



**ASSEMBLY — 41 ST SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 12: Outcomes of High-level Conference on COVID-19**

**ESTABLISHING AN OPERATIVE MULTILAYER CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

(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)

**REVISION NO. 1**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This working paper advocates for the evolution of the current global crisis management framework toward a multilayer crisis management approach that should provide ICAO, regions and States with effective coordination structures and mechanisms, with a view of supporting predictable and harmonized operational response to crisis. Such an approach will also support the further implementation of rapid response plans to be defined by the ICAO Secretariat as recommended by the High-level Conference on Covid-19 (HLCC).

**Action:** The Assembly is invited to:

- a) recognize the value of setting-up a multilayer crisis management framework taking into account already existing coordination mechanisms, and of establishing crisis management arrangements between States at regional level and global level and to amend Assembly Resolution A39-24 accordingly as proposed in the Appendix; and
- b) request ICAO to:
  - i. establish a cell capable of coordinating operational crisis responses at global level, responsible for maintaining the inventory of national and regional cells and collect their lessons learnt to build a register of risks to be managed at global level;
  - ii. support the information exchange and sharing of best practices between cells by developing guidance on the development and implementation of their work programme, which may include harmonized coordination mechanisms (including escalation processes between national, regional and global level) preparedness activities, risk management, exercises, crisis communication including towards passengers, the training of staff and involved organisations, and pre-defined arrangements to improve the predictability of responses to associated crisis scenarios; and
  - iii. identify and assess the capacity building options to ensure that all States and regions can take part in the framework.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to the Safety and Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency, Security and Facilitation Strategic Objectives.
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<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, 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

<i>Financial implications:</i>	The activities referred to in this paper will be undertaken subject to the resources available in the 2022-2025 Regular Programme Budget and/or from extra budgetary contributions.
<i>References:</i>	<a href="#">ICAO Crisis Management Framework Document (EUR Doc 031)</a> Assembly Resolution A39-24: <i>Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Response Mechanisms in Aviation</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Experience in managing crises affecting aviation has shown that isolated and uncoordinated actions by States in reaction to a global or regional crisis should be avoided. As much as coordinated policy action is required to address such crisis at political level, the orchestration of the resulting operational measures is also required to provide aviation stakeholders with enough predictability to ensure safe and secure business continuity of operations, and support swift aviation recovery.

1.2 In October 2021, the High-level Conference on COVID-19 (HLCC-21) recommended that ICAO establish rapid response plans as well as formal cooperation mechanisms with regional and national entities responsible for crisis management, to ensure rapid exchange of information and best practices and reduce inconsistent responses from States. This relies on the existence and awareness of relevant crisis coordination structures at national and regional level.

1.3 The European Aviation Crisis Coordination Cell (EACCC) was formally set up in 2010, following the eruption of the *Eyjafjallajökull* volcano in Iceland, to support the coordination of responses to air traffic management (ATM) network crises affecting adversely aviation, in close cooperation with corresponding structures in States and aviation operational stakeholders. EACCC also plays an active role in acquiring and sharing information with the aviation community decision-makers in a timely manner. In addition, the EUR region has set up a crisis management framework. Those arrangements were used several times and evolved according to the lessons learnt from previous crisis. On one hand, past crisis events demonstrated that only Pan-European solutions can be effective in providing solutions as it was achieved for the adoption of the EASA - ECDC COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol. On the other hand, the COVID-19 demonstrated that the scope of EACCC should not be limited only to ATM network crisis and that the interaction with other regions or with the global level were too limited.

1.4 Pursuant to Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention, States have to establish a National Air Transport Facilitation Committee and National Air Transport Facilitation Programme (NATFP) to allow for a close coordination, adapted to circumstances, of facilitation issues between government representatives, stakeholders and the private sector. Such existing specific national coordination mechanisms should be taken into account when designing a consistent and flexible global crisis management framework to address all kind of crises.

1.5 For States to exchange critical information (on a 24-hour basis) as well as urgent requests and/or messages about threats, acts of unlawful interference or incidents affecting civil aviation security, a network of ICAO Aviation Security Points of Contact was created in 2006. Such coordination mechanisms existing at global level should also be considered in the global crisis management framework.

## 2. ADDRESSING CRISIS MANAGEMENT AT THE MOST APPROPRIATE LEVEL

2.1 The eruption of the Icelandic volcano in 2010 required mostly a common approach at European level for several weeks, whereas the COVID-19 crisis has required continuous efforts at every level for more than two years. Depending on their nature, their scale and their impact, crises need to be managed with enough flexibility to ensure that States, regions, ICAO and the aviation industry can address challenges at the lowest level possible with the support of the right expertise. States need to cooperate closely based on pre-defined arrangements taking into consideration safety aspects and the necessity to ensure a quick recovery for the primary benefit of passengers and the aviation industry.

Hence, evolving the current global crisis management framework toward a multi-layered (global/regional/national) approach is an appropriate way forward.

### **3. ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CRISIS COORDINATION CELLS**

3.1 Permanent crisis coordination cells supported by the right arrangements are key tools to support crisis management involving numerous stakeholders and requiring a common approach. This is also true when the situation is not in the hands of the aviation community. European aviation stakeholders recognized that EACCC played a key role in allowing information exchange at regional level about the latest developments of the crisis (epidemiological situation, impact on traffic, and update on travel restriction, policy and guidance development).

3.2 In light of this experience, ICAO should encourage the establishment of such regional cells, taking into account the existence of existing coordination bodies such as facilitation committees or network of ICAO Aviation Security Points of Contact, and support the necessary arrangements to manage the risks that could reach a regional scale such as cyber-attacks, epidemic, volcanic ashes, nuclear events etc., that require regional coordination.

