



**WORKING PAPER**

**FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)**

**FOURTEENTH MEETING**

**Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026**

**Agenda Item 3: Amendments to Annex 9 — Facilitation**

**COOPERATION BETWEEN STATES AND INDUSTRY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF  
UNRULY AND DISRUPTIVE PASSENGERS IN SUPPORT OF STANDARDS &  
RECOMMENDED PRACTICES IN ANNEX 9**

(Presented by Spain, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the  
International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA))

**SUMMARY**

States and industry have shared concerns about the increasing frequency and severity of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents at airports and onboard aircraft. Standards in Annex 9 require Contracting States to “*deter and prevent unruly behaviour, promote passenger awareness of the unacceptability and legal consequences of unruly or disruptive behaviour.*” In recent years several initiatives involving States and industry have been launched bringing together key stakeholders with the objective of deterring, preventing and managing incidents. When used together with ICAO guidance and multilateral legal instruments, these multi-stakeholder initiatives form part of a broad and effective approach to addressing unruly and disruptive passengers. They also serve as examples of good practice that can inform and encourage other Contracting States relating to unruly and disruptive passengers

**Action by the FAL Panel:** The FAL Panel is invited to:

- note the information contained in this working paper;
- request that the Council urge States to a) refer to the examples contained in this paper to inform their own initiatives to ensure compliance with Annex 9 Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and b) benchmark and review their national laws and regulations relating to unruly and passengers using ICAO Manual Doc10117, *Manual on the Legal Aspects of Unruly and Disruptive Passengers* as a guide.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ensuring safe, secure and comfortable air travel is a shared aim of States and industry. Airlines and governments remain concerned about the frequency and severity of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents onboard aircraft.

1.2 These incidents may involve violence against crew and other passengers, harassment, verbal abuse, smoking, failure to follow safety and public health instructions and other forms of riotous behavior. Although such acts are committed by a small proportion of passengers, they have a disproportionate impact. They may threaten the health, safety and security of other passengers and crew, and they can lead to significant operational disruption and costs for airlines.

1.3 The latest statistically significant data from IATA's Incident Data eXchange indicate that there has been an increase in the rate of reported unruly passenger incidents. Based on 53,538 incident reports from over 60 operators globally, there was 1 incident for every 395 flights in 2024 versus 1 incident for every 405 flights in 2023. Non-compliance with crew instruction was the most frequent descriptor. However, of greatest concern is the number of reports mentioning physically abusive behaviours which also increased in 2024.

1.4 The trend identified in IATA's data is consistent with data published by regional and national aviation regulators including the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and others. Continued cooperation between States and industry is essential to address this problem.

1.5 Addressing the issue of unruly and disruptive behaviour on flights requires a holistic approach involving enhancement of the international legal deterrent and better prevention and management of incidents. Airlines report that where such an approach is taken, they have seen positive impacts on dealing with and deterring unruly passenger incidents.

1.6 Spain, IATA and IFALPA commend the significant work that ICAO has done over the last decade to provide States with tools and support to enhance the international legal deterrent. This includes publishing comprehensive guidance material set out in Doc 10117, *Manual on the legal aspects of unruly and disruptive passengers*. This sets out advice on resolving jurisdictional gaps and encourages the use of civil and administrative penalties to expand the range of available enforcement options consistent with the different severity of incidents.

1.7 However, preventing incidents from happening and managing them effectively when they do is also critical. The critical role of States is recognized in Paragraph 6.35 of Annex 9 – *Facilitation* to the Chicago Convention as follows:

*“Each Contracting State shall, in cooperation with airport operators and aircraft operators, promote passenger awareness of the unacceptability and possible legal consequences of unruly or disruptive behaviour at airports and on board aircraft to deter and prevent unruly and disruptive behaviour.”*

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Several States have adopted initiatives that go beyond simple awareness campaigns as required by Standards in Annex 9. Spain, IATA and IFALPA believe these represent examples of global good practice that enable States to both meet these requirements but also deliver a more comprehensive and robust approach to overcoming the challenge of increasing unruly and disruptive incidents. Several of these initiatives are described briefly below.

