

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

Strasbourg, 9-10 July 2024

*(Vocatives)*

Dear colleagues and friends,

In my role as President of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission, I am truly honored to have the opportunity to join the 42nd Plenary Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference-ECAC in this wonderful city of Strasbourg. It is both a privilege and a pleasure to be part of this significant event. I cannot imagine a better setting than the European Parliament in Strasbourg for fruitful and constructive discussions among all ECAC member States. On behalf of the 22 member States of LACAC and myself, I would like to extend our warmest greetings to all participants here.

This is an excellent opportunity to reflect on and strengthen the long-standing tradition of collaboration between LACAC and ECAC. Since its establishment in 1955, ECAC has significantly influenced the development of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission. Our organization, founded in 1973, was inspired by the European Civil Aviation Conference, among others. This relationship was later formalized with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between our organizations in July 1998, followed by an addendum signed in October 2008.

The result of all these cooperative understandings can be summarized in two main points:

First, we developed a relationship of trust and mutual respect that translates into a valuable exchange of information between both organizations through their secretariats. This exchange has been fundamental for learning and adopting best practices.

As a second point, we have provided reciprocal support for candidacies to the ICAO Council, support that also extends to other sister regional aviation organizations. This has allowed us to contribute to good governance in ICAO by following principles of status quo and regional balances.

This unwritten agreement has undoubtedly allowed the four regional aviation organizations to position their candidates on the Council.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we understand that it is urgent and a priority to ratify the protocols that allow for the increase of the ICAO Council and the Air Navigation Commission. This commitment is reflected in the fact that only 5 LACAC member States remain to ratify these protocols, and several others are already well ahead in this process.

I also want to highlight that each LACAC candidacy to the Council does not represent just a candidate State. They represent rotation sub-groups, thus all LACAC member States. This particularity has given us the regional unity that has prevailed for years in this international election process.

The sister regional aviation organizations have started holding formal meetings to deepen mutual collaboration and that create a climate of collaboration in an environment different from ICAO meetings. I want to publicly thank the President of ECAC, Mr. Alessio Quaranta and the Executive Secretary of ECAC, Mrs. Patricia Reverdy, for promoting this initiative. It was precisely in Paris, in February 2023, at the ECAC headquarters, where the first meeting took place. We then met in Dubai and recently in Kigali. In January 2025, we will meet in Latin America for the fourth meeting of this initiative that has already gained strength and dynamism.

Dear friends, Europe has shown the world that regional integration is possible. In our field, air transport, they have achieved a high degree of integration worth emulating. LACAC has followed Europe's integration initiatives, implementing an Open Skies Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding that liberalizes air cargo up to the seventh freedom. This last memorandum already has the endorsement of 12 LACAC member States, and we hope that more States will join in the future.

The pandemic crisis left us with several lessons: to join forces, cooperate, and seek more resilience. The challenges of these times call us to deepen multilateralism, and from our region, we want to contribute to this process. Although it is evident that we still have a long way to go, we already have success in the air cargo market with the implementation of the MoU I just mentioned.

I would like to conclude my intervention by reiterating that you have the support of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission and this Presidency for all projects that promote the continuous development of air transport in a safe, efficient, and sustainable manner, as stated in the ECAC mission.

Thank you very much.