



## DIRECTORS GENERAL

### Directors General of Civil Aviation gather in Madrid for 44<sup>th</sup> Special Plenary Session and ad hoc DGCA meeting

**Madrid, 17 March 2026** — The 44<sup>th</sup> Special Plenary Session of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC/44) and an ad hoc meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation were held in Madrid on 17 March 2026, hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility.

Opening the Special Plenary Session, Benito Núñez, Spanish Secretary General for Air and Maritime Transport, highlighted the vital role of civil aviation in connectivity, economic growth and international cooperation.

During the session, Directors General adopted amendments to the ECAC

Constitution concerning the procedure for the election of Officers of the Conference.

At the ad hoc DGCA meeting, Directors General applied these new amendments to elect Chems Chkioua (France) and Øyvind Ek (Norway) as new members to the ECAC Coordinating Committee.

Discussions at the DGCA meeting explored key developments, priorities and challenges facing European civil aviation, alongside updates on ECAC's ongoing work, including the ECAC Common Evaluation Process (CEP) of security equipment, facilitation capacity-building activities and progress on Member States' signature of the Convention on the Bureau of ECAC.

Spain's Director General of Civil Aviation, David Benito, also offered valuable insights into the national aviation framework and the sector's important role in supporting the country's connectivity and economic vitality.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry for its generous hospitality and for hosting this important meeting. ●



Alessio Quaranta (Italy), President of ECAC



Benito Núñez, Spanish Secretary General for Air and Maritime Transport

### New Coordinating Committee members

A warm welcome to **Chems Chkioua** (pictured on the left), Director General of Civil Aviation, France, and **Øyvind Ek** (pictured on the right), Deputy Director General, Ministry of Transport, Norway, who were elected as members of the Coordinating Committee during the ad hoc meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation in Madrid (17 March 2026).



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## Three more Member States sign the ECAC Convention

**Madrid, 17 March 2026** — Three more ECAC Member States – Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Spain – have signed the Convention on the Bureau of the European Civil Aviation Conference, marking another significant step forward in this important process.

The signings took place on 17 March on the margins of the ad hoc meeting of Directors General hosted by the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility of Spain in Madrid.

With these latest additions, the total



Laura Köonner, DGCA Luxembourg

Henri van Faassen, DGCA Netherlands

David Benito, DGCA Spain

number of signatory States has reached 21. This milestone reflects the growing commitment among ECAC Member States to

strengthening cooperation and advancing common objectives. ●



## Coordinating Committee reviews strategic priorities and advances preparations for upcoming meetings

**Madrid, 18 March 2026** — The 207<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Coordinating Committee, kindly hosted by David Benito, Director General of Civil Aviation, Spain, brought members together for a constructive exchange on key priorities.

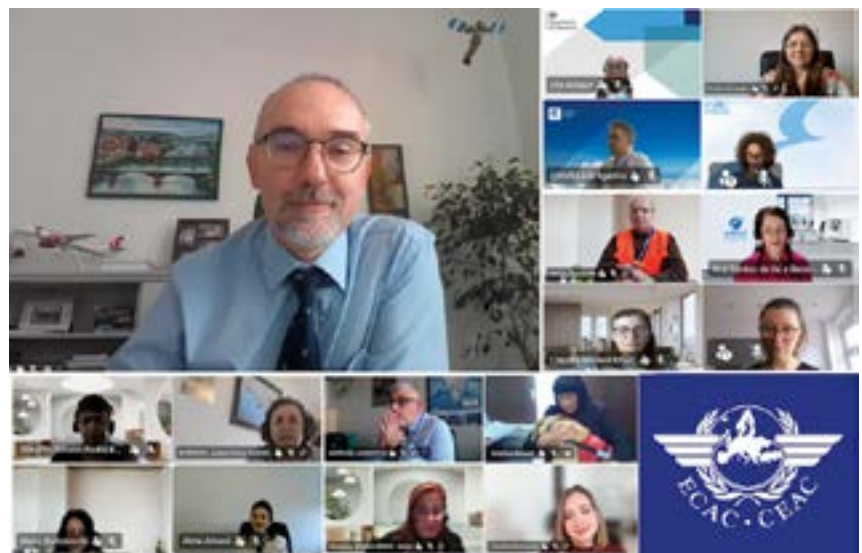
During the meeting, the Coordinating Committee appointed the following new ECAC Focal Points:

- David Benito (DGCA Spain) for Security;
- Chems Chkioua (DGCA France) for Safety;
- Julian Rotter (DGCA Poland) for Facilitation;
- For the UAS portfolio, the Committee appointed two Focal Points: Øyvind Ek (Norway) and Wilhelm Eschweiler (DGCA Germany).

