Parliamentary Assembly
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Recommendation 1549 (2002)[1]

Air transport and terrorism: how to enhance security?

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The hijacking of four US airliners in the United States on 11 September 2001, resulting in the killing of nearly 3 500 people in New York and Washington, highlights the need for reinforced security measures in air transport.

2. The Assembly acknowledges the long-standing work against air terrorism pursued by the European Civil Aviation Conference (Ecac) on behalf of its thirty-eight member states and recalls its own steadfast support for this work, as expressed in its Recommendation 1099 (1989) on aviation security.

3. The Assembly welcomes the close co-operation established since the events of 11 September between Ecac and the European Union, and the latter's subsequent draft legislation, largely based on Ecac's aviation security measures (Avsec).

4. The Assembly takes note of the considerable impact the adopted measures have already had on reinforcing security in air transport, but reinforcement of the security should be permanently accompanied by appropriate activities to inform the public about the progress achieved.

5. The Assembly recalls the importance of the following guiding principles underlying the new security level required:

On the ground

i. "100% reconciliation" between checked-in luggage and passengers to ensure that no luggage travels unaccompanied;

ii. reinforced security control of passengers and their hand luggage, as well as of all those with access to restricted areas (for example, catering, duty free and in-flight service items);

iii. 100% screeningof checked-in luggage introduced as early as possible, at the latest by the end of 2002;

iv. pre-flight checks of the interior and exterior of aircraft;

v. implementation of the special security regime developed by Ecac for cargo, mail and express parcels;

In the air

vi. prevention of any attempt by an unauthorised person to gain access to the cockpit, for example by the instalment of doors equipped with bars and locks capable of withstanding bullets and explosives, while at the same time permitting crew members to access and control the rest of the aircraft, and to escape in the event of an emergency;

1. Assembly debate on 23 January 2002 (5th Sitting) (see Doc. 9296, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Billing). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 January 2002 (5th Sitting).

vii. maintenance of contact at all times between the ground and the aircraft through vocal communication; transponder communication giving the aircraft's location, under the authority of Eurocontrol as the "European regional focal point" for civilian and military air traffic management information; and a press-button alarm function at the start of terrorist attacks;

viii. presence, at each country's discretion, of armed in-flight security personnel, and the international acceptance of such presence through international agreements;

Implementation

ix. the implementation and continued enforcement of the new security level should be ensured by European and global audit (inspection) teams, preferably through the development of the Ecac Aviation Security Airport Audit programme already in operation.

6. In view of the fact that air terrorism knows no national frontiers, the Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which includes all European Union, Ecac and Eurocontrol member states as well as five additional countries, to ensure that the totality of the above measures, as called for in Ecac's Avsec recommendations and in the forthcoming European Union legislation, are introduced as a matter of urgency in the territory of all the forty-three member states of the Council of Europe.

7. The Assembly furthermore calls for the rapid development of further means to identify passengers, such as computer recognition of facial and eye (iris) characteristics and handprints.

8. Finally, in recognition of the global impact of terrorist attacks in the air, the Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers, Ecac, Eurocontrol and the European Union to work towards the earliest possible worldwide introduction of the above measures, through the International Civil Aviation Organisation.