

**59th CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONS**

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AGENDA ITEM 3: AVIATION SAFETY

**STATE SAFETY PROGRAMMES (SSP), A KEY ENABLER TO
SAFETY IMPROVEMENT**

(Presented by France)

DISCUSSION PAPER

SUMMARY

In its capacity building actions with other countries, Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC) France, in accordance with European Union Aviation Safety Agency's policies, places a special emphasis on SSP drafting and implementation assistance, relying on the strong methodology which has been developed in France in this topic. Assistance in identifying threats or hazards, in setting strategic goals and indicators, as well as in helping to set up a reliable safety occurrence reporting system needs a careful adaptation from one national aviation context to the other. A structured and organized approach is required to create an environment where SSP becomes a reference for the whole national aviation system.

This environment is key to achieve and maintain the GASP aspirational safety goal of zero fatalities in commercial operations by 2030 and beyond.

STATE SAFETY PROGRAMMES, A KEY ENABLER TO SAFETY IMPROVEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper is following Action item 58/10 set at the last 58th APAC DGCA conference, which stipulates that given that the trust and collaboration between government and service providers is a critical factor in achieving effective implementation of the SSP, the Conference encouraged States/Administrations to share their experiences in achieving effective implementation of the SSP and data-driven state safety management. This paper also acknowledges the contents of point 3.2 b) “work towards an effective SSP”, of the Asia and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Civil Aviation issued in Delhi and dated September 12, 2024.

1.2 In 2009, France established its very first State safety programme (SSP) and adopted its first National Aviation Safety Plan, later defined in Annex 19 to the Chicago Convention. Since then, this pioneering initiative has become an international and, in particular, a European standard. In accordance with Article 8 of the European Union Basic Regulation 2018/1139, States must establish a “State Plan for Aviation Safety”.

1.3 To develop the French SSP, it was necessary to define precise strategic objectives. To monitor these objectives, creating a firm commitment of aviation stakeholders has been instrumental. Another essential part was to define a specific team, integrated in the DGAC France safety directorate, to collect and use trustworthy safety data. DGAC identified as well the main areas of risk and launched a consultation with the main aviation stakeholders to confirm the programme’s priority focus areas.

1.4 The previous period, from 2018 to 2023, saw major upheavals with the COVID-19 health crisis followed by the resumption of activity, which brought new risks. This period was also marked by growing environmental challenges, the resurgence of armed conflict on Europe’s doorstep, an increase in cyber-security threats, the emergence of new players particularly in new technologies and urban mobility, and a loss of skills due to staff turnover in certain aviation professions as a result of the health crisis. Following this time of crisis, and in response to those major and simultaneous changes, resilience has emerged as a general requirement in order to safeguard and consolidate the safety improvements made in previous years.

1.5 Thanks to continuous improvement in the reporting of safety occurrences, to new data sources and tools, to the ‘big data’ analyses now available, to more efficient tools enabling experts to analyse safety indicators, and to successful aviation safety networks which underpin our knowledge of the activity and its risks, DGAC France has been able to hone its understanding of safety risks and initiate priority actions.

1.6 DGAC is therefore making a commitment to address these issues over the next five years. These topics are addressed through systemic actions and operational actions, with a specific focus on ways of improving safety in general aviation. This stems from the fact that a continuous analysis of general aviation accidents in France has shown that the goal of improving safety levels was not achieved during the previous plan.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 **Identifying threats or hazards in different aviation contexts is a challenge**

A number of factors set France apart from most countries in the aviation domains, namely: significant airport density, a dynamic general aviation sector, both in terms of certified aircraft and microlights, very active innovation (prototype flights, new urban mobility projects (VTOL), use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), alternative energy sources, etc.). This context of innovation and expansion, marked by a long-standing tradition of aircraft manufacturing, requires a framework in which all these activities can develop while constantly improving the level of safety. With more than 12,000 aircraft holding a European or national certificate of airworthiness, 16,000 microlights, 20,000

UAS operators, 100 operators holding a commercial air operator certificate, nearly 500 aerodromes, 900 microlight airfields, 500 maintenance workshops or continuing airworthiness organisations, nearly 160 Approved Training Organisations (ATOs) and more than 750 Declared Training Organisations (DTOs), and an internationally known national civil aviation school, France’s aviation context is rich. However, this high level of activity comes with new threats that must be contained.

2.2 Setting strategic goals and indicators is a key component of State safety programmes

The goal set by the French SSP (named “PSE” for “Programme de Sécurité de l’Etat” in French), which is the State Safety Program as defined in Annex 19 to the Chicago Convention, is to keep France among the European countries where commercial aviation operators attain the highest standards of safety. The related indicator measuring the fatal accident rate of French operators of commercial transport aircraft with more than twenty passenger seats remained at zero over the period 2018-2023. The indicator for general aviation and aerial work includes the number of fatal accidents involving aircraft registered or identified in France. The SSP aims to significantly reduce the number of fatal accidents. This goal was not achieved during the period 2018-2023, and the SSP must draw the conclusions when determining the safety actions to be taken in the period 2024-2028.

2.3 Safety occurrence reporting is one of the keys to effective SSP implementation

An overall analysis and use of reports at SSP level has been one of the main sources used to identify the safety issues in preparation of French SSP. Despite the COVID crisis, the number of safety occurrence reports increased from 74,000 in 2018 to almost 93,000 in 2022. The reporting rate, which includes all stakeholders, thus rose significantly in 2020 and has remained high ever since. This increase is seen as a sign that the reporting system is working well and that French operators have a good safety culture.

Moreover, as stated in DP/3/2 presented by France at 57th APAC DGCA conference, efficient protection of safety data and of occurrence reporters are cornerstones of the Just culture. Protection of safety information sources is paramount to the flow of reports, and DGAC France has always put a stress on building trust on confidentiality and protection of information against any misuse. In any case, if an investigation report is produced, it will be deidentified (no identification of the date, nor operators, nor individuals involved).

However, DGAC’s goal is to remain focused on improving the quality of reports, particularly in terms of the analyses and risk level classification carried out by operators, as well as the traceability of the actions they take. In terms of safety culture, and more specifically safety occurrence reporting, DGAC has set a new strategic objective for the improvement of operator reporting rates.

3. ACTIONS BY THE CONFERENCE

3.1 The Conference is invited to:

- (a) note the content of the discussion paper;
- (b) agree on the relevance of safety occurrence reporting as a safety improvement enabler;
- (c) share experience and best practices on the implementation of SSPs