The Committee also engaged in a range of strategic and timely discussions, notably examining the implications of the current geopolitical landscape for European civil aviation, updates on ongoing ECAC activities and financial matters, and progress in shaping the agenda for the forthcoming May DGCA meeting and the ECAC/EU Dialogue with the air transport industry, scheduled for October 2026 in Paris.

The Committee also endorsed the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure for almost all ECAC working groups and agreed to their submission to Directors General for adoption. ●

## ECAC workshop on building an inclusive future for aviation



**Videoconference, 24-25 March 2026** — ECAC organised a workshop in March entitled “Building an Inclusive Future for Aviation”, under the framework of the ECAC Network on Diversity and Inclusion in Civil Aviation (NETD&I). The workshop brought together more than 55 participants from 21 ECAC Member States.

Speakers from Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom presented national experiences and practical initiatives to promote diversity, inclusion, skills development and accessibility in aviation, alongside contributions from the European Commission, EASA, EUROCONTROL, the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers’ Associations (IFATCA), Icelandair, the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) and the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC).

In his opening remarks, ECAC Focal Point for Diversity and Inclusion, Zdeněk Jelínek (DGCA Czechia) (pictured above), stressed that diversity and inclusion are an integral part of aviation policy and a key enabler for a resilient and sustainable sector. He highlighted the role of NETD&I and the ECAC Charter on Diversity and Inclusion, and emphasised that progress depends on cooperation and partnership across organisations and regions.

Over two days, discussions explored challenges and good practices related to inclusive workplaces, leadership, skills, accessibility and the passenger experience. ●

## EMTO reviews ECAC reference documents

**Videoconference, 31 March 2026** — Members of the ECAC Medium-Term Objectives (EMTO) Task Force met for the first time in 2026 to review and propose updates to ECAC reference documents such as the ECAC Communication Strategy.

They also analysed all the responses received from Member States to a survey on the added value of ECAC working groups, agreeing on a series of follow-up actions that will be submitted to Directors General for further reflection and decisions.

Following the election of Chems Chkioua and Øyvind Ek as members of the Coordinating Committee, two new EMTO members were appointed: Nils Raynaud (France) and Karl Koefoed (Norway), who will join the EMTO meetings and discussions. ●



## ECONOMIC MATTERS

### Shaping the future of aviation resilience: preparations advance for the 13<sup>th</sup> ECAC/ EU Dialogue with the European air transport industry

**Videoconference, 30 March 2026** — Preparations for the 13<sup>th</sup> ECAC/EU Dialogue with the European air transport industry (Paris, 13-14 October 2026) continue to progress as the Steering Committee held its third online meeting in March. Bringing together eleven Member States and eight representatives of partner organisations, the meeting marked further advances in shaping what promises to be a timely event.

This year's Dialogue will focus on strengthening resilience across the aviation sector, examining how threats are identified, assessed, and addressed today, and how this informs future preparedness. Discussions will span three core dimensions: insights from those monitoring evolving risks

across aviation; case studies highlighting current European and national initiatives to safeguard resilience and competitiveness; and forward-looking reflections on how to enhance the sector's ability to withstand future shocks.

Participants made solid progress in refining the programme reflecting a shared commitment to delivering a conference that is both relevant and forward-thinking.

Registration will open in the spring. Visit the ECAC website for more information and regular updates: <https://www.ecac-ceac.org/events-and-meetings/upcoming-events/2026-ecac-eu-dialogue>. ●

### European coordination group on economic matters meets for the first time in 2026 to share updates and plans for the year ahead

**Videoconference, 12 March 2026** — Members of the European Coordination Group on Economic matters met virtually to resume work launched at the end of 2025, marking the start of preparations for ICAO's Seventh Air Transport Conference (ATConf/7, Montreal, 16-20 November 2026). The group will start discussing European priorities and possible working papers once the agenda has been adopted by the ICAO Council.

