental Forum (16-18 and 20 May 2022) placed emphasis on the LTAG, with presentations of the latest issued IPCC report on climate change mitigation, of a scientific assessment of deep decarbonisation pathways and their compatibility with sustainable development goals, and of the CAEP-LTAG feasibility report, to promote even greater ownership of it. The presentations of ambitious commitments by States and the industry came as reality checks of the ICAO report's conclusions, reinforcing confidence in them. The presentation of inspiring innovations, such as Sun-to-liquid aviation fuels, carbon removals and their trading,

helped visualise the form which a Net zero CO₂ achievement might take. This helped develop the thinking in terms of opportunities arising from the LTAG instead of focusing on costs. CORSIA, adaptation to climate change, and non-CO₂ emissions were also addressed. It attracted experts from a wide spectrum of stakeholders and geographical scope (e.g. ACAO, AFCAC, LACAC, United States, Canada, Singapore).

- The sixth Environmental Forum (6-8 June 2023) placed emphasis on the enabling policies and roadmaps to achieve ambitious in sector reductions, and it also placed a focus on the financing of the energy transition, based on presentations of their financing initiatives by senior representatives of the United Nations for Environment Programme (UNEP), OECD, and the World Economic Forum. An entire afternoon was dedicated to the dialogue with key international partners, presenting their respective expectations for CAAF/3, and their environmental priorities. For the first time, a session was dedicated to the question of climate adaptation, and updates were shared by Member States on issues such as CORSIA and SAF roadmaps.
- The seventh Environmental Forum (29-30 May 2024) focused on potential ways of determining and tackling non-CO₂ effects of aviation, as well as building on existing work on ramping up of production and use of SAF, more stringent regulations on noise and CO₂ emissions of aircraft, and rapid developments in the field of unmanned air transport.

28. During this period ECAC Secretariat and EUROCONTROL have entered into a cooperation to develop and update a European map on sustainable aviation fuels, depicting national and regional regulatory measures as well as the status of SAF use at specific airports. The SAF-TG provided support and advice on its development. This European SAF map is published on both ECAC's and EUROCONTROL's public websites.¹

Action to be taken

29. The Plenary Session is invited to note the main achievements in the environmental domain for the period 2022-2024.

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¹ See <https://www.eurocontrol.int/shared/saf/>