



**EU-AFRICA AVIATION CONFERENCE**

**WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA  
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**Key note address by Mr Patrick Goudou**

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Honourable Minister of Transport of Namibia  
Honourable Representative of the “Président en exercice” of the  
European Union  
Honourable Representative of the EU Commissioner Tajani  
Mr President of AFCAC  
Mr Secretary General of AFCAC  
Honourable Ministers  
Director Generals of Civil Aviation  
Representatives of the industry  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Dear Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

First, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Namibia for the kind invitation extended to me and my team. We view this meeting as a major milestone in the long-lasting cooperation history between Europe and Africa. This is my first visit to Namibia, and despite the limited duration of my stay in Windhoek, I have been able to appreciate the kind hospitality of the Namibian people. I have been able to confirm, also, that Namibia undoubtedly deserves its reputation of “African Switzerland” because of the tremendous level of organisation and discipline of its people. Being here with you is a real pleasure.

This having been said, seeing the beautiful city of Windhoek is not the main purpose of my travel to Namibia. I decided to participate in this meeting because I consider cooperation with our African partners on aviation safety enhancement in Africa one of the Agency’s responsibilities. Some of you may wonder why !?

Indeed, several provisions of our Basic Regulation – the European Community Regulation that created EASA – address cooperation with third countries (don't worry, I won't read them all...). There are several reasons for this:

Firstly, European products (aircraft, engines, aeronautical parts etc.) are used or operated, by African and non-African operators, in Africa. As the primary certification authority for products designed in Europe, we have a major interest in the operations of such products in other parts of the World.

Furthermore, we strive to promote the highest level of aviation safety not only in Europe, but in the whole World, for European citizens fly everywhere on the Globe, and expect the European institutions to do their best to ensure that wherever they board an aircraft, anywhere on the Planet, their life be exposed to the lowest possible level of risk. As you know, statistics show that there are, currently, significant disparities in terms of aviation safety levels, between various regions of the world.

Last but not least, the African industry has access to the European market: EASA-approved maintenance organisations conduct maintenance tasks on European-registered aircraft in Africa; mechanical engineers, pilots and other African professionals wish to exert their profession in Europe; African airlines fly into Europe; tomorrow, maybe, aeronautical products and parts will be produced in Africa etc.

So for all these reasons, we wish to contribute to aviation safety improvement efforts in Africa.

But before explaining briefly what EASA can do to contribute to such efforts, please let me expose in a few words our perception of the current situation in the Continent.

It should first be made clear that I refuse a certain form of pessimism that sometimes paralyses good-willed aeronautical professionals, either in Europe or in Africa. I, personally, see no valid justification for Africa not being able to reach, in the foreseeable future, a global level of safety, and overall level of compliance with ICAO standards and recommended practices (SARPs), that would be close to the World average. This should be part of our vision and our goals at the onset of a new partnership between Europe and Africa.

The continent has strengths and assets. Some economically powerful countries can drive and support sub-regional aviation safety enhancement initiatives. Some regional economic commissions provide an adequate institutional framework for the creation and effective operation of regional aviation safety agencies.

Some regional cooperation projects, such as ASECNA, have proved to be quite effective in developing a common transnational safety culture.

I wish, also, to remind that Western best aeronautical engineer, pilot or mechanics schools train every year some bright African students. Convincing them that attractive professional opportunities exist for them in Africa is a joint challenging responsibility for you and for us.

So obviously, we have reasons to be reasonably optimistic.

Nevertheless, as aviation safety professionals, we cannot afford to turn a naïve eye on the situation in Africa. At national level, too many civil aviation authorities lack the minimum level of human and financial resources; ICAO regularly points out the insufficiency or the lack of adequate aviation regulations; aviation experts cannot always work in a “just culture” environment and political or economical factors sometimes override safety concerns. As will be shown by the European Commission in its presentation, the global level of non-compliance to ICAO SARPs is currently much higher in Africa than in any other region, as is the accident rate. In several regions, the necessary vision about future regional structures is not yet in place.

So we know how challenging the task that you are facing is. Please be assured that within the limits of our resources, we will make any effort to assist you in dealing with this challenge. In accordance with the political thrust provided by the European Commission, EASA will contribute to helping its African partners in their aviation safety improvement efforts. I wanted to assure you in person of the unfailing support of the Agency.

In practice, what can EASA do with you?

For those of you who elected to adopt or adapt European aviation safety rules, a specific online tool was recently introduced by the Agency. As recommended by the first EASA International Cooperation Forum, held in Cologne last year, a specific secure website was created and is now operational. A number of activities have been planned for the benefit of such “preferred partners” within this framework.

For these partners, and others, other activities have also been and will be, implemented:

When justified by their level of business exchanges with Europe, working arrangements could be signed between EASA and certain African States.

With others, technical cooperation activities can contribute to raising their safety oversight capability. Our project selection and implementation processes rely on the following principles (on which we will elaborate during our presentation under agenda item 3 – Aviation safety):

- We favour regional projects;
- We naturally cooperate in the fields that correspond to our core activities: rulemaking, safety initiatives, SAFA, organisation approvals etc.
- To be efficient, we seek to work with accountable partners, in a project management approach, and with whom co-decision is sought (e.g. in the definition of priorities or implementation details);
- We target sustainable activities.

But most importantly, we need, from our African partners, visibility, commitment and consistence. In several African sub-regions, different competing projects are currently implemented in parallel. We cannot afford to duplicate our efforts, and therefore our cooperation projects need to be focused on the regional framework that African States will have chosen. We can accommodate almost any regional institutional framework, as long as a clear vision exists on our partners' side, and clear choices are made and assumed.

I would like to thank again the People and the Government of the Republic of Namibia for hosting this important event, and I wish you all a very fruitful meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

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