International Civil Aviation Organization

Tenth Meeting of the ICAO Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Workgroup (APSAR/WG/10)

Siem Reap, Cambodia, 27 – 30 May 2025

Agenda Item 2: Review Outcomes of Related Meetings

ICAO EUR/APAC SAR WORKSHOP 2024

(Presented by Chairperson of APSAR/WG)

SUMMARY

This paper provides information on the ICAO EUR/APAC SAR Workshop 2024 held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 2 to 4 October 2024.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   Noting the positive feedback from the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS) online workshop conducted during APSAR/WG/7 in 2022, the meeting had called for a further workshop or seminar to be conducted. Consequently, ICAO Asia/Pacific (APAC) Regional Office coordinated with the ICAO European and North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Regional Office to conduct a joint in-person workshop, supplemented by tabletop exercise to strengthen inter-regional cooperation.

1.2   The primary objectives of the meeting and workshop were to strengthen cooperation between the EUR and APAC Regions on SAR implementation and to assess States' readiness in applying the GADSS, focusing on Autonomous Distress Tracking (ADT). A tabletop exercise on ADT and the Location of an Aircraft in Distress Repository (LADR) was included to facilitate discussions.

2. **DISCUSSION**

2.1   The ICAO EUR/APAC SAR Workshop 2024 was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 2 to 4 October 2024, organized jointly by the ICAO EUR/NAT and APAC Regional Offices and hosted by the State Civil Aviation Authority of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The event welcomed 100 participants from 37 States, along with representatives from multiple international organizations including ICAO, EUROCONTROL, Cospas-Sarsat, International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF), AIRBUS and SAR training entities like Joint Aviation Authorities Training Organization (JAA TO), SAR International, IAMSAR Solutions.

2.2   The event was opened by Mr. Elmin Mammadov (Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan), Mr. Elkhan Nahmadov (Deputy Regional Director, ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Office), Mr. Takata Hiroyuki (Regional Officer, Air Traffic Management, ICAO APAC Regional Office), Mr. Tai Kit (Chairperson of APSAR/WG) and Mr. Nikola Sarancic [Chairperson of the European SAR Taskforce (EUR SAR/TF)].

GADSS and Implementation of ADT

2.3   The workshop participants were provided with information on the GADSS, with a focus on ADT and the LADR.

2.4   The participants noted information provided by the ICAO Secretariat regarding a single global database of contact details, the ICAO OPS Control (OPS CTRL) Directory, for all Area Control Centres (ACCs), Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs), and aircraft operators. Access to the LADR would be provided through the OPS CTRL Directory. The ICAO Secretariat also highlighted on Amendment 19 to ICAO Annex 12, applicable as of 28 November 2024, related to OPS CTRL Directory and LADR.

2.5   The workshop participants were briefed on the regional preparedness for implementation of ADT in the EUR and APAC regions. The presentation noted a low level of ADT readiness, as revealed by the survey, with only 14% of States having registered a State Focal Point in the ICAO OPS CTRL Directory. The need was recognized for developing response procedures for ADT notifications and for States to organize training for relevant SAR personnel, ATS personnel, and flight dispatchers to enhance understanding of ADT notifications and ELT(DT) alerts.

2.6   Information on ADT equipage in aircraft from the aircraft manufacturer's view (Airbus) was presented at the workshop, with a focus on inadvertent ELT(DT) activations, root cause analysis, and mitigation actions launched by Airbus.

Location of Aircraft in Distress Repository

2.7   EUROCONTROL, the developer and host of LADR, informed participants that LADR had been operational since 10 June 2024 and that the ICAO State Letter had been sent on 25 June 2024 to inform States on the operational status of LADR. Information on the registration process for OPS CTRL Directory and LADR were also shared with participants.

2.8   EUROCONTROL updated that the enhanced version of LADR (version 4.00), was in its Pre-Operational (Pre-Ops) phase. As the developer and host, EUROCONTROL had established its commitment to the development of LADR based on the following key principles:

    a)   LADR based on the ICAO Doc 10150 specifications;

    b)   24/7 technical support provided to LADR-accredited users; and

    c)   Global coverage and a global interoperable system approach.

2.9   EUROCONTROL presented the functionality of LADR to workshop participants, highlighting forthcoming non-functional enhancements. The presentation emphasized plans for technical testing with contributors of ADT alerts, adjustments based on user preferences, and the development of a Business-to-Business (B2B) services prototype for users.

