



ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT workshop strengthens family assistance for air accident victims and their families



Madrid, 27 January 2026 — David Benito, Director General of Civil Aviation for Spain and ECAC Focal Point for Facilitation, Patricia Reverdy, Executive Secretary of ECAC, and Nicolas Rallo, ICAO EUR/NAT Regional Director, opened the joint ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT workshop on supporting air accident victims and their families through family assistance plans, hosted by Spain in Madrid on 27 January 2026.

The workshop brought together more than 70 participants from States, airlines, airports and family associations. Participants exchanged lessons learnt from past accidents, shared best practices, and explored the respective roles of States and industry in delivering effective and compassionate assistance to victims and their families.

The programme featured two sessions: the first examined the experiences of airlines and

airports in assisting victims and their families in the aftermath of accidents, while the second explored approaches taken to developing State-level family assistance plans ready for implementation.

The conclusions of the workshop highlighted the importance of effective coordination between all stakeholders, State authorities and operators, in both the preparation of plans and exercises, to ensure a high level of preparedness and practical family assistance plans that will ultimately enhance the support provided to victims and their families.

A warm thank you to all speakers, panelists and participants for their engagement, expertise and thoughtful contributions, as well as to the host for their commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue on this critical issue. ●

Advancing State assistance to air accident victims: task group meets in Madrid

Madrid, 28 January 2026 — Following the joint ECAC-ICAO EUR/NAT regional workshop on family assistance plans on 27 January, several ECAC Member States came together in Madrid for the seventh meeting of the State Assistance to Air Accident Victims Task Group.

The meeting enabled members to exchange updates on national developments regarding the development of family assistance plans, and review progress on the task group's ongoing initiatives. Discussions focused on draft guidance materials, templates, and checklists designed to support Member States in translating international and European requirements into practical, actionable family assistance plans. Participants shared feedback on the proposed tools, highlighted common challenges, and collaboratively defined the task group's priorities for 2026.

Looking ahead, the group explored the next phase of its work, which will include piloting these tools in delivering targeted capacity-building activities for interested ECAC Member States. Participants also emphasised the importance of strengthening coordination between national authorities and industry stakeholders to ensure that family assistance plans are robust, operationally effective and compassionate in practice.

By providing clear guidance and practical support tools, the task group aims to enhance the assistance available to victims and their families, ensuring timely and coordinated responses following air accidents. Feedback from the pilot activities will inform further refinements to the guidance materials, helping Member States continuously improve their preparedness and response capabilities. ●

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Italy signs ECAC Convention

Paris, 13 January 2026 — Italy has signed the Convention on the Bureau of the European Civil Aviation Conference, becoming the 17th signatory Member State.

The signing took place on 13 January 2026 in the distinguished setting of the Hôtel de Galliffet, home to the Permanent Representation of Italy to the International Organisations in Paris.

As the first signature of 2026, this step maintains strong momentum for further signatures by ECAC Member States in the months ahead, and underlines their shared commitment to strengthening ECAC's role in supporting civil aviation across Europe.

Warm thanks are extended to the Permanent Representative of Italy and to the Italian Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC) for their strong support and continued engagement throughout this process.



Network on Diversity and Inclusion in Civil Aviation starts the year with a strong focus on delivery

Videoconference, 29 January 2026

— The ECAC Network on Diversity and Inclusion in civil aviation (NETD&I) kicked off 2026 with a clear focus on implementation, as members met on 29 January to review progress and advance the 2026 work programme.

Discussions centred on key priorities for the year, including the launch of the biannual ECAC DEI Survey in spring 2026, which will provide an overview of progress and challenges across Member States. Members

also exchanged views on information-sharing activities, the development of practical guidelines and good practices, cooperation with regional and international partners, and the organisation of a DEI training course.

The meeting also moved forward preparations for the online NETD&I workshop scheduled for 24-25 March 2026. With continued and strong engagement from members, NETD&I is well placed to deliver its objectives for the year ahead. ●

2026 ECAC/EU Dialogue: preparations underway

Videoconference, 20 January 2026

The Steering Committee for the 2026 ECAC/EU Dialogue with the European air transport industry held its first meeting online in January, marking the start of joint work to develop the event's programme.

The 13th edition of the ECAC/EU Dialogue will take place in Paris on 13 and 14 October 2026 with a focus on the resilience of the aviation sector. The event will provide a platform for open exchange between policymakers and industry on how best to address critical challenges and reinforce the sector's long-term resilience.

The Steering Committee meeting brought together experts from ECAC Member States alongside representative from the European Commission, Airlines for Europe (A4E), Airports Council International Europe (ACI EUROPE), Airlines International Representation in Europe (AIRE), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), EASA, European Regions Airline Association (ERA), EUROCONTROL, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Initial discussions identified a range of priority topics. These include geopolitical uncertainty, the transformation of energy sources, technological innovation and new entrants, competitiveness and economic sustainability, infrastructure planning and climate change adaptation, as well as risks related to airspace disruption and capacity management.

