



42nd Plenary (Triennial) Session (ECAC/42)

Strasbourg, 9-10 July 2024

Opening speech by the President of ECAC

Dear President of the ICAO Council,

Dear Director General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission,

Dear Directors General of Civil Aviation,

Dear colleagues and friends,

Good morning everyone,

(Acknowledgment and welcome)

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to welcome you today to the 42nd Triennial Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference. Three years ago, we had to meet online for the 39th ECAC Triennial Session, so I am very happy today to be able to welcome you here in Strasbourg, the place where ECAC held its inaugural session at the end of 1955, and where we have traditionally met for our triennial sessions.

It is impressive to see so many participants in this Triennial Session of ECAC: Directors General of ECAC Member States and of several other ICAO States, ICAO Council members, senior representatives of our sister organisations: ACAO, AFCAC and LACAC, as well as of other international and regional organisations, including the European Commission, EUROCONTROL, EASA, ICAO, to name only a few. I am also particularly pleased to welcome representatives of industry organisations, with whom ECAC has valuable cooperation links: ACI EUROPE and A4E to name only a few.

It is also a privilege for ECAC to welcome the President of the ICAO Council, Mr Salvatore Sciacchitano, as well as the Director General of Mobility and Transport of the European Commission.

Thank you all for joining us today in this important event for ECAC.

(since 2021...)

When we met online, three years ago, our industry was, like most other things in the world, going through unprecedented times. The desperate state of the industry, at one of its worst periods

of the COVID-19 crisis, was made even worse by the existence of a patchwork of travel restrictions, imposed in the majority of European States, as well as at global level. The uncertainty around the restrictions was in many ways worse than the restrictions themselves.

A great deal of our discussion in the early part of the triennium was about how to do better in a future crisis. But first, we had to think about the immediate question of the revitalisation of the industry in the face of the worst economic and financial crisis in the history of the sector.

“Restart, Recovery and Resilience” were then the motto of all our actions and efforts. Today, traffic levels are back to the pre-2020 levels in most of our Member States, and in some States traffic has even surpassed 2020 levels. This crisis seems far away, forgotten by many. But this crisis has had long-term impacts on our sector, and on the expectations of the citizens we serve, of the people who work in our sector. Economic, social and environmental sustainability are necessary not just for the growth, but for the survival of our sector.

During this crisis, we have demonstrated our ability to adapt to change, to be creative and to find innovative and efficient solutions to rapidly evolving challenges. **Coordination and harmonisation** of measures have been at the heart of our actions, in the face of a legacy of uncoordinated actions in Europe and elsewhere during the pandemic, and despite the many challenges to the international order and a rules-based approach to global aviation,

While our industry is a very competitive sector, it is also marked by a strong solidarity between States. All European organisations joined forces to support Ukraine, its aviation sector and our colleagues from the civil aviation administration since 2022. Solidarity is also visible through our contribution to ICAO initiatives such as ACT SAF or the multiple programmes of capacity building that we collectively or individually offer to other regions of the world.

(Conclusion)

I also strongly believe that in the years to come, we must continue to exert our combined efforts to address the challenges affecting the European civil aviation sector, and that together we shall continue to improve the passenger experience and to have both the public and political recognition of the added value of aviation to our economies. In this context, we need to confront the challenges of the day, whether on artificial intelligence, GNSS interference, cyber security, decarbonisation or innovative mobility, and seize the opportunities.

Aviation is global. It reaches everywhere. We must therefore work together to facilitate the smooth transportation of people and goods, and the social and economic benefits that this brings. ECAC remains committed to strengthening its cooperation with international

organisations dealing with civil aviation, with our sister regional organisations and other international partners.

It is now my pleasure to declare open ECAC's forty-second Plenary (Triennial) Session, and to invite the President of the ICAO Council to address our assembly.

- END -