



Crisis Management and Response

Sharing the EU experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

Bas van der Weide
Manager International Cooperation – EU Neighbourhood and Asia section

13th GHAC – Dubai 26 October 2021

Your safety is our mission.

An Agency of the European Union 

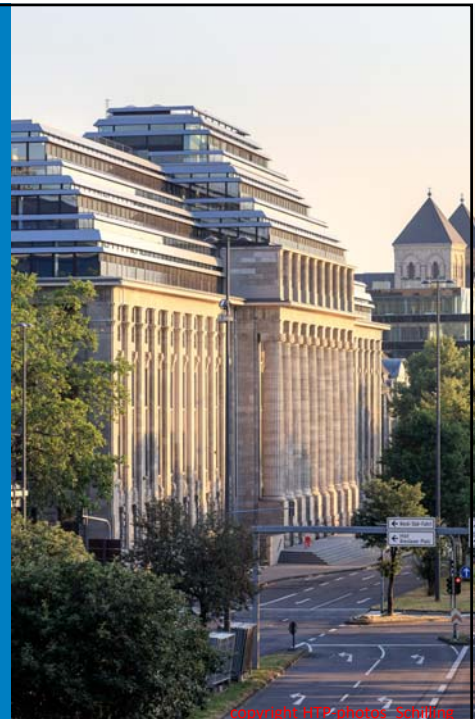
1



EASA

Who are we?

An Agency of the European Union 



2

European Union Aviation Safety Agency

Established
2002

18 years+
in operation

600

aviation experts
& administrators



EASA

Headquarters in
Cologne
Office in
Brussels



3

3

EASA's mission

Ensure the highest
common level of
safety protection
for citizens

Ensure the highest
common level of
environmental
protection

Single regulatory
and certification
process among
Member States

Facilitate the
internal aviation
single market &
create a level
playing field

Work with other
international
aviation
organisations &
regulators

EASA

4

4

EASA's mission

Draft implementing rules in all fields pertinent to the EASA mission

Certify & approve products and organisations, in fields where EASA has exclusive competence (e.g. airworthiness)

Provide oversight and support to Member States in fields where EASA has shared competence (e.g. Air Operations, Air Traffic Management)

Promote the use of European and worldwide standards

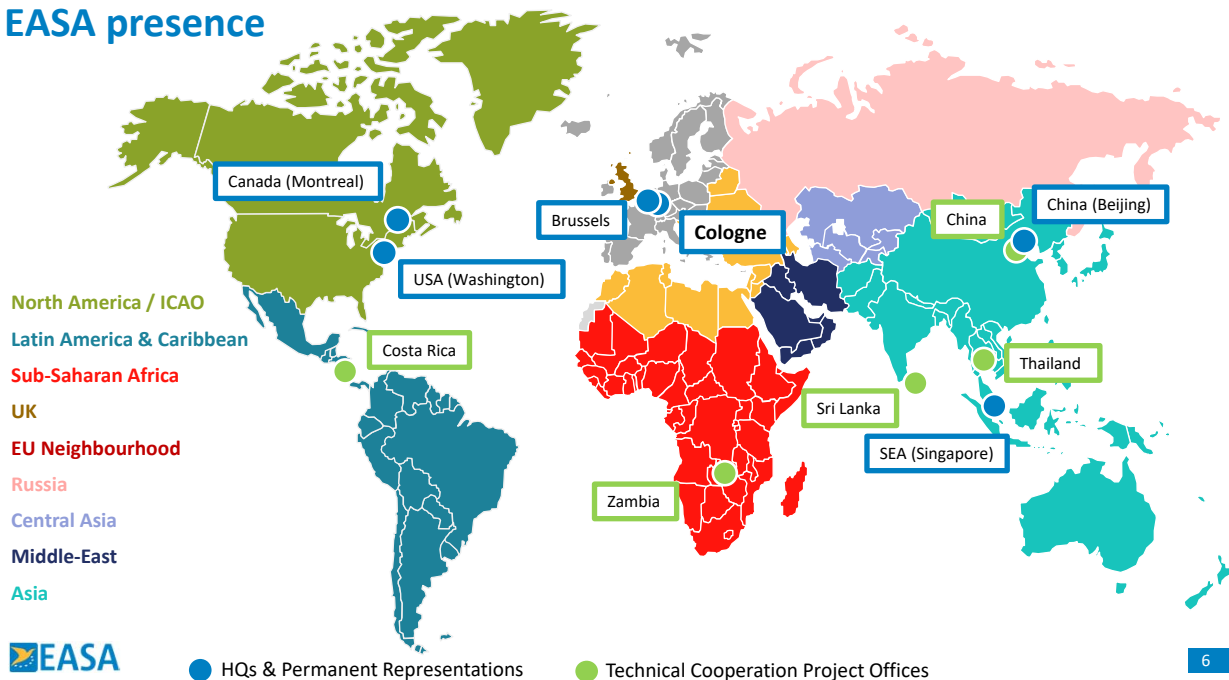
Cooperate with international actors in order to achieve the highest safety level for EU citizens globally (e.g. EU safety list, Third Country Operators authorisations)



