

## Atlantic Conference on Eyjafjallajokull and Aviation

Reykjavik, Iceland – 15/16 September, 2010

### European Commission contribution

#### What was the impact on European air transport? What could be done to alleviate these effects in the future?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WHEN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF IMPACT ON EUROPEAN AIR TRANSPORT, MY DIRECTOR, MR CALLEJA, ALREADY ALLUDED IN HIS INTERVENTION TO SOME EXAMPLES OF FINANCIAL LOSSES SUFFERED IN THE INDUSTRY. I HAVE HERE A LIST OF FURTHER EXAMPLES THAT SHOW THE WIDER CONTEXT OF SUCH REPORTED LOSSES:

- EUROPEAN REGIONAL AIRLINES ASSOCIATION (ERAA) - € 250M
- INTERNATIONAL AIR CARRIERS ASSOCIATION (IACA) - € 310M
- EUROPEAN LOW FARES AIRLINES' ASSOCIATION (ELFAA) - € 200M
- AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL (ACI EUROPE) - € 250M
- INDEPENDENT HANDLERS ASSOCIATION (IAHA) - € 200M
- CIVIL AIR NAVIGATION SERVICE ORGANISATION (CANSO) - € 25M/DAY
- EUROPEAN TRAVEL AGENTS' AND TOUR OPERATORS' ASSOCIATION (ECTAA) - € 388M

AND THIS STILL ONLY REFLECTS THE DIRECT LINK TO THE AVIATION AND TRAVEL INDUSTRY, SO IF ONE WERE TO LOOK AT IT IN A COMPREHENSIVE MANNER ONE WOULD GET NEAR THE FIGURE THAT WAS MENTIONED EARLIER OF APPROXIMATELY € 4B.

HOWEVER, BRINGING IT BACK TO THE AVIATION CONTEXT, I THINK THAT ALL IN ALL IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE IMPACT FROM THE EYJAFJALLAJOKULL ERUPTION WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE AVIATION COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF VOLCANIC ASH PHENOMENA AND THEIR POTENTIAL EFFECT ON AVIATION WAS INADEQUATE.

THIS, HOWEVER, THEN ALSO SERVED AS A CATALYST FOR A VARIETY OF ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES TO BE IDENTIFIED FOR THE SAKE OF MITIGATING FUTURE EVENTS AND SITUATIONS OF THIS KIND.

AS MR CALLEJA STATED EARLIER – "IN EVERY CRISIS LIES AN OPPORTUNITY".

FROM THIS SPECIFIC EVENT NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES HAVE EMERGED, RANING FROM BETTER KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY, TO REVIEWING AND ENHANCING REGULATORY PROVISIONS (AND THEREBY SAFETY), TO THE FACILITATION OF JOINT EFFORTS FOR THE SAKE OF ACHIEVING A HARMONISED, GLOBAL APPROACH. AND THERE IS OF COURSE MORE BUT I WON'T LIST THEM ALL AT THIS TIME.

FROM A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE, AS WAS INDICATED EARLIER, ONE SUCH OPPORTUNITY IS THE ENHANCEMENT OF EUROPEAN ATM INTEGRATION THROUGH THE ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN SKY (SES) INITIATIVE. THE EFFECT OF SUCH AN ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION WILL ENABLE THE EUROPEAN NETWORK TO DEAL MORE

EFFICIENTLY AND SAFELY WITH CRISES OF SUCH TYPES, AND EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY ARE INDEED 2 OF THE UNDERLYING PILLARS OF THE SES INITIATIVE.

SO, YES, DURING THIS CRISIS AIR TRANSPORT SCHEDULES WERE VERY BADLY DISRUPTED WITH MANY CANCELLATIONS OVER SEVERAL DAYS, DAMAGE TO COMMERCIAL AIR OPERATORS, AND INCONVENIENCE TO THOUSANDS OF PASSENGERS. AND WHEREAS IT IS IMPORTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS FACT, IT REMAINS HOWEVER MORE IMPORTANT TO LOOK AHEAD AS TO HOW WE CAN DO BETTER NEXT TIME.

WITH THIS IN MIND, AND AS MY CONCLUDING REMARKS, LET ME LEAVE YOU WITH SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR GUIDING PRINCIPLES THAT COULD HELP STEER THE WORK THAT STILL LIES AHEAD OF US:

- **THE OPERATOR** SHOULD TAKE THE DECISION TO PLAN A FLIGHT INTO AIRSPACE CONTAMINATED BY VOLCANIC ASH. THIS DECISION SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN BY AUTHORIZED ENTITIES WHICH CLOSE THE AIRSPACE.
- SUCH DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE USING A **RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**, METHODOLOGY OR PROCESS THAT IS RECOGNISED AND AUTHORISED BY THE REGULATOR AND STANDARDISED SUFFICIENT TO EASE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.
- THE **REGULATOR** SHOULD MAKE ITS RECOGNITION AND AUTHORISATION DEPENDENT ON ITS SATISFACTION WITH THE EXTENT AND QUALITY OF THE INFORMATION CONSIDERED BY THE OPERATOR AND WITH THE RIGOUR WITH WHICH THE ATTENDANT HAZARDS ARE ASSESSED AND MITIGATED AGAINST.
- THE OPERATOR ASSESSMENT SHOULD INCLUDE INFORMATION **FROM THE AIRFRAME AND ENGINE** MANUFACTURERS CONCERNING THE EXPECTED AIRWORTHINESS EFFECTS OF FLIGHT INTO ASH-CONTAMINATED AIRSPACE EXPRESSED IN A MANNER COMPATIBLE WITH THE NEEDS OF THE OPERATOR AND **FROM THE VOLCANIC ASH ADVISORY CENTRES**, AND AS APPROPRIATE FROM OTHER QUALITY-PROOFED SOURCES, CONCERNING THE PREDICTED AND ACTUAL POSITION OF THE ASH-CONTAMINATED AIRSPACE AND CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THAT CONTAMINATION EXPRESSED IN A MANNER COMPATIBLE WITH THE NEEDS OF THE OPERATOR.
- THE ABSENCE OF SUITABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AIRWORTHINESS EFFECTS OF ASH, OF THE LOCATION AND NATURE OF ASH CONTAMINATION OR OF SUCH OTHER KEY INFORMATION AS THE REGULATOR MAY DIRECT, **WILL PREVENT OPERATORS** FROM PLANNING FLIGHTS INTO AIRSPACE IN WHICH THE PREDICTED ASH DENSITY EXCEEDS  $4 \times 10^{-3} \text{G/M}^3$  OR THE ACTUAL DENSITY EXCEEDS  $2 \times 10^{-3} \text{G/M}^3$

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.