



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Henrik Hololei

Head of Cabinet of Vice-President and Commissioner for Transport Siim Kallas

ICAO High Level Conference on Aviation Security

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

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Chairman, Secretary General, distinguished representatives of the Member States and Observers of ICAO,

I am delighted to be with you today to say a few words on behalf of the European Union on our views on how the global aviation community can advance together on the important issue of aviation security.

Much has happened since the 9/11 attacks in the United States. One of the lasting repercussions has been to form a strong international consensus on the need to improve aviation security. Let us also recall that it was in the wake of those very events that the last ICAO security conference was held.

The European Union, for its part, since implemented a robust and comprehensive security regime which has shown its ability to counter threats and advance in step with technology developments. That regime is based on international standards drawn up in ICAO.

However, the threat of terrorism to aviation security has continued to evolve and is far from disappearing. Civil aviation is still one of the main targets of international terrorism, and is perhaps sadly, the "target of choice".

We saw that most recently with the 2010 attempts to circumvent air cargo security controls. Explosive devices concealed in packages and destined for shipment as cargo have made us realise that, in today's global threat environment, air cargo continues to be a definite area of vulnerability.

This is why we would like to call upon this conference to support stronger international rules for air cargo security that protect consignments transported by plane through the entire supply chain. This is an area where we cannot compromise on security because there is a proven and obvious threat.

The ICAO AVSEC Working Group on Air Cargo Security, under the leadership of Singapore, has done some impressive work on laying out principles for air cargo and mail security – and I would like to congratulate the Working Group for its efforts. Given the advanced stage of its work, these principles receive the full support of the European Union and should take be acted upon as soon as possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the EU, our approach is to encourage innovation to anticipate and respond to new security challenges. There is no doubt that new or enhanced technologies can really help us in developing a system for the future that not only secures air transport, but facilitates it.

The challenge for security technologies is to achieve high rates of detection accuracy whilst delivering efficient, risk-based and cost-effective security solutions that do not cause unnecessary cost to business and inconvenience to passengers.

It's clear that international aviation continues to grow and with it grows the challenge to deliver a high level of security, which must be reconciled with a better passenger experience and more efficient throughput. In a word, 'sustainability'.

So we do not want layer upon layer of security control and associated costs, or duplication of security measures - particularly at transfer points - where adequate security controls have already been carried out at the point of origin.

An example of avoiding duplication is the recently concluded mutual recognition arrangement between the EU and the U.S. on air cargo security.

Within the EU, the concept of 'one-stop security' is applied. It could and should be more widely explored; the benefits of having a good security-facilitation balance in terms of

expedience, lower costs and taking a risk-based approach to optimise limited resources is something that I believe we need to examine.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would also like to refer to capacity building as a good way of achieving global compliance with international standards. This, I believe, should be seen as a partnership between States, as it is a chance for them to help each other. But if these partnerships are to be effective, States need to volunteer enough information on their compliance with international rules laid down by ICAO, so that we all maintain an acceptable level of security in line with global standards.

ICAO is the best forum for us to work together in this vital area, to address threats effectively. And furthermore, its Universal Security Audit Programme is an excellent instrument to monitor implementation of the rules, and in doing so, to collect such information useful for capacity building initiatives, so that action can be targeted to where it is needed. As such, how to best share information collected during security audits is a question that needs answering.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is by working together that so much has been achieved over the last decade. In terms of global policy and standards, we are progressing well, which is why today's conference discussions can really help us to go the extra mile. In particular, ambitious conference results on air cargo security would be a significant achievement. I would assure you that EU will deliver its part and urges others to do the same.

Security is a matter for everyone. No country can tackle the threat that terrorism poses to international civil aviation on its own. ICAO is the appropriate place to discuss this and deliver solutions. We welcome its leadership.

Thank you for your attention.