



## DIRECTORS GENERAL

### Directors General address the resilience of the air transport sector to crisis at the annual ECAC Forum



#### Paris and videoconference, 14 December

— The latest edition of the annual ECAC Forum of Directors General (FORUM/14) took place in Paris and by videoconference to consider the resilience of the air transport sector to crisis.

Forty-eight in-person and forty-five remote participants, representing 34 ECAC Member States, the European Commission, EUROCONTROL, ICAO, United States' Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), IATA, ACI EUROPE, Airlines for Europe, Airbus, Groupe ADP and the European Transport Workers' Federation, took part in the conference thanks to its hybrid format.

In the opening of the Forum, Donal Handley (EUROCONTROL) provided a series of updates and forecasts on air traffic in the European region. He also presented an analysis of the trends in the number of flights and movements, comparing data with the figures registered in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

This snapshot of the current air traffic situation set the scene for the next three sessions of the Forum, where participants discussed best practices and lessons learnt during the pandemic, and how the aviation sector could recover sustainably and build resilience for the future. The debates were facilitated and enhanced by input from guest speakers from the industry, Member States, the United States and the European Commission, as well as other European organisations.

The first session, moderated by Raúl Medina Caballero, Director General for Civil Aviation of Spain, and ECAC Focal Point for

Facilitation, looked at facilitation as a key and strategic factor in the coordination of future crises. Aviation was highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and decisions on related protection measures and travel restrictions were driven by public health authorities. The presenters shared experience of managing the balance between health imperatives and the needs of the sector, from the point of view of industry and regulators, including a view from the United States' Federal Aviation Administration. The Forum agreed that a balanced approach between health imperatives and the economic needs of the aviation industry, and coordination and cooperation between the respective decision-makers are needed to enable the recovery of the sector.

Moderated by Damien Cazé, Director General of Civil Aviation, France, and ECAC Focal Point for Economic matters, the second session focused on labour demands and skills retention. It was highlighted that regulatory authorities need to attract and retain staff and expertise, and that the difficulties created in this respect by the pandemic would have lasting effects. Participants also discussed the changes to be expected in the future labour demands of the aviation sector.

The last session, moderated by Rannia Leontaridi, Director General for Civil Aviation, United Kingdom, and ECAC Focal Point for Environment, addressed innovation and sustainability in the aviation

industry. Environmental concerns and passengers' perception of the public health risks associated with air travel are the main challenges aviation faces today. The Forum discussed the regulatory and industry actions needed to ensure the aviation sector remains innovative and sustainable to meet consumer and environmental demands. The session concluded on the need for what was summarised in the acronym "IPAC": the image of the sector, partnership between all stakeholders, actions speaking louder than words and communication to showcase the efforts.

Closing the Forum, ECAC President Alessio Quaranta (DGCA Italy) underlined that the regulatory and industry actions need to ensure aviation remains innovative and sustainable in order to meet public expectations, while maintaining passengers' confidence in air transport, and this through coordinated measures taken across the aviation sector. ■

## Inside

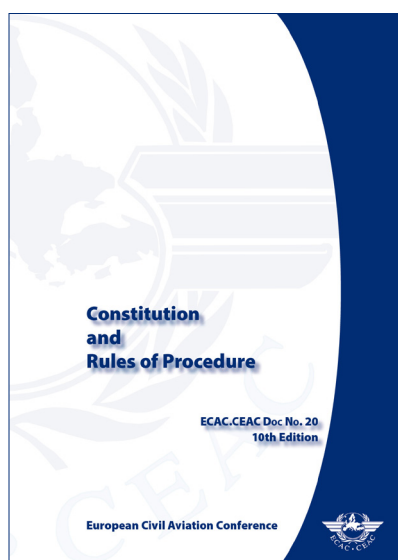
- 14<sup>th</sup> ECAC Directors General Forum
- 40<sup>th</sup> ECAC Plenary Session (Special)
- 157<sup>th</sup> meeting of Directors General
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## Amendments to the ECAC Constitution

**Paris and videoconference, 15 December** — Two amendments to the ECAC Constitution (ECAC Doc 20, 9<sup>th</sup> edition/December 2020) were adopted at the 40th ECAC (Special) Plenary Session to incorporate recent decisions taken by ECAC Directors General on the provisions for the Focal Point for Facilitation and Security, and those relating to associated bodies of ECAC.