5

5

EASA presence



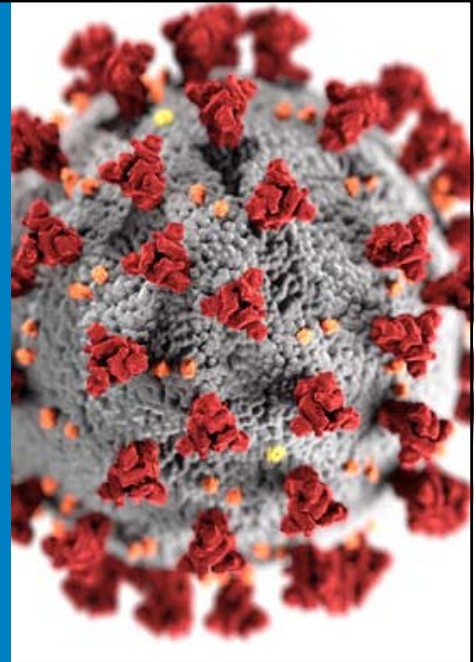
6

6

COVID-19 Pandemic

EU experience

An Agency of the European Union 



7

7

Aviation Crises

Article 91 of EASA's Basic Regulation:

- EASA shall, within its field of competence, contribute to a timely response to and mitigation of aviation crises, in coordination, with other appropriate stakeholders



