



**Opening remarks by the  
Secretary General of the  
International Civil Aviation Organization  
Dr. Fang Liu  
to the 2019 EUR/NAT Meeting  
of Directors General of Civil Aviation**

*(Paris, France – 19 March 2019)*

1. It is always a pleasure to visit Europe, and in particular ICAO's Paris office to meet with all of you.
2. Please let me take this opportunity to officially welcome Silvia to her new responsibilities as the EUR/NAT Office Regional Director, and to assure her and her team of the determined support and cooperation of everyone at ICAO Headquarters.
3. I also wish to express my appreciation that this meeting has been organized early enough this year to permit our consideration of some 40th Assembly objectives, and ICAO's 75th Anniversary this year, in addition to updates on the current EUR/NAT work programme.
4. These will be covered in separate presentations later in our agenda.
5. To begin today, I'd like to provide some global and regional perspectives on the state of air transport, both globally and here in your EUR/NAT region.
6. From a global standpoint, aviation presently connects some 4.1 billion passengers and 56 million tonnes of freight each year, on more than 37 million flights.
7. These operations are carried-out on a fleet of roughly 2,600 commercial aircraft worldwide, and to-and-from just under 4,000 airports.

8. One hundred and seventy-three Air Navigation Service Providers help air transport to safely and efficiently manage this global traffic, to the tune of 100,000 daily flights carrying some ten million passengers.
9. These operations permit aviation to transcend oceans and borders, and ultimately to connect peoples and businesses all over the world.
10. This is clearly attested-to by the fact that over half of the world's international tourists reach their destinations by air today, and we should appreciate that all of this activity contributes tremendously to global peace, prosperity, and sustainable socio-economic development.
11. This point is backed up by the fact that air transport directly and indirectly supports 2.7 trillion dollars in global GDP, while providing jobs and careers to more than 62 million people.
12. Here in Europe, it's important first to recognize that you benefit from one of the most liberalized air transport regimes in the world.
13. This helps explain why half of all the international passengers worldwide are carried by European airlines, and how your regions ranks second in the world in total Revenue Passenger Kilometres (RPKs) flown.
14. From an economic standpoint, this traffic today supports 11.9 million jobs and 860 billion dollars in European GDP.
15. Related North Atlantic Region figures are estimated at 670 billion dollars in GDP, and 4.6 million jobs.
16. ICAO has been making the point for several years now that steadily increasing flight and passenger volumes will generate significant risks, and that air transport growth must be effectively managed to mitigate those risks.
17. Current forecasts indicate that both air passenger and freight traffic volumes will more than double by 2035, characterized by 4.3 per cent and 3.9 per cent annual growth rates, respectively.

18. We should keep in mind in this context that, under the Chicago Convention, each State maintains the primary responsibility for its own aviation development.
19. This reminds us of the important role of having national development plans and strategies which meaningfully incorporate aviation development priorities, whether for physical infrastructure, system modernization, or human resources development.
20. And it is especially important that these national priorities be aligned with the targets and timelines presented in our ICAO Global Plans for Aviation Safety (GASP), Security (GASeP), and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency (GANP).
21. Last May, we benefitted from a detailed exploration of the role to be played by the new ICAO Global Security Plan going forward, during the EUR/NAT Regional Conference on this topic.
22. That event provided you with valuable insights into the GASeP's principles, aims and objectives, whether in the context of Assembly Resolution A39-18 or UN Security Council resolution 2309.
23. It also touched upon the important role ICAO plays in driving international counter-terrorism priorities.
24. As you continue to socialize the Plan and its Roadmap with all relevant security stakeholders, please keep in mind the major aviation security event now being planned for 18-19 September at ICAO HQ, just before our 40th Assembly.
25. The State letter regarding this Global Aviation Security Symposium (AVSEC2019) was published last Thursday, and kindly note that it will feature an Industry Engagement Day on 20 September which will include workshops that draw from the preceding panel discussions on aviation security best practices.
26. Looking now to Air Navigation matters, current gaps between network capacity and demand here in Europe are estimated to be costing your States some two million jobs and 96.7 billion Euros in regional GDP.
27. In addition, the majority of this loss is being felt in the general economy which relies so strongly on aviation connectivity, and not by the aviation sector directly.

