



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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AVIATION 259

INFORMATION NOTE

From: Commission
To: Council
Subject: European Aviation Safety Management System
– *Information from the Commission*

Delegations will find annexed an information note from the Commission on the above mentioned subject, which will be dealt with under "Any Other Business" at the meeting of the Council (**Transport, Telecommunications** and Energy) on 12 December 2011.

Information Note from the Commission
A European Aviation Management System

1. The current growth of European aviation is set to continue over the coming decades. However, the aviation accident rate, which had been falling consistently for decades, appears to have flattened out. As aviation activity is expected to continue growing, we are therefore faced with the prospect of an increase in the number of fatalities to European citizens resulting from aviation accidents unless we can continue to reduce the accident rate.
2. In addition, the safety record in Europe, as measured by the number of fatal accidents per million flights, is not the best in the world, coming third behind North America and East Asia. In its Transport White Paper the Commission stated the clear aim that Europe should become the safest world region in aviation.
3. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) advocates that, in order to continue to achieve safety performance improvements, a pro-active element needs to be added to the aviation safety system to augment the current prescriptive element. A pro-active approach, known as a Safety Management System, is already being used at industry level and, to a lesser degree, at the Member State level. By developing a pro-active system at EU level, which brings together contributions from the safety management processes of the Industry, the Member States and EASA, the EU can add value to the safety efforts in Europe and therefore contribute to the desired reduction in accident rates.
4. The Communication of the Commission on a European Safety Management System spells out how this can be achieved. It highlights the issues and obstacles that will need to be overcome. It proposes that the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), being the single specialised expert body for aviation safety at EU level, is ideally placed to be the facilitator and focal point of such a system. EASA's role would be to draw together inputs from all the aviation stakeholders, including the industry, in order to identify the highest safety risks and decide on the actions that will mitigate those risks. It is this cooperative approach, drawing on expertise from across the EU, that is at the heart of the system.

5. Nonetheless, the system will only work if it results in action, not only by EASA but also by the Member States. The production by EASA of a European Aviation Safety Plan (EASp), which describes the safety issues and the necessary mitigating actions, will provide clarity on where the effort should be directed. It will reflect the Member States own safety concerns and will therefore enable a 'joined up' approach on safety issues across the whole Union, with the EASp supporting the safety actions of individual Member States, and vice versa. In this way a European Aviation Safety Management System should achieve a focused, risk based approach, which addresses safety risks before they result in an accident.

6. However, taking action will require commitment from the Member States. The Commission is therefore looking for the support of the Member States in this important advance in European aviation safety. In voluntarily contributing to the system Member States and their aviation industry will be able to directly assist in the identification of the safety issues that impact upon all the citizens of Europe, and by taking action will provide the safety environment that will enable the EU to become the safest aviation region in the world.