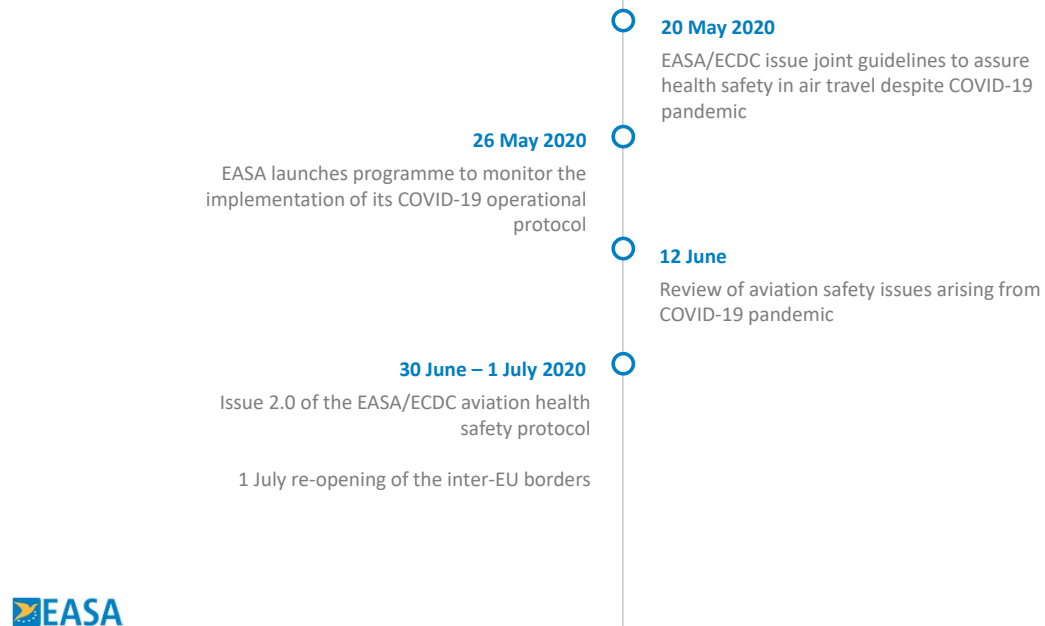
8

8

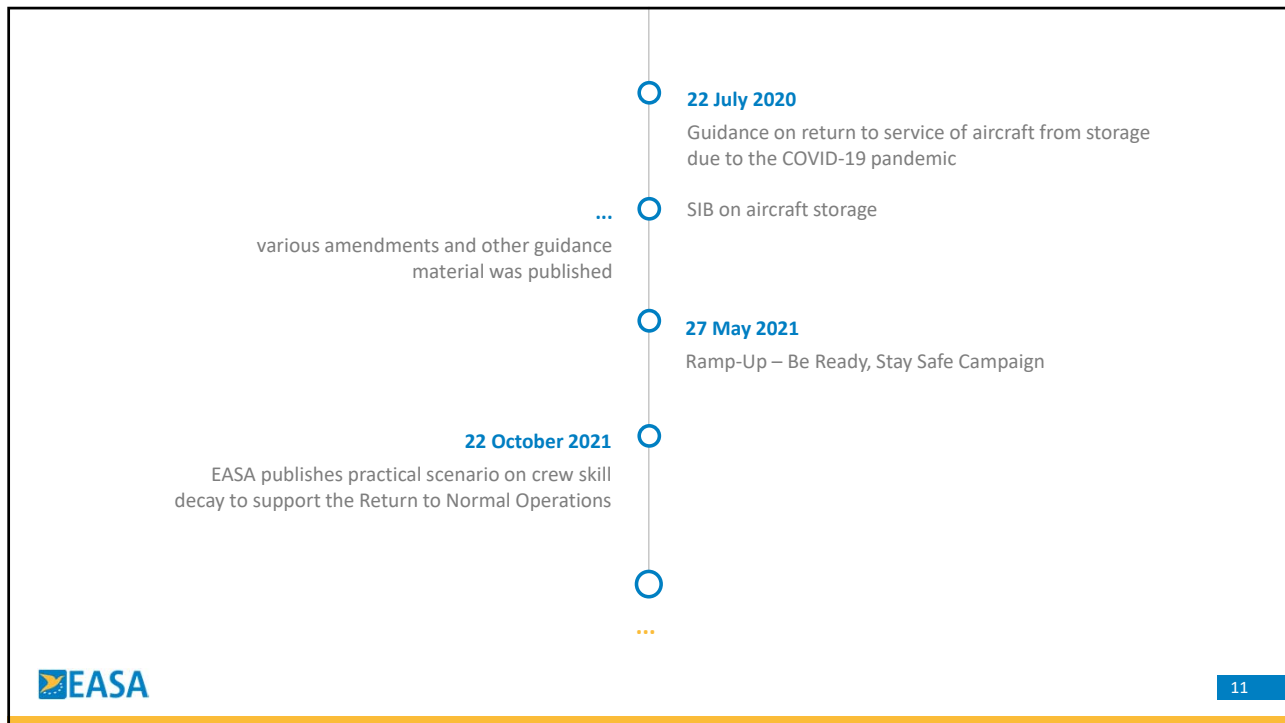
Timeline



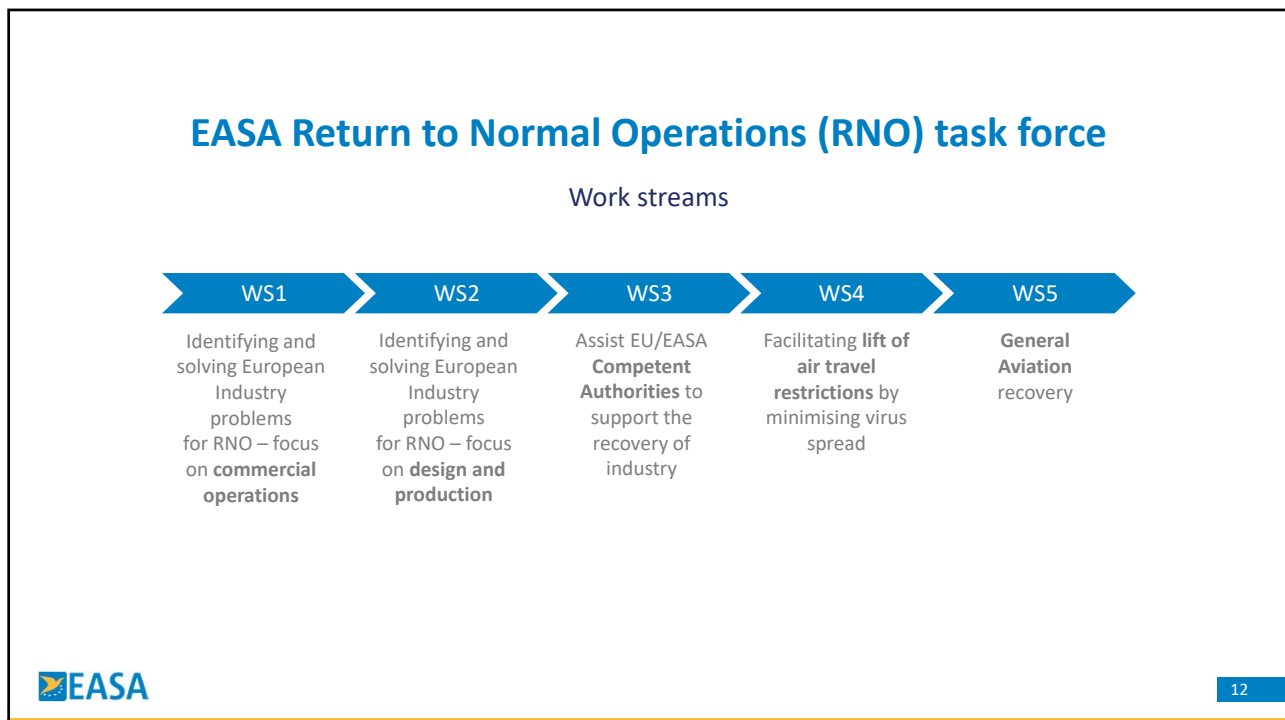
9



10



11



12

RNO Task Force focus of attention

- First reaction – controlling the spread of a new virus
- Dealing with the immediate crisis in aviation and starting the return to normal operations
- Keeping stakeholders up-to-date
- Enabling repatriations and cargo flights
- Enabling special uses of aircraft
- Supporting air crew and other aviation personnel
- Supporting rotorcraft
- Welcoming passengers through health safety measures (e-PLF)
- The Aviation Industry Charter for COVID-19
- Safe and effective operations (safety promotion material)
- Caring for 'our' people



13

13

Business continuity – flexibility and resilience

- Huge disruptions induced by the pandemic - a challenge to a highly **regulated** industry, like aviation