2.2 Spain, IATA and IFALPA particularly commend several European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Member States for convening stakeholders including airlines, airports, law enforcement, prosecutors, ground handlers and others to agree actions to deal with rising frequency and severity of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents. These include the signing of public declarations of agreed actions which include communication campaigns that highlight prohibited conduct and the legal and other sanctions that may be imposed for non-compliance. They also include actions to strengthen laws and enforcement options relating to unruly passengers.

2.3 For example, in the Republic of Ireland there was a 3-fold increase in passenger unruly behaviour reported between 2019 v 2023. In response, the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA), along with industry stakeholders developed [a joint declaration](#) to combat unruly passenger behaviour in airports and on flights as part of EASA's #NotOnMyFlight campaign. All Irish airlines and airports, Police, AirNav Ireland, ground handlers and international aviation organisations came together to tackle the issue of disruptive and dangerous behaviour. The declaration sets out an action plan for the Irish aviation industry to reduce the incidence of unruly passenger behaviour in airports and onboard aircraft. The signatories are meeting regularly and engaged on the topic, working together to prevent disruption and enhance enforcement. Specifically, the industry aims to ensure police are informed of all criminal activity, enhance training for cabin crew and improve communication to passengers to prevent unruly behaviour. In addition to creating various communications material and social media posts to highlight positive messaging, IAA has also led efforts to extend jurisdiction under national law with the intention to ratify the Montreal Protocol 2014 (MP14) in due course. It is also working with other government departments to assess the possible use of a wider range of enforcement measures for use against unruly passengers.

2.4 In 2025, a High-Level Joint Declaration on Unruly Passengers was signed by the Austrian Federal Minister of Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure together with stakeholders including airlines and airports. A joint government-industry Task Force on Unruly Passengers was established to assess joint awareness campaigns review incident categorization methodologies and concrete proposals for possible legal adaptations. Finally, Austria has also committed to ratification of MP14 as part of wider measures to deter and punish those who become unruly onboard flights.

2.5 Similar joint initiatives have been implemented in the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. In Spain, the Spanish National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFC) has set up an Unruly Passenger Working Group to review options and propose solutions to the issue.

2.6 In France, the government has expanded the use of civil and administrative penalties to cover unruly and disruptive air passengers, thus giving police and prosecutors a wider range of enforcement options. France also ratified MP14 to promote greater international uniformity and certainty.

2.7 In the United Kingdom, a rise in unruly passenger incidents immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was linked to alcohol intoxication. Particularly problematic was the issue of passengers opening and drinking alcohol purchased in duty free stores at the airport during flights without knowledge of the crew. In response the police, airports, airlines, handling agents duty free operators, restaurant and bar operators came together to develop government-endorsed [Industry code of practice](#) setting out a set of actions that each signatory committed to undertake. A high-profile social media and airport wide communications campaign called "One too many" highlighted the personal consequences of becoming unruly including significant fines, airline bans, refused carriage and prison. Reported incidents fell in response despite an overall growth in traffic.

2.8 Finally, IATA has published a [strategy document](#) titled "*Even safer and more enjoyable air travel for all – A strategy for reducing the problem of unruly and disruptive passenger incidents*". This high-level document sets out the practical steps States and operators can take to reduce the problem of

unruly passengers. It includes data from IATA and key regulators, examples of global good practice as well as examples of actions the industry is taking to prevent and manage such incidents.

### 3. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The FALP is invited to

- note the information contained in this working paper; and
- urge States to:
  1. refer to the good practice examples to inform their own initiatives to ensure compliance with Annex 9 SARPs; and
  2. benchmark and review their national laws and regulations relating to unruly and passengers using ICAO Manual Doc 10117 as a guide.

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