



**WORKING PAPER**

**ASSEMBLY — 41ST SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 13: Facilitation Programmes**

**BUILDING A RESILIENT FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE OUTBREAKS**

(Presented by Czechia on behalf of the European Union and its Member States<sup>1</sup>,  
the other Member States of the European Civil Aviation Conference<sup>2</sup> and  
EUROCONTROL)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

With the COVID-19 pandemic still unfolding we will continue to learn lessons on our response to its impacts for many years to come — both at the international and national level. However, some lessons are already clear. This paper summarizes the lessons already learned, including the need for enhancing and formalizing the role of the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) integrating key aspects of the Council Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART) guidance into Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, and developing an outbreak framework and associated toolkit as a response to future health crises.

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to take the actions as set out in paragraph 7.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Strategic Objective <i>Security &amp; Facilitation</i>
<i>Financial implications:</i>	None
<i>References:</i>	Annex 9 — <i>Facilitation</i>

<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden

<sup>2</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Although the aviation industry has experienced other health crises, for example SARS, Ebola and ZIKA, COVID-19 has been unique in its intensity and spread — exacerbated by the ever-increasing globalization and interconnectivity of travel. Multi-lateral organizations, States, industry and individuals all have a role to play to prevent, or at least slow down, the spread of COVID-19 and be prepared to react swiftly and effectively to new and emerging health crisis. We have a responsibility to reflect on the global response to the pandemic and learn from our failures and successes. We have two years' worth of evidence and experience of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic to add to our previous knowledge of the impacts of health crises on travel, and it is imperative that we use this invaluable information to build better guidance to preparing for and responding to the next inevitable health crisis. This paper presents a pathway to achieving this and supports the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC) declaration.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC

2.1 The COVID-19 pandemic is still unfolding, and we will continue to learn lessons on our response to its impacts for many years to come — both at the international and national level. However, some lessons are already clear. Aviation is international in nature, so there is a need for a global, harmonized response. A patchwork of different rules and measures hampers recovery and places barriers to connectivity across the world. In addition, global health crises can affect states in different ways due to complex local characteristics, for example existing surveillance capabilities, robustness of public services and risk tolerance differing considerably between States. Clearer guidance on pandemic preparedness specific to aviation is required at a global/ICAO-level with more defined frameworks and structures for implementing this guidance in a coordinated fashion.

2.2 In order to respond more effectively and efficiently to future health crises at a global level, it is essential that we always seek to maximize predictability, in the sense of having more certainty about stages and actions in a crisis, and minimize disruption for States, industry and individuals. As a starting point the following steps should be considered.

## 3. ENHANCING AND FORMALISING THE ROLE OF CAPSCA

3.1 CAPSCA is a collaborative network of States, international, regional, national and local stakeholders representing multiple sectors. Its primary objectives are to assist States with the implementation of the ICAO public health related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and the World Health Organization (WHO) International Health Regulations (IHR) and to improve preparedness planning and rapid response to public health emergencies that might affect the aviation sector.

3.2 During the COVID-19 pandemic, CAPSCA has continued to play a fundamental and active role in providing a forum for sharing information, in allowing a collaborative decision making across all relevant sectors and stakeholders, and in ensuring the appropriate dissemination of information.

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<sup>3</sup> “We commit to ensuring that ICAO is well positioned to support the long-term resilience of international aviation and incorporate the lessons learned from the current and past pandemics, by enhancing its crisis response capability, and regularly reviewing and updating ICAO’s Standards and Recommended Practices and guidance materials as may be required;”

CAPSCA has also worked in close collaboration with CART to develop practical applicable guidance material and implementation tools for managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, CAPSCA experts are supporting States in their capacity building efforts for the development of national aviation preparedness plans relating to public health emergencies in aviation. They are also conducting Technical Assistance visits to States in coordination with WHO. Considering the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and previous disease outbreaks, as well as CAPSCA's experience in other public health emergencies not related to infectious diseases, there is a need to strengthen the existing CAPSCA framework to enhance preparedness for public health emergencies, irrespective of the cause of the event.

3.3 The need to improve the development of guidance material and methodologies supporting implementation that could enable earlier response in future health crisis and the continuous monitoring of developments in medical science with an impact on aviation has been identified. CAPSCA could play a fundamental and active role in preparing such guidance material, to be endorsed by ICAO in accordance with its procedures. Building on the outcomes of the HLCC, it is proposed to integrate CAPSCA within the ICAO organization, as part of its regular work programme and structure, going under the ICAO Secretariat.

