

**EC-ICAO SYMPOSIUM ON REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN CIVIL
AVIATION
10-11 April 2008**

OPENING REMARKS BY DANIEL CALLEJA

Dear Secretary General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for the European Commission to host this Symposium together with ICAO, and I am delighted to see that the subject that we will be discussing over the next two days, “regional organisations in civil aviation”, has attracted so much interest.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Chérif, the Secretary General of ICAO, and all his staff that have supported and collaborated closely with us from the outset in the organisation of this event. I fully realise that this represented a lot of work for all concerned, but I think it is fair to say that we have worked well together to bring this about.

I should also underline that this is a joint initiative between the European Commission and ICAO. As such, it is one of a growing number of areas of cooperation between our two organisations. Indeed, this event follows cooperative initiatives and arrangements in the fields of aviation safety, security, environmental protection, and ATM, which have been developed together over recent years. All of them are a living evidence of our day-to-day commitment to ICAO, which is equally highlighted by the establishment of our Office here in Montreal.

Given the importance of the relationship between the European Community and ICAO, it is quite fitting that this Symposium should be focusing on the contribution of regional organisations to achieving the objectives and standards of ICAO. Although the European Community represents a very ambitious and extensive form of regional cooperation, it is by no means alone. Precisely because we are all observing a trend towards the establishment of a growing number of regional civil aviation bodies and initiatives around the world, we felt it important to draw this phenomenon to the attention of the international civil aviation community, by organising this Symposium together with ICAO.

Ladies and gentlemen,

For over a decade, the European Union is enjoying the benefits of a single internal, regional market for air transport, where national barriers to market access have been entirely removed. It is important that in panel 2 tomorrow, we will hear about various initiatives underway in other regions of the world with a similar aim. What sets the European Community approach apart is that this process of removing barriers to air

services has been pursued hand-in-hand with the implementation of common rules at regional level in areas such as competition, safety, security, and the environment. We firmly believe that this parallel process of removing barriers and creating a level playing field through common regulations is absolutely essential and we would like to encourage others to follow this approach.

In the field of safety, an important focus of this afternoon's first panel, the European Community and its Member States have established a single European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). I am very happy that Patrick Goudou, EASA's Executive Director, will participate as a panellist today. We believe that regional safety oversight provides a key solution to the difficulties faced by many countries around the world to develop, manage and run an effective safety oversight system and thereby comply with ICAO standards and improve safety for all. But again, this Symposium is not about Europe – I am therefore delighted that representatives from regional safety oversight organisations from around the world are here to share their experiences with us.

Regional cooperation is often linked to safety, but there is no reason why it could not play a useful role in other areas of aviation. One other such area could be ATM.

I am sure all of you will know about the Single European Sky, which will remove national frontiers in ATM, make the organisation and management of the European airspace more efficient, reduce the environmental impact, and improve safety. I am therefore very happy that David McMillan, the Director-General of EUROCONTROL is also with us. His organisation plays an important role in the implementation of the Single European Sky, and it is working closely with the European Commission and all the air transport stakeholders to make it a reality.

The establishment of regional civil aviation bodies with regulatory and/or executive tasks and responsibilities should not be seen as a threat to the global framework for civil aviation, but as an opportunity to reinforce it and to make it work better. Just like the European Community, regional bodies can facilitate the uniform implementation of international standards across an entire region, by developing common regional standards that are in line with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. On the economic front, regional initiatives to liberalise air transport can contribute to the goal we all share to make global air transport services competitive, efficient and affordable.

In short, we believe that regional organisations can make a significant contribution to achieving the fundamental goals of ICAO and the Chicago Convention, whether by improving safety and security, or by removing barriers different to air transport services.

This being said; it is also clear that the regional governance of civil aviation can give rise to many, sometimes complex legal and political issues. These will be tackled tomorrow by our third panel, in a discussion to which I am personally very much looking forward.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before we start our work, I would like to thank all of you for attending this event, with a special word of thanks to those of you who have travelled from afar.

My sincere gratitude also goes to our three distinguished moderators Nancy Graham, Brian Havel and Michael Milde, and to all our equally distinguished panellists.

We are all looking forward to the panel discussions, but we also want to encourage as much interaction with the audience as possible during each of the questions and answer sessions. From the program, you will see that this is not just an obligatory remark: we have set aside a full hour per panel for this purpose. At the end of tomorrow's proceedings, it will be my pleasure to chair the concluding session, where we will bring together the three moderators, to develop our conclusions.

Of course, it is my hope that this important Symposium will not be a one-shot event – in fact, we expect that it will allow ICAO, its Contracting States, the European Community as well as other regional organisations to work ever more closely to facilitate and support the development of regional civil aviation bodies worldwide, and to ensure that their important contribution to the international civil aviation framework and their status within it are fully recognised.

I wish you a highly stimulating and productive Symposium.