

Civil aviation security

2005/0191(COD) - 16/04/2019 - Follow-up document

The Commission presented its annual report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 300/2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation security. The report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2017.

2017 featured renewed concerns related to the global threat that improvised explosive devices (IEDs) artfully concealed in tampered electronic devices constitute. The U.S. and UK governments banned from the cabins of flights from airports located in some Middle Eastern and North African countries all personal electronic devices larger than cell phones. Cybersecurity and the protection of public areas of airports remained a priority.

Inspections

The Commission continued its fifth cycle of inspections of appropriate authorities in 2017. In total, nine inspections of appropriate authorities were carried out during the year. For most Member States, these inspections showed significant improvements from previous inspections. The deficiencies most commonly found in 2017 related to shortcomings in the implementation of the National Quality Control Programmes. Some Member States did not monitor with the expected regularity foreign air carriers and did not fully apply some of the compliance monitoring methodologies required by the Regulation.

The majority of Member States inspected did, nevertheless, align National Aviation Security Programmes with the EU legislation, implemented mostly the requirements relating to security training, met the minimum frequency for inspecting security measures at airports and ensured that identified deficiencies were rectified within established timeframes.

As regards airports, the inspection results reflect the efforts made by appropriate authorities and the industry. The majority of security requirements stemming from this ambitious legislation were correctly implemented; the level of compliance for the most important areas of aviation security remained stable at around 80%.

Most of the deficiencies found continued to stem from human factor issues. In particular, some provisions relating to access control, screening of staff and screening of cabin baggage will require continued efforts by the appropriate authorities, industry stakeholders and the Commission. Aircraft security searches was another area where further efforts are necessary.

In the course of the year, an assessment of one US airport (Charlotte-Douglas International airport) confirmed that the implementation of US security measures continues to be of an equivalent standard to the implementation of EU aviation security legislation.

Legislation, tests, studies

The report notes in particular the following:

- The Commission and Member States are therefore constantly adjusting the mitigation measures in order to achieve the highest level of security while minimising adverse effects on operations. In May 2017 the Commission adopted Regulation (EU) 2017/815 amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1998 as regards clarification, harmonisation and simplification of certain specific aviation security measures.

- Two trials conducted in the Netherlands and France were completed in 2017. They concerned the use of new generation screening equipment for cabin baggage without the need to remove laptops, and the use of shoe analysis equipment detecting both metals and explosive materials in combination with walk-through metal detectors and security scanners. Both trials have given positive results and it will be considered to include the trial on shoe analysing equipment for inclusion in an amendment to the legislation in 2018. No other trials were conducted or initiated in the course of 2017;

- At the end of 2017, DG MOVE commissioned a Study on economic (and other benefits) of One Stop Security (OSS) to analyse economic and other benefits in the scope of existing OSS arrangements between the EU and the United States of America, the EU and Canada and the EU and Montenegro. If the study confirms the importance of the economic (and/or other) benefits that OSS entails, this could serve as additional incentive for continuing to work towards a global sustainability of aviation security and engage in OSS talks with our major partners. The study shall be completed in September 2018.

- As regards cargo, the Commission continued to work closely with Member States to prepare for the implementation of a regime for pre-loading advance cargo information (PLACI) analysis.

Dialogue with international bodies and third countries

The Commission continued its efforts to enhance aviation security worldwide, through its longstanding cooperation with ICAO and through its capacity building project CASE for Africa and Middle East.

At ICAO level, a Task Force to address the issue of the carriage of PEDs on board an aircraft was established with the strong support of the Member States and the Commission. The Task Force met in July in Paris and established a number of recommendations on how to mitigate the threat of concealed explosives without having to ban items like portable electronic devices.

During the transport dialogue with Singapore (June 2017), an administrative agreement was signed to demonstrate a continuous commitment to the implementation of the One Stop Security control between the European Union and Singapore.