

**Forum:** 3rd Committee (Disarmament & Int. Security)

**Issue:** Comprehensive Strengthening of International Flight Safety

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## **Introduction**

Flying is one of the safest forms of transport according to statistics, and the fastest growing as well. Faced with the explosion of the air traffic and a huge number of carriers resulting from the successful implementation of the single aviation market, the European Union (EU) has decided to seize the initiative, to ensure that all European citizens can enjoy the same level of safety in the sky.

Beyond ensuring a high level of safety for the passengers, the EU air safety policy promotes rules that are cost efficient and facilitate the free movement of products, services, and persons involved in civil aviation.

Aviation safety is the concern of the whole world. Its importance is unanimously recognized. While air transportation is by far the safest mode of travel, as measured by the ratio between the number of accidents and that of passenger/kilometers, it is susceptible to inherent risks of flight, the use of force, and, more dangerously, terrorist acts.

Civil aviation needs to overcome not only the natural or inherent hazards of aircraft operations, such as mechanical failure, bad weather conditions, or human errors; but it must also resist man-made dangers and threats. The relations between civil aviation and military activities represent a crucial aspect of aviation safety. The greatest risk posed by military activities to civil aviation has been demonstrated by occurrences of civil aircraft being shot down deliberately or by mistake, causing numerous fatalities.

It may be concluded, therefore, while aviation safety is a multidisciplinary matter, the legislator of a sovereign State may, subject to its international obligations imposed by the Chicago Convention and other sources of international law, determine how safe is safe for aviation within its areas of competence, such as aircraft registered or operated in its territory, personnel licensed in its country and airports as well as air traffic service agencies under its jurisdiction. From this perspective, it may not be difficult to argue that aviation safety is ultimately a matter of law, namely, a matter of legislation and its implementation.

## **Definition of key terms**

### Aviation safety

A term encompassing the theory, which can also be applied in the context of campaigns that inform the public as to the safety of air travel.

### Safety oversight

Safety oversight may be defined as “a function by means of which States ensure effective implementation of the safety-related Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and associated procedures contained in the Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and related ICAO documents” - Safety Oversight Manual (2006)

### Standards And Recommended Practices (SARPs)

Technical specifications adopted by the Council of ICAO in accordance with Article 37 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation in order to achieve "the highest practicable degree of uniformity in regulations, standards, procedures and organization in relation to aircraft, personnel, airways and auxiliary services in all matters in which such uniformity will facilitate and improve air navigation".

## **Background Information**

The year 1910 witnessed the first international air law conference, which marked the serious attempt to provide a global regulatory regime for civil aviation. The delegations of 19 States gathered in France for six weeks from 18 May to 29 June to prepare the first multilateral air law convention. The conference did not end with the adoption of a convention because the participating States could not agree on whether they should offer equal treatment to foreign and national aircraft with respect to the freedom of overflight.

Many important safety related issues, such as the nationality and registration of aircraft, airworthiness and personnel licensing, were covered by these provisions, which were inherited in both substantive content and drafting style by the 1919 Paris Convention and the 1944 Chicago Convention. The draft convention also contained three annexes dealing respectively with national and registration marks of aircraft, characteristics of aircraft relating to airworthiness and the rules of air traffic. The conference also adopted statements to declare a number of important principles, which, inter alia, affirmed that

rules of the air in free airspace should be established by international agreements. Indeed, the conference had established a basic framework for the regulation of aviation safety, which paved the way for future development in this respect.

### **Major countries involved**

The issue of comprehensive strengthening of International Flight Safety is truly international due to the fact that there are more than 300 commercial air companies and, according to statistics, about 2 billion people travelling by plane every year. However, member states that are owners of the biggest airline companies (the USA, Germany, China, France, the UK, the United Arab Emirates) are more vulnerable to the possible consequences connected with insufficient security of flights.

### **UN Involvement**

Several documents were signed by member states in order to implement measures to strengthen aviation safety.

Convention on International Civil Aviation (also known as *Chicago Convention*), was signed on 7 December 1944 by 52 States. Pending ratification of the Convention by 26 States, the Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAO) was established. It functioned from 6 June 1945 until 4 April 1947. By 5 March 1947 the 26th ratification was received. ICAO came into being on 4 April 1947. In October of the same year, ICAO became a specialized agency of the United Nations linked to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

### **Possible solutions**

Even though air transportation is a global industry and numerous States are involved, there are still some countries with underdeveloped aviation. Therefore, it is important to establish long-lasting relationships between different Member States in order to achieve the goal of flight safety.

Taking into account current situation in the Middle East, it is vital to develop new strategies and policies in order to minimize the risk of terroristic acts.

## **Reliable useful links**

[Flight Safety Foundation](#)

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/international\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/international_en.htm)

[The European Aviation Safety Policy](#)

[New Measures to Strengthen Aviation Security](#)

[International Civil Aviation Organization](#)