- Overall aviation demonstrated **incredible resilience** when faced with disruptions of such magnitude
- **Extended use of flexibility measures** needed to ensure business continuity.
Key safety enablers:
 - Built-in safety margins
 - Maturity and robustness of SMS
 - International by design: Regional and international coordination
 - Strong safety culture shared by all stakeholders
- COVID 19 pandemic – a great **accelerator**

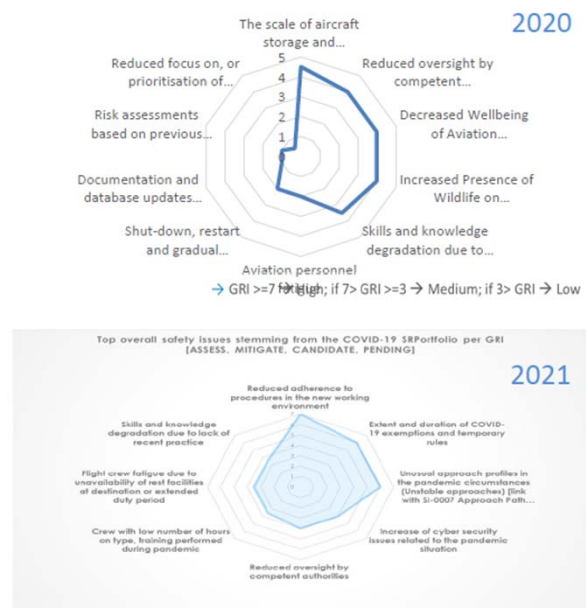


14

14

Changed risk picture

- Industry recovery not at the expense of safety
- EASA took two main safety initiatives:
 - Identify the **Safety Issues** that emerge from the crisis → **COVID-19 Safety Risk Portfolio** [Foresight activity]
 - Establish a mechanism to **monitor the safe return to operations** → **Data Intelligence Report** [Hindsight activity]



