



## DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION-MIDDLE EAST REGION

### Third Meeting (DGCA-MID/3) (Doha, Qatar, 27-29 April 2015)

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#### Agenda Item 6: Aviation Security and Facilitation

##### RECOGNITION OF EQUIVALENCE AND ONE-STOP SECURITY

*(Presented by Qatar)*

#### SUMMARY

The ICAO High-Level Conference on Aviation Security concluded that mutual recognition and one-stop security arrangements contribute to a more sustainable aviation security system. Clear actions should be adopted to implement these principles.

Proposed action by the Meeting is in paragraph 4.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The ICAO High-level Conference on Aviation Security held in September 2012 in Montreal concluded that mutual recognition of equivalence and one-stop security can contribute significantly to aviation security sustainability. The Conference also endorsed three principles of international aviation security cooperation:

- a) respecting the spirit of cooperation defined in bilateral and/or multilateral Air Services Agreements;
- b) recognizing equivalent security measures; and
- c) focusing on security outcomes.

1.2 Despite the existence of two Standards in Annex 17 - Security (4.4.2 and 4.5.4) as well as a section dedicated to one-stop security in the ICAO Aviation Security Manual (Doc 8973 – Restricted), the adoption of one-stop security arrangements is still slow and limited.

#### 2. NEED FOR A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND ONE-STOP SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 According to Doc 8973, one-stop security is the process whereby passengers and cabin baggage and/or hold baggage are not rescreened at a connecting airport if they have been satisfactorily screened at their airport of origin (Section 11.5.15 and Appendix 28). This one-stop security arrangement is based on the recognition of the equivalent security measures applied by the airport of origin by the State of the transfer airport.

2.2 Existing experience can demonstrate the direct benefits of such recognition of equivalent measures and one-stop security arrangements. The State of Qatar has been operating a unilateral recognition of equivalence programme since September 2010, based on the assessment of screening standards at certain specified and identified airports of origin. The programme consists of a comprehensive joint inspection of the airport of origin by staff from both the regulator and the screening authority to determine the equivalence of screening standards. At all times the joint inspections focus on security outcomes when determining whether equivalence is present or not. As a result of the programme approximately six million transfer passengers per year are exempted from the need to be rescreened through transfer screening points at Hamad International Airport.

2.3 Another example is the European Union (EU), where the one-stop security concept has been in application within the EU for 10 years. It allows, yearly, 81 million passengers and their baggage to transfer at EU airports without being re-screened. This has shortened connecting times (in average 40 minutes for intra-EU flights) for passengers, allowing for a more efficient coordination of traffic at hub airports but also reduced delays or missed connections. Beyond the obvious facilitation for passengers, it has also allowed European airports to focus their resources and efforts on passengers and items which have not been screened already to an equivalent level.

2.4 Considering the past experience of States, it appears that the requirements for collaborative and continuous validation processes between States have often been interpreted as a systematic comparison looking for identical security measures, without consideration of the outcomes of the security measures in place or a proper risk assessment. This approach has indeed proven to be a very burdensome and resource-intensive exercise. It took, for example, more than five years for the EU to come to a one-stop security arrangement with the United States.

### **3. ALLOWING FOR UNILATERAL RECOGNITION OF EQUIVALENCE**

3.1 The ICAO AVSEC Panel convened a Task Force of the ICAO Working Group on Guidance Material and directed this Task Force to develop guidance material on unilateral recognition of equivalence to be considered for inclusion in Doc 8973. The Task Force consisted of representatives from ICAO, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Qatar, Singapore, USA, IATA and ACI. The deliberations of the Task Force resulted in guidance material that will be submitted to the AVSEC Panel meeting (13-17 April 2015) for inclusion in Doc 8973. The guidance will, amongst other things, allow for non-reciprocal (unilateral) recognition by one State of the aviation security measures of another State.

3.2 On the basis of a State's own risk and threat assessment and verification of the other State's security regime and measures implemented, a State could recognise the security measures applied by other States, allowing for passengers and/or baggage from these States not to be re-screened.

3.3 This unilateral recognition process should however remain collaborative with the "recognised" State allowing for the collection of the necessary information and documents. In addition, recognition of equivalence will always be reversible (i.e. recognition may be suspended), for instance in case of changes to the risk and threat situation or in the measures applied at the airport of origin.

3.4 This concept of a collaborative process leading to unilateral (or bilateral) recognition is consistent with Recommended Practice 2.4.9 in Annex 17, which states:

*Recommendation – Each Contracting State should consider entering into collaborative arrangements in order to increase the sustainability of the aviation security system by avoiding unnecessary duplication of security controls. The arrangement should be based on verification of equivalence of the security outcome ensured by the application of effective security controls at origin.*

3.5 As States are increasingly concerned with the security of in-bound flights, unilateral recognition of equivalence will allow focusing security resources on passengers/bags/aircraft/cargo requiring more attention, while facilitating the travel of passengers from countries applying equivalent security measures. Qatar and IATA, as parties who have helped to develop this concept, believe that this approach is fully in line with a more risk-based security concept, avoiding unnecessary re-screening of already secured passengers, bags, aircraft and cargo, while concentrating available resources on higher risk or vulnerable areas.

#### **4. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

4.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) as part of a risk-based aviation security strategy, encourage MID Region Contracting States to recognize equivalent security measures of other States to focus security efforts where they are most needed; and
- b) encourage MID Region States and airports to consider one-stop security arrangements for passengers and baggage in the future planning of airport infrastructure and the associated operational processes.

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