During the meeting, participants also shared updates on their contributions to the ongoing work of the ICAO Air Transport Regulation Panel. This year, several experts from ECAC Member States are actively engaged in the Panel's working groups, addressing key issues such as Article 15 of the Chicago Convention and a comprehensive review of the ICAO Template Air Services Agreement. ●





## European exchanges continue ahead of ICAO Facilitation Panel

**Videoconference, 10 March 2026** — Experts from ECAC Member States and European institutions met online on 10 March for the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Coordination Group on Facilitation, in preparation for the upcoming ICAO Facilitation Panel (FALP/14, Montreal, 20-24 April 2026).

Co-chaired by Italy on behalf of ECAC, and the European Commission, the meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on the working papers expected to be discussed at the Panel.

Participants shared updates on a range of initiatives, including papers on irregular migration by air, crew identification, accessibility and inclusive air transport, wildlife trafficking, and the transportation of pets. ●



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## CEP Management Group reviews testing progress and sets priorities for 2026

**Videoconference, 10 and 12 March 2026** — The 67<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ECAC Common Evaluation Process (CEP) Management Group focused on the status of test programmes, configuration change management (CCM) activities, and priorities for 2026.

Participants reviewed ongoing and scheduled tests, including pending allocations and report endorsements, noting steady progress and the need to further optimise available testing capacity. Discussions highlighted the importance of supporting the integration of new and potential test centres through guidance, collaboration and quality assurance activities. For the first time, the Italian Civil Aviation Authority, ENAC, participated as an observer, marking a first step towards broader engagement in CEP activities as a future contributing authority.

The meeting also addressed the implementation of recently agreed CEP procedures and upcoming developments, including the organisation of a manufacturers' information session and enhanced engagement with stakeholders. ●

## CEP test centres review testing activities and strengthen coordination for 2026 activities

**Videoconference, 4 March 2026** — The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the test centres participating in the ECAC Common Evaluation Process (CEP) of security equipment focused on the status of ongoing and planned testing activities and key implementation aspects for 2026.

Participants reviewed progress across CEP test programmes, covering over 100 allocated tests (2025 and first quarter 2026), and discussed pending allocations and configuration change management (CCM) requests.

The meeting also addressed coordination across test centres and some practical aspects of testing, as well as the importance of maintaining efficiency and enhanced consistency in CEP testing activities.

For the first time, armasuisse (Switzerland) joined the meeting following its designation as a CEP participating test centre for explosive trace detection (ETD) testing.

Participants also discussed activities to support the integration of new and potential future test centres, including collaboration, knowledge sharing and practical guidance. ●



## Preparatory meeting of the unmanned aircraft systems working group

**Videoconference, 23 March 2026** — A preparatory meeting with members of the ECAC Working Group on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) was held online in March ahead of the group's first formal meeting. It brought together ECAC experts in the domain for the first time since 2024, and for the first time since Directors General agreed to reformulate the previous ad hoc engagement into a working group.

Participants considered the working group's draft Terms of Reference, and provided

suggestions for topics to be covered in this year's work programme. These include a keen interest in U-Space and integration of airspace users, electronic conspicuity and remote ID, and counter-UAS developments.

The topics and initial suggestions for possible outputs were noted to be used as a basis for finalising the work programme's list of deliverables at the group's next meeting, scheduled to be held in May or June 2026. ●



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## What's on in April?

- 1 April: 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Coordination Group on Aviation Security (ECG-AS/24), Paris
- 8 April: 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Action Plans for Emissions Reduction Task Group (APER-TG/21), videoconference
- 8-9 April: 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Coordination Group on Facilitation (ECG-FAL/29), Rome/videoconference
- 9 April: 91<sup>st</sup> meeting of the European Aviation and Environment Working Group – CAEP (EAEG/91), videoconference
- 9 April: 92<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the European Aviation and Environment Working Group – Expanded (EAEG/92-Exp), videoconference
- 15 April: 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Facilitation PRM experts (FAL-PRM-Expert/7), Chisinau/videoconference
- 16 April: 77<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Facilitation Sub-group on Persons with Reduced Mobility (FAL-PRM-SG/77), Chisinau
- 16 April: 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the European Coordination Group on Economic matters (ECG-ECO/22), Helsinki
- 17 April: 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Economic Working Group (ECO/21), Helsinki
- 20-21 April: 67<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Guidance Material Task Force (GMTF/67), Berlin/videoconference
- 21-22 April: 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Aircraft Noise Modelling Task Group (AIRMOD/44), Cologne/videoconference
- 22-23 April: 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Study Group on Cyber Security in Civil Aviation (CYBER/55), Toulouse/videoconference

