

Statement no 1 from EACCC
23 May 2011

Following the eruption of the Grimsvötn volcano on 21 May, the European Aviation Crisis Coordination Cell (EACCC), set up on 19 May 2010 following the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull, has been activated.

The EACCC held its first meeting at 10.30 CET today. During the meeting, the participants, who include States, European Commission, EUROCONTROL, EASA, Air Navigation Service Providers, Airlines, and airport associations, shared information on the current situation in European airspace as well as on its possible evolution. They agreed a number of recommendations for managing the potential impact on European airspace while respecting established safety levels.

The EACCC will recommend to States that they adopt a revised approach, in line with guidance material developed by ICAO – ‘Management of Flight Operations with Known or Forecast Volcanic Cloud Contamination’. This approach allows airlines to decide if they will fly in areas contaminated by ash, on the basis of a safety risk assessment accepted by the relevant national supervisory authority. The material is currently subject to EASA rule-making procedures and in this respect EASA will circulate a letter to all States during the course of the day providing them with additional information on this approach.

In some States, this approach is already in place and was tested during the volcanic ash exercise in April 2011. In others, additional information is still required in order to adopt the approach, and the EACCC will therefore be encouraging airlines to provide all necessary information to their national authorities when submitting their safety risk assessments for operations in actual or potential ash-contaminated airspace.

As the situation is constantly evolving, the European Commission, EUROCONTROL and EASA will continue to provide all relevant information to national authorities to enable them to take the best possible decisions on how to manage safety in their national airspace in the interest of the travelling public.