



## **ICAO FACILITATION CONFERENCE 2025**

### **ORAL STATEMENT - ECAC PRESIDENT, ALESSIO QUARANTA**

It is my great pleasure to address you today at the 2025 ICAO Facilitation Conference as President of the European Civil Aviation Conference, ECAC. This event gives to the domain of facilitation the much-needed attention it requires, being at the heart of our aviation industry. We strongly believe that the effective implementation of facilitation measures as defined in Annex 9 to the Chicago Convention is essential to reach the full potential of connectivity, economic growth and sustainability that civil aviation brings to our citizens.

While ECAC celebrates this year its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it continues to promote the continued development of a safe, efficient and sustainable European air transport system, and facilitation is an integral component of this development.

ECAC has long recognised the importance of facilitation for air transport. In fact the first meeting of the formal ECAC Facilitation Committee was held in 1969. Since then we have sought to prioritise the subjects and issues that are of common interest to our 44 Member States, and where ECAC can add value to, for example to collaborate practically in fora such as this one, to share experiences and best practices, and to work together to come up with practical solutions to current and emerging challenges.

ECAC's facilitation experts develop efficient and harmonised facilitation measures on a Pan-European basis; And in doing so, they work in close cooperation with international partners, with states and organisations. This supports a wider international collaboration through direct engagement with states in other regions and international organisations representing the interests of all stakeholders.

Let me share with you our three main priorities in facilitation:

1. The first one is **Accessibility**: We are responsible to make sure that air transport is accessible to all passengers, including those with visible or hidden disabilities. At ECAC we launched a programme last year to assess the quality of assistance provided by states, airports, airlines and other service providers to persons with disabilities. This programme has been designed to support ECAC Member States in their compliance monitoring activities of operators to ensure that the measures on site met our regional recommendations set in ECAC Doc 30 and the provision of assistance is of sufficient quality. In time we will welcome an exchange with international partners on how these learnings and other experiences could be used by the international community to make improvements in the overall accessibility of air transport. Of course, ECAC has other workstreams related to accessibility, such as on service dogs.
2. The second is the **Assistance to air accident victims**: This is an area where improvement is needed across the aviation sector. Experience has made us acutely aware of the need to plan and implement better assistance to air accident victims and their families. ECAC believes it can support work on this for the benefit of all, and has established a formal task group to address key issues towards this goal. Its current work includes the development of a family assistance plan template for ECAC Member States and related guidance material, and the second phase later this year, more practical, will be to help, at no cost to them, our Member States to draft or improve their national family assistance plan, as part of our ECAC capacity building programme.
3. Lastly our third priority is on **immigration matters**. I wish to highlight the focus that ECAC has on the facilitation of border controls and related passenger journey aspects of international air transport. The implementation of immigration controls, including the introduction of innovative technologies, is complex and requires coordination across multiple agencies. By sharing their experiences and developing best practices, ECAC Member States are able to develop together more efficient crossborder systems. Our experts have been working in collaboration with other European organisations to prepare for

changes to border controls, as well as to come together to address issues related to Advance Passenger Information, initiatives to identify fraudulent travel documents and combat illegal activities such as wildlife and human trafficking.

I would like to conclude by expressing our thanks to ICAO and the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority for the organisation of this Conference, which I am sure, will pave the way to constructive discussions on facilitation during the forthcoming Assembly in September.

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