Cospas Sarsat's Support for GADSS

2.10   The Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat provided additional information to the GADSS project. The participants were informed on the status of the ELT(DT) the Autonomous Distress Tracking device developed by the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme in support of GADSS. First-generation ELT(DT) was declared Full Operational Capability (FOC) by the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme on 1 January 2023, and the Second-Generation ELT(DT) FOC was declared by the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme on 1 January 2024. Airbus, Boeing, Bombardier, and Embraer (OEMs) had selected the ELT(DT) to satisfy ICAO Annex 6 Standard and Recommended Practices (SARPs) related to GADSS implementation, and European operational requirements (see ED-237). It

was shared that ELT(DT) data would be automatically distributed to SAR Point of Contacts (SPOCs), as well as placed in the ICAO LADR, where it would be made available to ATS units, aircraft Operators and RCCs that had subscribed to the LADR. The workshop recalled the Cospas-Sarsat RCC handbook on distress alert messages for RCCs, SPOC (C/S G.007) containing guidance on SIT 185 messages (messages from MCCs to RCCs) and on how to handle 406 MHz beacon alerts, available on the Cospas-Sarsat website.

2.11   Information about Galileo's and the EU's contribution to SAR was shared by the European Commission. The Workshop noted that in 2023 Galileo participated in 1,076 SAR events, and 3,109 people were rescued (8 every day). The Galileo services include Open Service (OS), Public Regulated Services (PRS), Navigation Message Authentication (OSNMA), High Accuracy Service (HAS) and Integrity Navigation (I/NAV) Message improvement. The workshop participants also noted with interest the planned evolutions regarding Remote Beacon Activation and two-way communications.

SAR and SAR Related Topics

2.12   Australia and Cyprus shared successful practices of civil-military collaboration in the APAC and EUR regions, providing valuable insights into the integration of civilian and military resources and expertise to enhance SAR capabilities and efficiency.

2.13   The workshop participants received a presentation from Azerbaijan's Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) on the role of Air Traffic Service Units (ATSUs) in SAR and their implementation of GADSS operations.

2.14   The workshop participants were also presented with an overview of SAR as a commercial service, highlighting its potential applications and benefits in providing efficient and effective SAR operations.

2.15   The workshop participants were briefed by the Baku Airport operator on the Family Assistance Emergency Response Plan in the event of an air accident, using the Heydar Aliyev International Airport as a case example.

2.16   Italy and Malaysia shared on the outcomes and challenges faced with the conduct of their recent major SAR operations.

2.17   Chairperson of ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on SAR updated the participants on the ongoing work done by the group with respect to the implementation of ADT and the incorporation of guidance material for GADSS in the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR (IAMSAR) Manual.

Outcome of North Atlantic Autonomous Distress Tracking Exercise

2.18   The participants were provided with information on the outcome of the North Atlantic (NAT) Autonomous Distress Tracking Exercise, organized by the LADR Project Team (NAT DISTREX PT), that took place on 24 September 2024 in the NAT Region. The main task was to evaluate any changes needed with the introduction of ADT. Participants included ANSPs, Regulators, RCCs, Cospas-Sarsat, ADT developers, IATA, IFALPA and others in the NAT Region.

Tabletop Exercise

2.19   On 4 October 2024, participants had the opportunity to observe a live demonstration of a simulated ADT alert for the tabletop exercise. During this exercise, ADT signals were received in the EUR Region, and the information was displayed on the LADR. The Cospas-Sarsat French Mission Control Centre (FMCC) assisted with the simulation of ADT alerts, with support from the EUROCONTROL OPS team that developed and manage the LADR.

2.20   The workshop participants were able to observe the live transmission of data from the ELT(DT) beacon simulator in CNES/FMCC, Toulouse, to the LADR, and saw firsthand how the data was presented on the LADR for users. This facilitated many discussions among the participants regarding the notification process, management of such alerts, etc.

Conclusion

2.21   It was agreed that the ICAO EUR/APAC SAR Workshop 2024 provided valuable insights to both regions, fostering the exchange of critical SAR and SAR related information. The conclusion was made that further collaboration between the EUR SAR/TF and APSAR/WG should continue, and such events should be held at least every three years.

3.   ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1   The meeting is invited to note the information contained in this paper.

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