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Theme 2: Towards the proactive management of safety

Topic 2.1: Managing the transition to the implementation of an State Safety Programme (SSP) environment

THE EUROPEAN AVIATION SAFETY PROGRAMME

(Presented by Spain, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States²
and by the other States Members of the European Civil Aviation Conference³
and by EUROCONTROL)

SUMMARY

The sharing by the European Union and its Member States of roles and responsibilities in aviation safety has given rise to a need to develop a common strategy for implementing the equivalent of the ICAO State Safety Programme at the European Union level.

This paper describes the work under way to develop this regional safety programme.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 State Safety Programmes (SSP), by definition a Member State responsibility vis-à-vis ICAO, describe individual States' activities in ensuring a safe aviation industry. The Member States of the European Union (EU) have decided to exercise jointly the key competences regarding aviation safety. This has implications for the establishment of SSPs because in the EU aviation safety is not solely a State responsibility. The challenge in Europe has therefore been to implement the SSP requirements at both the national and the regional levels.

¹ English and Spanish versions provided by Spain.

² Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

³ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Iceland, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine.

1.2 Taking into account the many interactions between the components of the aviation safety system in the European Union, a "total system approach"⁴ has been adopted to streamline the applicable rules, to reduce safety gaps and overlaps, and to complement the current SMS requirements applicable to regulated organisations. The European Commission Regulation on "Authority Requirements" should contain elements that aim to provide a legal framework enabling the implementation of a safety programme at the European level.

2. HOW WILL THE EUROPEAN AVATION SAFETY PROGRAMME WORK?

2.1 The European Aviation Safety Programme will be the basis for setting high level safety objectives in support of an overarching Aviation Safety Strategy. The strategy will set out a clear aim to the European Union's objective of maintaining a high and uniform level of civil aviation safety in Europe. It will aim to move the European Union's management of safety towards a more systematic and proactive one which utilises the best safety management techniques.

2.2 The European Aviation Safety Programme will involve all stakeholders (Member States, the European Commission, EUROCONTROL and EASA), working in partnership in order to coordinate their activities and achieve the aim of the safety strategy. Also regulated organisations will be associated in the development of the programme.

2.3 Within the framework and mechanisms provided by the European Aviation Safety Programme, and on the basis of their respective competences, stakeholders will share data, knowledge and experience, identify principal safety concerns, establish safety priorities based on identified risks, plan and implement safety actions, and evaluate their effectiveness. To use efficiently the expertise available at State level a "pool of analysts" is being established to work on issues of pan-European Union concern. Safety issues will be raised by assessing the data obtained from this and other work. The expertise of the European Safety Strategy Initiative (ESSI)⁵ and its safety teams will be also called upon. The European Aviation Safety Programme will enable coordination of these various activities.

2.4 A European Aviation Safety Plan, containing concrete actions to address specific safety risks identified at the European Union level, will be developed from the activities in the European Aviation Safety Programme which will feed into and draw from SSPs. The Plan will contain mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of its actions (e.g. by means of safety performance indicators) and will be reviewed periodically according to the results of actions taken and to capture emerging issues.

2.5 Actions established in the European Aviation Safety Plan will be given serious consideration by Member States when developing their own State Safety Plans and the European Aviation Safety Plan will take into account Member States' Safety Plans. There may, however, be specific State actions that will not be included in the European Aviation Safety Plan.

⁴ The total system approach is based on the fact that the aviation system components – products, operators, crews, aerodromes, ATM, ANS, on the ground or in the air - are part of a single network.

⁵ The European Strategic Safety Initiative (ESSI) is a 10 year programme (2006-2016) aimed at promoting the highest common standards of safety in civil aviation and improving aviation safety in Europe, and for the European citizen worldwide, coordinated by EASA in line with the ICAO Global Safety Roadmap. It builds on a partnership with industry and involves more than 150 organisations involved. More information on: <http://www.easa.europa.eu/essi/>.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Implementation of the relevant ICAO SSP provisions within the European framework has represented a unique opportunity to further improve the way safety is managed by all EU Member States. By coordinating the regulation and activity needed at the regional level to manage aviation safety in the European Union, the European Aviation Safety Programme will enhance the control of safety risks.

3.2 This regional Programme will supplement and complement the State Safety Programmes, by describing the activities needed at the regional level. In deciding on actions to be included in a European Aviation Safety Plan, Member States, the Commission, EUROCONTROL and EASA will work in partnership using a risk assessment process applied at both the national and regional levels, in order to maintain a high level of civil aviation safety in Europe, and over time to drive it still higher.

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