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Международная
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Ref.: EC 6/3 – 20/55

15 April 2020

Subject: Speedy authorization of “repatriation flights” during the COVID-19 pandemic period

Action required: a) Note the information;
b) Expedite the approval process of “repatriation flights” as requested in paragraph 4

Sir/Madam,

I have the honour to refer to State letters 2020/46 (Ref. EC 6/3-20/46, 18 March 2020) and 2020/47 (Ref. AN 13/35 -20/47, 20 March 2020), advising on various measures to be taken by Member States in light of the increasing restrictions on air traffic being introduced by many States to contain the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to the implementation of the measures mentioned in these State letters, several States have organized special flights for the exclusive purpose of repatriating their nationals and other eligible persons from foreign countries through operations by State aircraft, humanitarian flights or chartered commercial flights. These flights, which are organized by States for the sole purpose of repatriating their nationals and other eligible persons from other States, with no embarkation or disembarkation of other passengers for “remuneration or hire”, could be designated as “repatriation flights”. This would ensure that necessary authorizations for the entry, departure and transit of aircraft carrying out such “repatriation flights” are granted expeditiously.

As regards “repatriation flights” carried out on a commercial basis, I wish to remind States of their obligation under Article 5 of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation* (Chicago Convention) of 1944 on privilege of foreign aircraft engaged in non-scheduled commercial flights to carry passengers to/from their territories, subject to conditions imposed by States. As a result of the extraordinary circumstances caused by COVID-19, States are encouraged to review their authorization procedures with a view to granting speedy approval to such “repatriation flights,” in line with the relevant provisions relating to international non-scheduled flights found in Section F of Chapter 2 to Annex 9 – *Facilitation* to the Chicago Convention.

Considering the above, I wish to invite States to facilitate the operations of all designated “repatriation flights” during the COVID-19 pandemic by reviewing their authorization procedures and exercising flexibility in their approaches for granting all necessary authorizations for the entry, departure and transit of aircraft carrying out such operations whether by State aircraft, humanitarian flights or chartered commercial flights.

States are also encouraged to share with ICAO any information on the measures taken and any difficulties encountered during this period as regards the authorization and operation of “repatriation flights” described above.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Fang Liu
Secretary General