

Speech by the Secretary of LACAC

European Civil Aviation Conference Thirty-Ninth Plenary (Triennial) Session

President of the ICAO Council

Secretary General-elect of ICAO

President of the European Civil Aviation Conference

Director-General of the European Commission's department for Mobility and Transport

Vice Presidents of ECAC,

Executive Secretary of ECAC

Authorities of the Member States of ECAC,

Observers present at this meeting,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my capacity as secretary of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission, it is a privilege and pleasure for me to virtually be part of the Thirty-Ninth Plenary (Triennial) Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference-ECAC. Please receive warm greetings from me and from the 22 LACAC member States.

I want to start by congratulating you for the great success of this meeting, which addresses, every three years, relevant issues after the fulfillment of the mission to "promote continuous development of safe, efficient and sustainable European air transport system" through the harmonization of public policies and also through an understanding between the member States of ECAC and other regions of the world.

This is a great opportunity to remember and reinforce the long tradition of understanding between LACAC and ECAC. Looking back, since its establishment in 1955, ECAC has had a positive influence on the organization of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission.

Indeed, our organization was born in 1973, having, among others, the European Civil Aviation Conference as a source of inspiration. Subsequently, the relationship was formalized by signing the Memorandum of Understanding between our organizations in July 1998 and an addendum signed in October 2008.

Beyond the Memorandum that regulates our cooperative relationship, I want to highlight the importance of the unwritten rules that also bind us. I am referring to the gentlemen's agreement that we consistently invoke at the ICAO Assemblies, since these agreements are what enable and strengthen the understanding between the sovereign States that make up ECAC and the sovereign States that make up LACAC.

The result of all these cooperative understandings can be seen in four points that I will briefly mention.

In the first place, with due respect to the sovereignty of the States, we have given each other mutual support in the election of certain authorities of the ICAO bodies, thus providing a framework of certainty that contributes to the stability of the institution.

Second, we have helped simplify some discussions in ICAO, based on the reciprocal support of Working Papers that are presented at meetings, especially at ICAO Assemblies.

Third, we have had the opportunity to participate in seminars, courses, and workshops that have been held in States that make up ECAC or in the Latin American and Caribbean States with the participation of European experts.

As a fourth point, there is also an exchange of information between the Secretariats of our organizations that has been very useful to learn from the best practices between us.

It is unavoidable to mention the crisis we are going through. The crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic shows us a common destiny worldwide and forces us to redouble our efforts to activate air transport internationally, without cooperation, the above is not possible.

Of course, those of us who work in this sector are highly aware of the value associated with harmonization and consistency of standards and procedures in aviation. However, we still have a high fragmentation in the rules and procedures to apply. During the crisis, States began to take unilateral measures that were not consistent or harmonious with each other, all of them derived from the necessary protection that each State seeks for its citizens.

This is a decisive year to advance in harmonization and to recover international air transport. The regions of the world that are ahead in their vaccination processes can show a way forward, in order to make international air transport possible within a framework of harmonized standards and procedures.

By the way, the crisis has also revealed the importance of protecting the environment. Europe has been a pioneer in these matters, and it is a great responsibility for all ICAO Member States to prioritize these issues on our agendas.

On the other hand, the use of new technologies is imperative to facilitate travel in conditions such that passengers feel certain of traveling in protected environments. An initiative that we must analyze is the EU Digital COVID Certificate and determine if it is possible to carry out a similar initiative in our region.

I want to give a special recognition to Ingrid Cherfils, who is leaving the Presidency of ECAC. A few years ago, we met for the first time in Havana, and we shared our first impressions of the work that both sister organizations must carry out together and it is worth highlighting the determined leadership of the then president of ECAC. I am sure that we will have the possibility of continuing on the same path of greater closeness between our regions with the new president of ECAC.

Europe has shown the world that regional integration is possible, especially in air transport and we have a lot to learn from this process. The pandemic crisis leaves us with the task of joining forces, cooperating, and recovering our sector as soon as possible.

The challenges of these times are to deepen multilateralism from a regional perspective. At least in our region, we still have a long way to go.

Dear colleagues, to conclude, I want to reiterate that you have the support of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission for all projects that promote the continuous development of air transport, in a safe, efficient, and sustainable way, as indicated by ECAC's mission.

Thank you very much.