Thank you Mr. Chairman,
Good Morning,

H.E. Suleiman Alhamdan, MOT & President of GACA of Kingdom of SA
Dr. Aliu, President of the ICAO Council,
Honorable Ministers,
Directors General of Civil Aviation Authorities,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank to Saudi Arabian Authorities for the kind invitation as well as the excellent hospitality shown during our stay in Riyadh.

I am truly honored to be here with you today for the keynote address of this important gathering as the President of the Provisional Council of EUROCONTROL.

When returning from a recent flight from Brussels to my home country, Turkey, I was looking at the aircraft's on-board passenger information system – the one that tells you where you are and what temperature it is outside. It also told me when the aircraft was expected to arrive at the destination, and it struck me that I, as a passenger, probably had access to more accurate information on this arrival time than the air traffic controllers at my destination airport, Ankara, in Turkey had received through the network. All they had received was the Flight Plan, with no information on the actual take-off time or how a helpful controller had given the pilot a quicker departure routing than planned.

Now this is not specific to Europe or to Turkey. In general, this sort of information is not shared around the world, although there are some notable exceptions. But does it matter? After all, we've managed to cope for decades without having better information than the flight plan.

The answer is that not being able to predict traffic levels does have a very real effect. It may affect safety – you can end up having too many aircraft for a controller to handle. It affects costs as aircraft may not be able to fly the most efficient trajectory, and it may affect network and airport capacity and increase delays as aircraft are stacked on approach. The effects are much more widespread than might be thought.

The lack of predictability means that air navigation service providers have to build in large safety margins because the number of aircraft in their airspace at any time might be significantly higher than forecast.

That means more staff and, in areas where we have flow management, it means declaring a lower capacity than necessary and restricting the number of aircraft allowed in that particular volume of airspace, hence, more delays.

So what's the solution? Well, as it was mentioned by the several Speakers during the last two days, sharing information is the key. This is now always much easier because we have developed a common language for sharing ATM data – coming out of the System-Wide Information Management (SWIM) initiative. This is a huge step forward and it means that air navigation service providers, airlines and airports are able to exchange Flight Plan information and other operational data, and do so in real time.

This sort of data exchange is working well now. EUROCONTROL and the FAA have been exchanging real-time operational data for several years. It means that EUROCONTROL and its Network Manager and European ANSPs can see where incoming aircraft are at any time not just when they reach their radar coverage, but while they are still inbound for Europe.

Earlier this year, EUROCONTROL signed comprehensive agreements with Brazil and the United Arab Emirates. Just a few months later, the link with the United Arab Emirates was confirmed to be working satisfactorily and the data exchange with Brazil will hopefully follow soon. EUROCONTROL is also talking to other States around the world. In part, this is in support of the ICAO 'No Country Left Behind' initiative, which aims to make sure that all countries can meet the ICAO standards. This means that wherever an aircraft is flying it should be able to expect a high-quality service. This is the ultimate goal of ICAO's Global Air Navigation and Safety Plans.

EUROCONTROL is also working with countries situated adjacent to Europe and their ANSPs who have indicated to us that they would like to cooperate on a regional basis – for example in South East Asia and here in the Middle East.

I strongly believe that regional cooperation is the way forward and EUROCONTROL is willing to facilitate this. As you may know, EUROCONTROL, an intergovernmental State Organisation, has itself been growing and has recently welcomed into its family the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Israel.

This again improves the sharing of data and improves the performance of the Network as a whole. Turkey, due to its positioning between Europe and the Middle East region and being a EUROCONTROL Member State, contributes very much the European Network and fully supports further extension of regional cooperation, and may even be able to help to facilitate this data-sharing with the NM and thus help improve the safety levels in the region.

Dear Participants,

A further example of EUROCONTROL sharing Knowledge and Information with countries outside Europe is, for instance, the indispensable assistance provided by EUROCONTROL to the <u>ICAO Africa (AFI) region</u>. Here, EUROCONTROL agreed in June 2015 to provide support to IATA in the coordination, planning, and overseeing of Aeronautical Information Services and in Training Services in connection with these systems. This information sharing will help the countries situated in the African region to improve the level of implementation of the Global Aviation Safety & Navigation Plans and other safety standards, and this could also be of interest to the countries in the Middle-East region.

Operational data exchange with <u>airports</u> is also valuable. Within Europe alone, we are now exchanging information with over 30 airports as part of the <u>Airport Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) and Advanced ATC Tower programmes</u>. These help the airports as they have a more accurate picture of when aircraft will be arriving. It also helps the network as a whole as we can use this more accurate data to improve the flow management of aircraft across Europe.

Over one third of European departures now originate from a CDM airport. In the future, as the programme further expands, EUROCONTROL and its Network Manager expect to be able to generate reductions in flow management delays of between 20 and 25 per cent. This is vital if we are to achieve the levels of performance and network efficiencies that are being looked for both by our political leaders and of course by the airlines.

EUROCONTROL has been running Centralised Flow Management Services – now part of the EU Network Manager function – for more than twenty years, and it has dramatically reduced delays and cut costs.

You don't often see aircraft stacking in holding patterns in Europe any more – except where the airport has a lot of aircraft coming from outside the European Network. That's because those aircraft are not subject to flow management.

I firmly believe that several other regions of the world could benefit from some form of regional flow management as their traffic levels increase. They do not need to follow the European model – after all, each region is different – but as traffic and congestion increases, the benefits of Central or regional Flow Management will become ever clearer and more compelling.

Once we have established these better information-sharing and flow-management mechanisms around the world, then we can really start to put in place the ICAO concept of Global Air Traffic Flow Management. I am aware that this is still some way off, but as global traffic continues to increase, we will need tools to improve the network capacity, to reduce delays and to avoid the sight of aircraft speeding around the world to be first in the queue at their destination.

The heart of all this is more effective sharing of knowledge and data. We live in an interconnected world, where passengers have access to an incredible level of information. The industry needs to catch up and to start working together on a global level. Joe SULTANA, Director Network Manager summarized the EUROCONTROL's role in ATFM, the civil and military coordination aspect of it, and the importance of radar data sharing on a regional basis during the Panel Sessions.

To conclude my keynote address, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to underline that the challenge is not primarily a technical one – the tools already exist. It just requires the will on the part of us all to make it happen – the will to share operational data, to share the technical knowledge we have and to work together to respond to the needs of the airspace users at a global level.

Thank you

Haydar YALÇIN,
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