



WORKING PAPER

FIFTH MEETING OF THE ALLPIRG/ADVISORY GROUP

(Montreal, 23 – 24 March 2006)

Agenda Item 3: Aviation Safety

DEVELOPMENTS FOR IMPROVED SAFETY LEVELS IN ATM

(Presented by the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation – EUROCONTROL)

SUMMARY

The European Strategic Safety Action Plan (SSAP) has addressed areas of Air Traffic Management (ATM) safety requiring urgent, high-priority attention. A number of inhibitors to progress have been identified, which continue to need collective action by States, including:

- The establishment of national safety bodies on a viable and credible basis, properly empowered, and equipped with sufficient resources to discharge their roles competently and effectively.
- The availability of training in the disciplines of safety management and safety regulation to enable a harmonised and high standard of safety expertise to be applied throughout the ATM industry.
- The lack of an open and just reporting environment – a “Just Culture”.

ATM safety has progressed considerably over recent years, but success in addressing these issues is essential if the safety performance of the industry is to be protected in the context of increasing traffic growth and ATM network complexity.

By the time of the ALLPIRG/5 meeting, some of these issues will have been considered by the DGCA Conference on a Global Strategy for Aviation Safety.

Action by ALLPIRG/5 is in paragraph 6.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In 2004, the European Strategic Safety Action Plan (SSAP) was established by EUROCONTROL as an industry-wide response to the accidents at Überlingen and Milan (Linate). The Plan focused emphasis on eight areas of Air Traffic Management (ATM) safety requiring urgent, high-

priority attention and included monitoring, at State level, the implementation of formal safety systems, practices and processes. In many areas, more fundamental needs for the development and enhancement of ATM safety functions have been revealed.

1.2 SSAP much improved ATM safety in ECAC States, but a sustained effort is required to maintain momentum, particularly in light of the traffic growth and the safety challenges presented by SES. Hence a new European ATM (proactive) Safety Programme has been launched over the next 3 years

2. OPERATION OF NATIONAL FUNCTIONS IN ATM SAFETY

2.1 EUROCONTROL has been working with both national ATM service-provider organisations (ANSP's) and safety regulatory authorities to develop formal approaches to ATM safety required to protect the safety performance of the industry in the context of increasing traffic growth and ATM network complexity.

2.2 Nevertheless, SSAP studies have identified political and institutional factors that continue to represent inhibitors to progress. Specifically, national safety bodies need to be established on a viable and credible basis, properly empowered, and equipped with sufficient resources to discharge their roles competently and effectively. In turn, this requires appropriate priority being given by States to their establishment, funding and resourcing. These factors affect both service-provision and safety regulatory functions.

2.3 **ICAO is therefore recommended** to urge States to give priority attention to the establishment and effective operation of their ATM safety management and safety regulatory functions.

3. LEVELS OF ATM SAFETY EXPERTISE

3.1 One key aspect affecting the development of safety functions is the application to national safety tasks of sufficient qualified expert safety personnel. The increased funding and resourcing required in ATM safety is needed to support the creation of sufficient manpower levels to sustain the functions, but also to ensure that safety professionals are fully trained.

3.2 The availability of training mechanisms has been identified as one barrier to further progress which can be addressed through collective action. EUROCONTROL is developing a range of courses in the disciplines of safety management and safety regulation to enable a harmonised and high standard of safety expertise to be applied throughout the ATM industry. The first courses are already being delivered, with a high demand and a good response from Member States. This cooperation at regional level permits an optimum use of scarce training resources as well as opportunities for harmonisation and sharing of experience.

3.3 **ICAO is urged** to support the development of sufficient expertise levels in the industry through formal training in ATM safety issues and, through regional cooperation, promote collective means to optimise the effectiveness of training provision.

4. SAFETY REPORTING – THE NEED FOR A “JUST CULTURE”

4.1 Continuous efforts on safety improvements must come from, *inter alia*, lessons learned from accidents and incidents, and the mitigation of identified risks. This is only possible if a

comprehensive system of occurrence reporting is in place. In turn, the effectiveness of reporting is totally dependent on a conducive reporting environment – a “Just Culture” – defined as *“a culture in which front line operators are not punished for actions or decisions that are commensurate with their experience and training, but also a culture in which violations and wilful destructive acts by front line operators or others are not tolerated”*.

4.2 Current work with Member States has shown that lack of full and open reporting continues to pose a considerable barrier to further safety progress in many areas. Major impediments are a fear of prosecution through the continued existence of punitive legislation, and a lack of appropriate confidentiality, leading to public access to details and names. Agreement by States is required on a renewed initiative to overcome these obstacles.

4.3 **ICAO is therefore urged** to develop further measures to enable the implementation of a just-culture reporting environment to facilitate the reporting of ATM occurrences.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 EUROCONTROL is working with other regions and ICAO to promote the introduction of harmonised, formal and robust approaches to ATM safety, including the implementation by service-providers of Safety Management Systems, and in regulation through harmonisation of safety requirements.

5.2 However, inhibitors to progress have been identified and require collective action by States with the support of ICAO. In particular, the provision of national safety functions and bodies that are adequately empowered and financially supported, together with the provision of adequate levels of expertise, are vital to respond to future demands on aviation safety.

5.3 It is essential that safety can be properly and accurately measured. Effective occurrence reporting systems are an essential pre-requisite to informed safety decision-making, but are critically dependent upon an open and just reporting environment – a “Just Culture”.

6. ACTION BY ALLPIRG

6.1 The ALLPIRG/5 Meeting is invited to:

- a) request ICAO to urge States to give priority attention to the establishment and effective operation of their ATM safety management and safety regulatory functions;
- b) recommend that ICAO support the development of sufficient expertise levels in the industry through formal training in ATM safety issues and, by cooperation through regional bodies, promote collective means to optimise the effectiveness of training provision;
- c) strongly urge ICAO to develop further measures to enable the implementation of a just-culture reporting environment to facilitate the reporting of ATM occurrences.