The portfolio of the ECAC Focal Point for Facilitation and Security was split into two separate portfolios, given the growing importance of facilitation matters and the increasing volume of activities in this domain as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and focus on health matters.



## End of year review of ECAC's 2021 activities and the priorities for 2022

**Paris and videoconference, 15 December** — Directors General of Civil Aviation assembled for their 157<sup>th</sup> meeting (DGCA/157) to hear updates on recent ICAO and European developments, to discuss the preparations for the next ICAO Assembly (27 September – 7 October 2022), and to review the status of implementation of ECAC's activities in the current year and the work priorities for the next year in the following domains: external relations, safety and accident investigations, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), facilitation, security, environment, economic and legal matters.

ECAC President Alessio Quaranta (DGCA Italy) presented ECAC's activities on external relations, highlighting the relations with key international partners and regional organisations (ACAO, AFCAC, LACAC).

Srečko Janša (DGCA Slovenia) provided an update on the achievements of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and Damien Cazé (DGCA France) gave a presentation on the priorities for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (first semester of 2022), underlining that the main priority in the field of aviation would be decarbonisation. Damien Cazé also announced that an Aviation Summit dedicated to decarbonisation would be organised in Toulouse on 3-4 February 2022.

EASA Executive Director, Patrick Ky, briefed Directors General on the latest EASA initia-

tives on drones, and the Chief of Staff in the EUROCONTROL Director General's Office, Donal Handley, gave an update on traffic volumes and on recent developments within EUROCONTROL, including its support for SESAR and for environmental initiatives. ■



## New appointments

**DGCA/157, 15 December**



Directors General elected by acclamation **Mirjana Čizmarov** (DGCA Serbia) as a new member of the ECAC Coordinating Committee.

**Ionut Florian** (Romania) was appointed as the deputy chair of the Air Accident and Incident Investigation Group of Experts (ACC) for a first mandate of three years.



## Sixth ECAC monthly familiarisation webinar on basic knowledge on aviation and the environment

**8 December** — Becoming familiar with sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) was the objective of the sixth monthly ECAC familiarisation webinar on basic knowledge on aviation and the environment. 47 participants from 23 States and 6 organisations including the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) participated in the webinar.

The ICAO EUR/NAT office recalled the relevance of SAF among the basket of measures to reduce aviation's emissions, and provided an overview of ICAO's work to promote its use. The recent endorsement by the ICAO Council of a complete set of sustainability criteria for SAF is the first globally agreed sustainability approach for the use of renewable energy in an industry sector.

César Velarde, ECAC Climate Change and Capacity-Building Specialist, explained what SAF is and how it can be produced. Matteo Prussi, a specialist from the Polytechnic University of Turin who is highly involved in ICAO CAEP work in this field, addressed sustainability certification requirements applicable to SAF and how CO<sub>2</sub> savings are calculated. The vice-rector for international affairs and biomass expert, David Chiaramonti, also from the Polytechnic University of Turin, outlined the SAF potential in Europe and the main biomass challenges for large-scale production. The next webinar is scheduled on 2 February 2022.

## First meeting of the Sustainable Aviation Fuels Task Group

**3 December** — A new ECAC/EU ad hoc Sustainable Aviation Fuels Task Group (SAFTG) held its first meeting online at the beginning of December, co-chaired by the appointed co-rapporteurs, Inmaculada Gómez, nominated by the Spanish Aviation Safety Agency (AESA), and Magnus Gislev from the European Commission (DG MOVE).

The aim of SAFTG, which was created under the aegis of the European Aviation and Environment Working Group (EAEG) (Expanded), is to address the ECAC 2021 work programme's objective of developing guidance material to promote best practices and harmonised policies to support SAF promotion and supply in ECAC Member States. The group is composed of 25 experts appointed by 12 Member States, plus EUROCONTROL, the European Commission (DG MOVE and DG CLIMA), EASA and ECAC.

