

**Event: ECAC Triennial Session**

**Date: 9th July 2024**

**Speaker: Raúl Medina, EUROCONTROL Director General**

Good morning to everyone.

I am very **happy to be with you here** for this ECAC Triennial meeting and to see colleagues from around the world.

A couple of **reflections** on my side...

Aviation is **global** and it is also **complex**. A lot of the complexity comes because we have a **huge** range of partners involved in making aviation work. Regulators, airlines, airports, ATC, industry, the military, intergovernmental organisations, staff representatives, just to name a few.

All the different stakeholders bring their different views and requirements to the table **BUT sharing the same goal**, which is giving Society what they are demanding.

So we have a **real challenge**. To bring together all these different views and needs into **one coherent approach** that can deliver what is needed. At a **global level**, this is the role of the States and ICAO and at **European level**, this is mainly the role of ECAC, the European Commission and the European States. To **set the framework and the strategic vision**. To **guide** the whole process. And then for the technical organisations such as EUROCONTROL **to work with the stakeholders to deliver**.

For us to do our job, it's important **to be close** to the operational stakeholders but it's **not enough**. We also need to be **constantly connected** to our institutional partners. I am convinced that the closer we are with institutions like ICAO, ECAC, the European Commission, the **better service** we will be able to deliver, **the more** we will support our Member States and **the better** we will face all the challenges we have ahead.

Indeed we have some **major challenges** facing us in Europe today. The first one I would like to share with you is **capacity**, something many of you have probably noticed over the last few days, as the **weather disruptions** have put more and more pressure on our already limited airspace. Already this year in some parts of Europe,

we are nearly 20% above 2019 traffic. This is a **huge** challenge. **How do we cope** with this in the future?

The EUROCONTROL Network Manager has been working very closely with all the operational stakeholders over the past months to implement some solutions. But **we have to be honest** – with the situation in Europe as it is today, limited airspace, increasing flights, we have to work with all the stakeholders **very closely** to use our capacity in **the best possible way** if we want to continue to grow and to give society what they are demanding.

Of course growing the number of flights has to be done taking into account **sustainability** and the need to reach NetZero by 2050. As a **contribution** to that big challenge, we have just launched a new platform, FlyingGreen, that has been developed together with our stakeholders.

It's a kind of **big brain** to give decision makers data, information and analysis to facilitate this journey towards decarbonisation. For me, this is a really good example of **how EUROCONTROL has to work**: Providing solid and neutral expertise to our stakeholders so they can make the best decisions and do what they need to do.

We adopt a **similar approach** in other fields as well: **Innovation** or **ATM modernization** are also good examples of how working together is the best way to make the system progress.

All these activities are carried out in a spirit that is very important to me. **Humility** – because we know that we don't have all the answers. **Partnership** – because that is how I believe we can best make things happen.

As I said before, **aviation is global** so many of the tools and approaches that we are developing are relevant for other parts of the world as well. We work closely with the European Commission, EASA and ECAC, as part of what we call **Team Europe**, to align our work in the wider international space and see where we can make **a concrete contribution to global aviation**. *(For example, we often organise joint visits from non-ECAC states to see how our experiences can benefit other regions and also what we can collectively learn from them).*

Working in partnership, **within** and **beyond** the European boundaries, is something I have said since the start of my mandate that I want to strengthen and improve. Globally, next month we will be signing a **revised MoC with ICAO** which will strengthen our cooperation, and which will reflect today's reality with new activities such as drones, sustainability, cyber security, HAO, GNSS to name just a few.

Before I finish, I would like to thank ECAC for inviting me to speak here today. Like I said earlier, I see our partnership with ECAC as central to advancing aviation in Europe and more widely aviation across the world.

I will end with a personal reflection. As we look at the world today with the political challenges that we face, **maintaining understanding** between different people and **spreading global prosperity** has never been so important. Aviation has a central role to play in that. And EUROCONTROL is proud to support the **entire Aviation ecosystem** to help ensure what I said at the beginning: that aviation can deliver what today's society is demanding.

Thank you.