15

15

Lessons learned

- **Data** is good but **not everything** – use good, old expert judgment
- Many interdependencies – high propensity for risk transfer
- **Integrated risk management** - a key enabler to successfully manage disruptions of such scale
- Management of **external (non-aviation) risks** – leading to a shift from “**safety of flight**” towards the “**safety of the passenger**”
- Extensive use of “**soft law**” regulatory tools
- **International by design** – imperative that measures are coordinated and accepted at **regional/international level**.
- **Fragmented and uncoordinated** non-aviation measures, an **obstacle** to the quick and safe recovery.



16

16

Lessons learned

- **Opportunity** to implement bold changes: remote oversight, address regulatory rigidity, use of faster regulatory instruments
- It's not over yet – **latent risks** remain and need to be identified and mitigated, changed **economic** landscape, increasing **environmental** challenges
- Next crisis will be different – enhance overall resilience
- Through the international technical cooperation programmes and bilateral and institutional relations EASA will share these experiences and exchange information



17

17



Conclusion

Crises will continue to happen



Picture: <https://blackburncap.com/del-monte-foods-marketing-through-a-crisis/>

An Agency of the European Union

18

18

Crisis management

- The history of civil aviation is full of various events which led to crisis situation (e.g. volcanic eruptions, public health issues, grounding of fleets, aviation security-related events) and it is difficult to predict the nature of the next one to emerge
 - Floods and earthquakes
 - Volcanic ash
 - Nuclear events
 - Armed conflicts and security incidents
 - Pandemic
 - Cyber security threats and critical infrastructure events
 - ...

An evolving safety landscape

- New safety landscape created by the pandemic
- Disruptive innovations
- Digital aviation increases cybersecurity risks
- Drones
- Health safety
- ...

GNSS jamming



An evolving risk management landscape

- **Integrated Risk Management** of any risks that might impact the integrity of a flight
 - Conceptually tempting but challenging to implement
- Different cultures and constraints to integrate in the different safety domains but also form different fields (security, conflict zones, environment, health...)
- Importance of a data driven approach based on information sharing and data sharing



SAFE360°

An all round perspective on aviation safety
Integrating aviation safety domains



Data4Safety

Partnership for Data Driven Risk Management



21

21

Conclusions

- The next crisis will come, even though we don't know yet what the crisis will be
- Emerging risks are already a reality and have exposed new vulnerabilities and risks
- Integrated Risk Management becoming a challenging necessity
 - Data capture, information sharing and capacity to analyse as a basis to address emerging risks and future crises events
- The intersectoral cooperation can and should be improved
 - The insufficient level of implementation of ICAO Annex 9 SARPS (8.18 and 8.19), specifically the lack of proper and functioning NATFCs, led to a lack of effective coordination and cooperation of contingency measures, recovery and restart (*ICAO EUR/NAT office conclusion*)
 - The establishment of ad-hoc coordination bodies for managing the pandemic resulted in unseasoned and inefficient coordination and delayed an effective response (*ICAO EUR/NAT office conclusion*)
- Regional cooperation is key, including regional contingency plans and preparedness exercises (despite their limitations)



22

22

Conclusions

- Crisis coordination structures must be agile and able to quickly adjust to new developments
 - The expectations regarding role, scope and its objectives need to be clarified in light of the COVID-19 experience
 - The level of participation (expert, senior etc...) to these structures should be aligned according to its objectives (coordination or decision making)
- Build and expand on regional successes (EU COVID certificate, EUR aviation health safety protocols – EASA/ECDC cooperative document as a means to implement ICAO CART, EACCC, etc.)



23

23



Thank you for your attention



[International Cooperation | EASA \(europa.eu\)](#)

[#haveasafeflight](#)

easa.europa.eu/connect



Your safety is our mission.

An agency of the European Union

24