

## EAEG Action Plans for Emissions Reduction Task Group



*Interview with*

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**ICAO Resolution A40-18, adopted at the ICAO Assembly in October 2019, encourages States to submit to ICAO voluntary action plans outlining respective policies and actions to reduce international aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The ECAC/EU Action Plans for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Reduction Task Group (APERTG) is one of the specialist groups supporting the ECAC/EU European Aviation and Environment Working Group (EAEG), which helps European States by providing guidance material with a recommended common European approach for them to follow. Stefan Bickert (Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, Germany) and Magnus Gislev (DG MOVE, European Commission) are the appointed APERTG co-chairs and below they jointly explain the background and objectives of the task group's work.**

### **1. What are APERTG's objectives?**

APERTG aims to support an effective and harmonised submission of action plans for emissions reduction from all 44 ECAC Member States to ICAO, in accordance with the ICAO Assembly Resolution A40-18, to show Europe's determination to fight against climate change while making common efforts to do so.

To achieve this, the ECAC Directors General decided to develop and further update common ECAC/EU guidance material for the provision to ICAO of those action plans from European States, with a recommended common European approach for States to follow.

### **2. Who participates in the APERTG group, and how does it relate to others working on this topic?**

APERTG is intentionally a small group with members from States (Germany, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland), the European Commission, EASA and EUROCONTROL.

EASA and EUROCONTROL are key technical contributors on the estimation and update of a common European baseline scenario, which is intended to reasonably represent the fuel consumption and traffic that would occur in the absence of action. APERTG then assesses what the expected benefits from the different CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction measures considered are.

The group also works in close cooperation with the ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Office, as it follows ICAO guidance material, and interacts with the European focal points for State action plans appointed by ECAC Member States to ICAO.

### **3. What is the group's current focus and what are its expected outputs in 2021?**

ICAO asks States to submit or update their action plans once every three years. In this context, the ECAC guidelines to support European States therefore also need to be regularly updated. The last edition was made in 2018 and currently we are working on providing a revised 2021 version to support the submission of the action plans preferably by the end of June this year, as requested by ICAO.

For every three-year round of updates, APERTG is reactivated and six to seven meetings are normally necessary to update the European common section for the action plans. For the current update, the group has been working since December 2020. The main expected outputs to be delivered by May 2021 are:

- updated European common section for European States' action plans, describing actions taken collectively at the European level;
- updated European baseline scenario;
- assessment of the benefits of common measures to tackle aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### 4. What have the main challenges been?

The main challenge we addressed in this update cycle was how to reflect the COVID-19 impact in a CO<sub>2</sub> emissions baseline scenario, which should forecast emissions from 2020 till the 2050 long-term time horizon. There is much technical work under development worldwide to address how this crisis could impact future traffic, but because we needed to deliver our update in the first months of 2021, the level of uncertainty was still really high. It was decided to reflect the impact in the short- and mid-terms with the limited information available at this time, indicating that this would be revised in the next update, since in three years' time from now we could expect that a more accurate analysis would be possible.

Another challenge for the future will be how to assess the emissions reductions that can be achieved in the future thanks to disruptive new aircraft technologies and new energy sources, about which our knowledge today is still limited.

#### 5. What are the next steps until the submission of action plans by States?

By May 2021, the European updated common section should be submitted to ECAC Directors General for endorsement, in accordance with the ICAO guidance that encourages States to submit action plans preferably by the end of June 2021.

The European focal points will be invited to incorporate the information of the common section into their State action plans, noting that they are also recommended to add a national section presenting the way in which they implemented the common measures, as well as providing a quantified assessment of their own additional national measures.

Information seminars with European focal points are planned in order to present the work on the ECAC guidelines, including the common section, to support States in that process.

#### 6. Some final words?

APERTG's ultimate objective is to give visibility to mitigating actions taken collectively throughout Europe, including those led by the European Union, via the submission of State action plans to ICAO by ECAC Member States. So, our aim is to support all ECAC Member States in that endeavour, with the very valuable technical support of the EASA and EUROCONTROL teams, as well as the inputs from the European Commission and the precious expertise from States in developing and updating previous action plans. It is an important step in demonstrating European commitment to sustainable aviation at ICAO level. ■

**Stefan Bickert** has worked in the Department of Aviation of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure in Germany since January 2019. He is responsible for the department's work on environmental and climate protection in aviation at international level as well as at European and domestic levels. Stefan is the ICAO CAEP member for Germany and Germany's focal point for the ICAO State action plans initiative. Before working for the government of Germany, he worked in the Environment, Air Transport Bureau at ICAO (2014-2018). He started working in research at a university and a research centre focusing on sustainable transport and electric mobility. Stefan studied ecological economics and additionally obtained his doctorate analysing the economic and environmental integration of electric vehicles in Germany.

**Magnus Gislev** has a degree in chemistry and business administration from the University of Karlstad, Sweden. He started in the European Commission in 1995 and joined the Environment Directorate-General in 1999. Since August 2019, he has been working in the Aviation Policy Unit of the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, on environmental matters, in particular within ICAO.