28. With respect to aviation safety, ICAO continues to commend the EUR/NAT Region on the aviation safety performance being achieved here, even as your traffic figures continue to rise.
29. The steady downward trend of accidents involving scheduled commercial operations is a clear example of the progress you're achieving.
30. Otherwise I would wish to recall that the European Aviation Safety Group has reported that less than 40 percent of its affiliated States have defined their State Safety Programme implementation plan, and that none have fully implemented their SSP to-date.
31. We should acknowledge together that these State Safety Programmes are an essential component of an effective aviation safety posture for your States, and that related implementation gaps must be addressed to achieve truly effective, and GASP-compliant, national Safety Management Systems (SMS).
32. Fortunately, the 2020-2022 edition of the ICAO GASP will be a very helpful tool as you continue along this path to effective and sustainable safety management in Europe.
33. On the Environmental front, there has been some excellent CORSIA-related progress achieved by the ICAO Council in the last few weeks.
34. Agreement was reached at its most recent Session for the operationalization of the Council's new CORSIA Technical Advisory Body (TAB), a group of experts nominated by States with a mandate to make recommendations regarding eligible emissions units for use by participating airlines.
35. The Council also approved the Emissions Units Criteria (EUC) which will be used by the TAB to undertake the assessment of emissions unit programmes, and to subsequently make recommendations on eligible units.
36. An open invitation will be issued on the ICAO CORSIA website encouraging applications by emissions unit programmes for consideration by the TAB, and NGOs and other public bodies are also invited to comment on these submissions.

37. Moving now to the Economic Development of air transport, the capability to continually improve cost efficiencies and attract foreign investment could be much more restrained in a EUR/NAT air transport market characterized by slower rates of growth.
38. Besides these updates and insights relating to ICAO's Strategic Objectives, I also wished to highlight that during our 75th Anniversary this year ICAO is focusing on aviation's future as well as its past.
39. In February for example we signed a new MOU with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, better known as ICANN, which will see our two agencies exploring new ways of securing digital communications in the aviation sector.
40. With everything we're hearing today about the increasing connectivity of the 'Internet of Things', it is beholden upon ICAO to ensure that all aviation stakeholders can take advantage of cost-effective digital communication links which are fully secured.
41. Establishing secure identities for of all senders and receivers is critical to this outcome, and this new ICANN agreement permits us to explore how ICAO could feasibly serve as a single-source 'digital identity trust-broker' for global aviation.
42. Preliminary analysis has illustrated that this type of single-source identity certification framework can generate significant cost savings and security benefits for operators, manufacturers, suppliers... basically anyone wishing to exchange information in a globally and digitally connected aviation network.
43. As we begin to explore this new trust framework, we are also focusing intently on the role and importance of innovation more generally in aviation, and how many new developments are poised to evolve air transport in fundamental ways in the years ahead.
44. You will have noted for instance in our State Letter of 21 February of this year that we have sought your State's assistance in launching three new global innovation competitions targeting three youth demographics, and additionally that we have focused this year's World Aviation Forum and its associated technology fair squarely upon the topic of innovation.

45. I would encourage all EUR/NAT States to familiarize themselves with and take advantage of these initiatives, because none of us can afford to be relying on old knowledge and practices while the world and our sector are changing so quickly all around us.
46. This year's Innovation IWAF will also be focused on the related challenges we face as aviation regulators and standards-setters, for instance to ensure new entrants in air transport are being effectively engaged and not impeded by our processes and requirements.
47. All of these topics, and many others such as new applications for drones and Artificial Intelligence in air transport, or hypersonic and sub-orbital flight, will be covered at these upcoming events, and I would also encourage you to visit our new 75th anniversary Future Aviation website to learn more.
48. Looking now to the specific items on our agenda at this meeting, a first key objective will be to present you with a review of the progress being made on the EUR/NAT 2017-2019 work programme.
49. And referring back to my earlier comments on the GASP and the GAsEP, there are also some items ahead of us on how to strengthen State safety and security oversight capabilities, as well as some specific suggestions for your review aimed at enhancing EUR/NAT Air Traffic Management safety.
50. More generally, we should continuously be seeking here to ensure the successful implementation of the ICAO and EUR/NAT Work Programmes, in close coordination with all pertinent regional organizations, and in ways which optimize all related synergies and resource allocation.
51. I'm confident that through cooperative approaches which leverage the incredible amount of experience and expertise represented in this room today, we can make some much needed progress at this meeting.
52. I also wish to advise you that, for the preparation of the budget for the 2020-2022 triennium, the Secretariat had proposed three scenarios and the Council provided guidelines and requested the next triennium budget to be developed on Zero Nominal Growth.
53. To do so they made use of our 2019 assessments as their baseline for how we will continue to provide leadership and pursue activities and programmes for our Member States' benefit.

54. The Council has also emphasized that the budget should reinforce the role and mission of our Regional Offices, and the Secretariat will be presenting final estimates for its consideration at its next Session.
55. On that note I wish you all a productive and engaging meeting.
56. Thank you.