In the coming months, the Steering Committee will work closely to refine these topics, shape session formats, and identify potential speakers and moderators. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled to take place online on 20 February 2026. ●



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Advancing cargo security guidance in 2026

Videoconference, 12-13 January 2026 — The first Guidance Material Task Force meeting of 2026 (GMTF/66) made significant progress towards finalising draft guidance on cargo security controls and screening. Participants discussed the text in detail, informed by an industry presentation on lessons learnt from cargo incidents in recent years. The new and updated guidance is expected to support more consistent and effective implementation of cargo security measures across all ECAC Member States.

The group also agreed on timetables and next steps for an ambitious programme in 2026, covering both the development of new guidance material and the revision of existing documents. In parallel, members considered initiatives to improve the group's internal working methods and strengthen coordination with other ECAC security groups.

The task force welcomed the appointment of Rachael King (Ireland) as deputy chair for a first mandate, beginning in January 2026. ●



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First meeting of ECAC cyber security experts in 2026

Videoconference, 28 January 2026 — The ECAC Study Group on Cyber Security in Civil Aviation held its first meeting of 2026 (CYBER/54), centering its discussions on a new draft document on best practices for conducting aviation cyber security audits and inspections. The draft responds to Member States' calls for further ECAC guidance on cyber security oversight, raised at the 46th meeting of the ECAC Security Forum.

The draft document focuses on the oversight of cyber security measures designed to protect critical aviation ICT systems and data from cyber threats that could compromise the security of aviation. These measures are to be established and implemented in accordance with ECAC Doc 30, Part II.

Finalising this guidance is a priority task for the study group, and the document is expected to be completed at the group's next in-person meeting in April.

In addition, the meeting reviewed progress on other activities under the group's 2026 work programme, including the development of guidance on criticality in civil aviation cyber security. Members also discussed the scope and approach to aviation cyber security as part of the group's longer-term vision.

Participants agreed to launch a survey to better identify Member States' needs for further guidance or best practices, which could be developed during 2026. ●



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ECAC webinar on mitigating the threat of improvised incendiary devices

Videoconference, 15 January 2026 — More than 60 participants representing 22 ECAC Member States took part in the first ECAC webinar on mitigating the threat of improvised incendiary devices (IIDs) in air cargo and mail. The event was designed to support Member States in responding effectively to this evolving threat.

The webinar helped build a better understanding among participants of IID threats and the risks they pose to aviation security. It enhanced knowledge of different IID types, their key components, and concealment methods, as well as the main differences between an IID and an improvised explosive device (IED).

The session also reviewed recent updates to Doc 30, Part II recommendations, as well as relevant ECAC guidance material and best practice documents, including best practices for training security personnel to detect IIDs.

The webinar was organised in cooperation with the Training Task Force, which provided two experienced instructors from Romania and Spain to deliver the session alongside the ECAC Secretariat. ●



Legal Task Force looks ahead to key 2026 aviation legal meetings

Videoconference, 22 January 2026 — The ECAC Legal Task Force (LEGTF) held its 56th meeting, bringing together legal experts from ECAC Member States to discuss recent developments and upcoming milestones in international aviation law.

Discussions focused on preparations for several ICAO legal events scheduled for 2026.

These included the fourth ICAO Civil Aviation Legal Advisers Forum, which will take place in Nassau, Bahamas, from 27 to 29 May 2026, and the 40th session of the ICAO Legal Committee, to be held in Montreal from 26 to 30 October 2026. Participants shared views on the scope of these meetings and the legal topics expected to be addressed.

The Task Force also reviewed progress on ongoing ICAO legal work covering areas such as data protection in international air transport, the legal framework for unmanned aircraft operations, and questions linked to the application of existing international air law frameworks. ●

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European Safety and Air Navigation Coordination Group discusses priorities for 2026 and beyond

Videoconference, 29 January 2026 — The European Safety and Air Navigation Coordination Group (ESANCG) held its 46th meeting online, marking the first meeting chaired by Eric de Vries (Netherlands) in his role as ECAC co-chair.

The meeting reviewed recent international and European developments relevant to aviation safety and air navigation, including follow-up to the outcomes of the 42nd ICAO Assembly and their implications for European coordination. Participants also exchanged views on priorities for the period ahead, taking

into account evolving policy and operational challenges.

The meeting marked the start of a new three-year work period leading up to the 43rd ICAO Assembly. Initial reflections were shared on ESANCG's working methods and activities, building on lessons learnt from the previous cycle and considering opportunities to further strengthen cooperation, participation and information sharing. The discussion will continue through additional exchanges and future meetings, supporting the group's work programme for 2026 and beyond. ●

calendar

What's on in February?

- 4-5 | 3rd meeting of the Group on Security Testing (STG/3), videoconference
- 4-5 | 93rd meeting of the Technical Task Force (TTF/93), videoconference
- 6 | 23rd meeting of the European Coordination Group on Aviation Security (ECG-AS/23), videoconference
- 9 | 27th meeting of the European Coordination Group on Facilitation (ECG-FAL/27), videoconference
- 12-13 | 61st meeting of the Training Task Force (TrTF/61), videoconference
- 20 | 2nd Steering Committee meeting for the ECAC/EU Dialogue (DIA2026-STC/2), videoconference
- 25-26 | 43rd meeting of the Behaviour Detection Study Group (BDSG/43), videoconference
- 25-26 | 47th meeting of the Explosive Detection Dogs Study Group (EDD/47), Lisbon

