



International Civil Aviation Organization

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ICAO NEWS RELEASE

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ICAO ASSESSES SITUATION OF AIR TRANSPORT FOLLOWING ERUPTION OF EYJAFJALLAJOKULL VOLCANO IN ICELAND

MONTREAL, 20 April 2010 – The Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) met yesterday to review the current situation and welcomed the decision by the Ministers of Transport of the European Union (EU) to gradually reopen the European airspace, in a safe and coordinated manner.

Today, the Organization's Air Navigation Commission considered near-term initiatives to advance the science of aviation safety and airspace contaminated by volcanic ash.

Both meetings included participation by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW) system, established by ICAO in coordination with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), is providing critical information to States, allowing them to exercise their responsibility as regards the use of their airspace.

No incidents or accidents have been reported due to volcanic ash as a result of the smooth operation of the IAVW system that was established in 1987 to detect and track the movement of volcanic ash in the atmosphere and to warn States and aviation users. To this end, continuously updated information concerning the area affected by volcanic ash has been issued by the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre (London) as required by the ICAO provisions.

In light of the unprecedented disruptions to air traffic, however, it is clear that more effort needs to be undertaken to establish a global safety risk framework for routinely determining safe levels of operation in airspace contaminated by volcanic ash. ICAO invites States, the scientific community, aviation safety professionals, manufacturers, airports and airlines to provide valuable input to the development of such a framework.

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A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 190 Contracting States.