This first gathering launched the process for elaborating ECAC/EU guidance and agreeing on a work programme, which is expected to be decided at the next meeting scheduled on 20 January 2022.

## Environmental capacity-building webinar for DGCA Indonesia

**8 December** — The ECAC Secretariat delivered an environmental capacity-building webinar for staff from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation of Indonesia, under the existing cooperation agreement between both organisations.

At the request of DGCA Indonesia, the webinar addressed an important discussion topic for the next ICAO Assembly in 2022: Climate long-term aspirational goals (LTAG) for international aviation. The aim of the session was to provide background information and familiarise participants with the concepts and terminologies, such as net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (or carbon neutrality), carbon removals (or negative emissions), etc.

It also provided an overview of the aviation industry's net-zero roadmaps for 2050 and an update on European developments for promoting sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), such as Norway's existing SAF blending mandate,

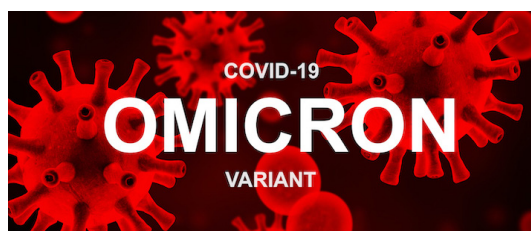
the ReFuel EU Aviation regulatory proposal, or the United Kingdom's 2021 consultation for the establishment of a SAF national mandate.

Attended by 31 DGCA Indonesia officials from 23 different departments, this

two-hour webinar allowed for a fruitful exchange of experience and information between the respective technical teams. This activity is expected to be followed by additional cooperation activities in the context of supporting the sustainable recovery of the aviation sector. ■







## European coordination on COVID-19

**3 December** — Directors General of Civil Aviation from ECAC Member States and representatives from EUROCONTROL, the European Commission and EASA shared the latest information on traffic developments in the ECAC region and on travel restrictions imposed by ECAC Member States, in particular since the COVID-19 Omicron variant was detected in Europe, at the 40<sup>th</sup> European coordination meeting on COVID-19 held virtually on 3 December. ■

## First ECAC conference on the use of artificial intelligence in behaviour detection

**13 December** — ECAC organised its first conference on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in behaviour detection. More than 40 aviation security experts and scientific researchers from ECAC Member States and partner States met remotely to explore the capabilities of AI in behaviour detection. Particular attention was paid to the status of scientific research initiatives on AI to further strengthen the implementation of behaviour detection in the domain.

The conference combined virtual panel discussions with presentations by experienced speakers from ECAC Member States and the European Commission's DG-CONNECT.

Topics discussed included the legal issues and limitations in the use of AI applied to behaviour detection in the aviation security context, the role of the human factor in the creation process of the AI systems, and ethics.

The participants unanimously agreed that even though the use of AI in behaviour detection procedures is still quite limited, it definitely has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of behaviour detection operations and should be explored further, together with a careful analysis of the possible challenges and risks. ■



Available on the ECAC website  
[www.ecac-ceac.org](http://www.ecac-ceac.org)



## What's on in January?

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|--------|--|
| 11-12/ | 54 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the Guidance Material Task Force (GMTF/54)                     |
| 13/    | 42 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Legal Task Force (LEGTF/42)                                |
| 18/    | 8 <sup>th</sup> meeting of the European coordination group on economic matters (ECG-ECO/8) |
| 20/    | 2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Sustainable Aviation Fuels Task Group (SAFTG/2)             |



Our mission is the promotion of the continued development of a safe, efficient and sustainable European air transport system

**ECAC Secretariat**  
3 bis, villa Emile Bergerat  
F-92522 Neuilly-sur-Seine  
France

Tel: +33 1 46 41 85 96

[www.ecac-ceac.org](http://www.ecac-ceac.org)  
[communications@ecac-ceac.org](mailto:communications@ecac-ceac.org)