3.3 Regional cells should also be able to interact with each other on a global level to share information, relevant analysis, collect evidence on how situation evolve and may impact other regions and States, and when possible, harmonize operational mitigation measures and external communication. However, the pandemic demonstrated that the interaction between regions or States is too limited, for both reasons that there is not enough global awareness of other existing crisis coordination structures and that there are no existing coordination mechanism between crisis coordination cells. ICAO should therefore maintain a list of existing crisis coordination structures to facilitate the establishment of a network of cells and provide them with harmonized coordination mechanisms, including escalation process when coordination at higher level is needed.

3.4 When reviewing its crisis response policy and considering HLCC-21 Recommendation 1/1, ICAO should also contemplate establishing a cell to coordinate operational response to global crisis and the necessary arrangement to ensure the link between global and regional cells, while duly identifying common and distinct expertise and capabilities required for different types of events. Such organisation will also support ICAO in implementing rapid response plans for various situations in a swift and efficient manner.

3.5 Those arrangements shall also ensure that operational and policy levels can coordinate closely together, including on communication matters. This will be essential for cells to develop and present findings, situation information and recommend policy actions and for the political level to get operational feedback on further decision to be taken.

3.6 The efficiency of such an approach relies on the existence of the cells and on their geographical and functional coverage. Therefore, ICAO would have to consider the necessary capacity building to ensure that all States or regions exposed to any particular type of crisis requiring global or regional operational coordination can be part of the framework.

### **4. BUILDING AND ENHANCING PREPAREDNESS OF CELLS**

4.1 ICAO should collect the lessons learnt from each crisis, and from each regional cell with regards to risks that need to be managed at global or regional level and elaborate guidelines for global and regional crisis management, including a register of relevant risks and their assessment, identification and description of crisis preparedness activities, crisis management procedures and exercises and crisis communication.

4.2 Crisis coordination cells should have an associated work programme consistent with their scope of activities (monitoring, reporting, geographical coverage, sectors, exercise etc...) and adapted to

the risks they would need to manage at their level, in view of enhancing preparedness of aviation stakeholders when crisis occurs.

4.3 Staff, organisation and inter-organisation training will be essential to support cells in strengthening their operational response to all types of events. ICAO should then develop associated training guidance for instance for staff requiring specific skill sets (such as management of uncertainty, analytical thinking, creation and maintenance of a network of people, communication towards public/passengers, coordination of adaptive response to crisis, taking critical decision etc...) or on how to standardize, train and enhance inter-organisation performance.

4.4 ICAO should also foster the exchange of best practices between cells. As risks vary from situation to situation, experience of managing some particular risks may have reached various levels across the globe. Building upon individual experience of cells to raise the bar globally would be decisive in the management of further crisis. Europe would be available to share its experience on the management of volcano eruption and the application of the SRA approach.

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## APPENDIX

### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO A39-24: STRATEGY ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RESPONSE MECHANISMS IN AVIATION

*Whereas* Article 44 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation states that among the aims and objectives of ICAO are to foster the planning and development of international air transport so as to meet the needs of the people of the world for safe, regular, efficient and economical air transport;

*Whereas* the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 adopted by the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction;

*Mindful* that natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, and the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper their sustainable development;

*Mindful* that States are primarily responsible for prevention and reduction of disaster risk and any response undertaken by the Organization should be guided by, and in concert with, the State(s) affected;

*Recognizing* that Annex 1 — *Personnel Licensing*, Annex 6 — *Operation of Aircraft*, Annex 9 — *Facilitation*, Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services*, Annex 14 — *Aerodromes* and Annex 19 — *Safety Management* provide Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for States relating to emergency planning and response, as well as border control formalities relating to relief flights following natural or man-made disasters;

*Recognizing* that disaster risk reduction is an important function of the United Nations System and should receive continued attention, and stressing the need for the international community to demonstrate the firm political determination required to utilize scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental hazards, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries;

*Recognizing* that all States have a vital need for disaster-resilient aviation infrastructure to promote socio-economic development and, in times of need, to support the timely and efficient distribution of aid; ~~and~~

*Recognizing* that all States can benefit from integrating disaster risk reduction strategies into their Air Transport Sector Strategic Plans;

*Recognizing* that there is a need to coordinate at the most appropriate level the political and operational response to natural or man-made disasters reaching regional or global scale; and

The Assembly:

1. *Urges* States to recognize the significant role of aviation in the context of disaster risk reduction at the national level, including in their Air Transport Sector Strategic Plans;
2. *Urges* States to take into consideration the disaster risk reduction priorities as contained in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, as well as the best practices of member States, in the development of their State emergency response plans as well as in the emergency response plan requirements for aviation service providers;
3. *Directs* the Council to establish a crisis response policy and disaster risk reduction strategy in aviation that would institutionalize and guide the Organizations strategic approach and tactical responses to aviation-specific crises that could affect the safety or continuity of international civil aviation;

4. *Directs* the Council to assist States in implementing disaster risk reduction strategies in aviation with priority given to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS);

5. *Instructs* the Secretary General to establish an ICAO network of crisis coordination structures and associated coordination mechanisms and arrangement between ICAO, regions and States supporting coordinated political and operational crisis response and assistance at the most appropriate level ~~in coordination with the States affected and neighbouring States, for crises response and assistance;~~

6. *Instructs* the Secretary General to continue working collaboratively within the United Nations System to ensure timely, coordinated and high-quality assistance to all States where disaster losses pose a threat to people's health and development; and

7. *Instructs* the Secretary General to ensure that ICAO participate, when applicable and in alignment with its Strategic Objectives, in appropriate mechanisms put in place to support the cross-sectorial implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.

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