#### **4. INTEGRATION OF KEY ASPECTS OF THE CART GUIDANCE INTO ANNEX 9 SARPS**

4.1 CART in its different phases, is globally recognized as a great example of cooperation and guidance during disruptive times for aviation. Its several recommendations and attached guidance, supported by scientific evidence, have helped both aviation authorities and the industry to take various decisions in order to help the swift recovery of aviation. This important work has also been unanimously praised during the latest HLCC. It is vital that such outcome and coordination efforts between aviation and health authorities are not forgotten in a future global outbreak. While CART will remain on the ICAO website, it is important to take further steps and secure this important work within Annex 9 and other relevant Annexes, Documents and Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS).

4.2 We need to recognize that Annex 9 has now become a reference to public health in aviation, with full respect of IHR and the respective competences of ICAO and WHO. While Annex 9 has been reviewed and improved in Amendment 29, implementation and guidance material remains essential to ensure a practical implementation in each State and ensure no state left behind. Annex 9 should help to secure CART recommendations and should stream the work between aviation and health authorities in the future outbreaks. It has proven essential to ensure a coordination network between health authorities, the broader border control community, aviation authorities, as well as with the aviation industry to ensure a harmonized response to an outbreak. The use of the standard for a facilitation committee is essential to lay a foundation for that coordination network.

#### **5. DEVELOPING AN OUTBREAK FRAMEWORK AND ASSOCIATED TOOLKIT AS A RESPONSE TO FUTURE HEALTH CRISES**

5.1 Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic need to be captured and enshrined to provide a clear and tested reference. A Facilitation Outbreak Framework, incorporating new SARPs and already existing developed guidelines and best practices, could perform this role. The Framework could be inserted in the new chapter of Annex 9 dedicated to health-related issues and would be supplemented

with a toolkit that would provide concrete and ready-to-use solutions, such as model Passenger Locator Forms, in order to maintain the same level of global air traffic while ensuring adequate health protection to passengers and provide assurance to States on a societal and political level.

5.2 Building upon the current detailed work on COVID-19 by CAPSCA, the framework would support a much needed harmonized and proportionate international response to every type of outbreak that would have a major impact on aviation. Providing an easily accessible and free of charge resource to guide states in their response, streamlining the cooperation between aviation and health authorities, it would ultimately maximize the predictability for industry and passengers, while minimizing disruption. This outbreak framework would not be only for COVID-19 but be generic to health crises, as a single reference point to the main and most useful principles in tackling a health crisis from a facilitation point of view. A clear reference to this framework in the form of Standards and/or Recommended Practices in Annex 9 would further strengthen a harmonized response.

5.3 Where necessary, new SARPs, guidelines or best practices could be incorporated as part of the regular work program of Annex 9. Examples of best practices could range from health certificates and digitalized passenger locator forms that can be seamlessly integrated in the passenger global journey and which are globally usable, or to creating regional or global information repositories to help passengers find relevant health information on travel. This would be created from the lessons learned from the current COVID-19 pandemic, with a set of basic criteria that can be copied by any ICAO State.

## **6. OFF-AIRPORT DOCUMENT VERIFICATION DURING THE PANDEMIC: AN EXAMPLE FOR FUTURE USES IN FACILITATION**

6.1 From a facilitation point of view, technological solutions have proven to be very useful in avoiding major disruption and vastly increase queuing time during the pandemic situation. In enabling off-airport verification of health documentation, States and industry have greatly aided the passenger journey and can be replicated within other field of facilitation, such as passport or visa verification across borders. In setting up the European Union Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC) framework<sup>4</sup>, the European Commission and States who joined the EU DCC Gateway have worked toward a standard that is open, secure and has the necessary technical support to ease the implementation of such digital certificates. At the moment, around 60 States have joined the EU DCC gateway, with more to come in the next months, and several billions of these certificates have been issued. Also the European Commission and ICAO have constantly worked together to enable synergies between EU DCC and the Visible Digital Seals for Non-Constrained environment (VDS-NC) to provide global solutions of health certificates for aviation recovery.

6.2 In the future of facilitation, we should take inspiration from such digital applications and seek to adopt similar principles and technologies for documentation verification. In particular, attention should be paid to trust framework principles, format of certificates, to an increased interaction between the passengers and authorities through government web portals among others, and notably to off-airport verification, with quick verification of different rules and where open standards should be preferred.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0953&from=EN>

7. **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN**

7.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) request ICAO to integrate CAPSCA within its regular work programme and structure;
- b) request the ICAO Council, to direct the work in ICAO so that key aspects of the CART including guidance material on COVID-19 can be secured and integrated into Annex 9, in order to set up a legal and guidance framework that would support a harmonized and proportionate international response to every type of future outbreak that would have a major impact on aviation; and
- c) recognize the need to develop a readily accessible Facilitation toolkit for future outbreaks, which could also serve for other facilitation purposes, and request ICAO to monitor the work on such a toolkit.

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