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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

EUROPEAN UNION SAFA PROGRAMME

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(Text with EEA relevance)

1. THE EU SAFA PROGRAMME

1.1. Aviation safety as key priority for the European Union and for its Member States

Aviation safety constitutes a priority for the European Union (EU) and for its Member States. In the light of this objective, a key instrument is the EU Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) programme. This programme requires participating States to conduct ramp inspections on third country aircraft to verify compliance of aircraft, crew and operations with application international safety requirements. Ever since its inception under the auspices of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) in association with the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) back in 1996, the SAFA programme has increasingly proven to be a vanguard in enhancing European, and indeed international, aviation safety.

The EU has from the outset fully endorsed and supported the SAFA programme, participating actively through membership in the SAFA Steering Committee and also through the provision of funding made available to the JAA by the European Commission.

Within the framework of the Community's overall strategy to establish and maintain a high uniform level of civil aviation safety in Europe, on 21 April 2004 the Community adopted Directive 2004/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the safety of third-country aircraft using Community airports¹ (the so-called 'SAFA Directive'). This Directive introduced a legal obligation upon EU Member States to perform ramp inspections upon third country aircraft landing at their airports, where 'third country aircraft' implied an aircraft which is not used or operated under control of a competent authority of an EU Member State; although the Directive does in no way prohibit EU Member States from inspecting aircraft from other EU Member States. EU Member States were given a window of two years for implementing this Directive through the enactment of national legislation.²

In addition and following a decision by the Directors General of ECAC member states, the SAFA programme was transferred under European Community competence where as of 1 January 2007, responsibility for the management and further development of the EU SAFA programme falls upon the European Commission assisted by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). EASA is a European Commission agency based in Cologne which is responsible for the operational management of the EU SAFA programme on behalf of the same Commission in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) 768/2006.³

¹ OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 76.

² See in particular Report from the Commission on Safety of Third-Country Aircraft using Community Airports dated 24.9.2008. C(2008) 5265 final.

³ OJ L 134, 20.5.2006, p. 16.

Until 2006 the operational elements of the SAFA programme were implemented by the Central Joint Aviation Authorities (CJAA). At the end of 2006 the SAFA coordination activities including the centralised database have been transferred from CJA A to EASA.

The continued participation of the fifteen non-EU ECAC Member States, and thus the pan-European dimension of the programme, has been assured through the signature of a Working Arrangement between each of these individual States and EASA. Including the EU-27 therefore, the EU-SAFA programme boasts a total of 42 participating States (*see Appendix A to the accompanying Staff Working Paper of the Commission*).

1.2. Why this report?

This report constitutes a clear evidence of EU's efforts in making European skier safer. Transparency of safety information and sharing of the major conclusions pursuant to the SAFA inspections are fundamental tenets of a safe air transportation system. Public confidence in the safety of air transportation is also contingent upon access to adequate information regarding the implementation of international safety standards. In this context, Article 6 (2) of Directive 2004/36/EC requires the Commission to publish yearly an aggregated information report available to the public and the industry stakeholders containing an analysis of all information received. The analysis needs to be simple and easy to understand and shall indicate whether there exists an increased safety risk to air passengers.

This is the fourth annual report covering the period 01 January to 31 December 2009.

1.3. Functioning of the EU SAFA programme

In each SAFA participating State, aircraft (third-country for EU states or foreign for non-EU ECAC states) can be subject to a ramp inspection, chiefly concerned with the aircraft documents and manuals, flight crew licences, the apparent condition of the aircraft and the presence and condition of mandatory cabin safety equipment. The references for these inspections are contained in the Standards of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annexes 1 (Personnel Licensing), 6 (Operations of Aircraft) and 8 (Airworthiness of Aircraft).

These checks are carried out in accordance with a procedure which is common to all participating States. Their outcome is then the subject of reports which also follow a common format. In the case of significant irregularities, the operator and the appropriate Aviation Authority (State of Operator or Registry) are contacted in order to arrive at corrective measures to be taken not only with regard to the aircraft inspected but also with regard to other aircraft which could be concerned in the case of an irregularity which is of a generic nature. All data from the reports as well as supplementary information are shared and centralised in a computerised database set up and managed by EASA.

The main features of the EU SAFA programme can be summarised as follows:

- its application by all SAFA participating States: in principle all 42 ECAC States (EU Member States and non-EU ECAC States that have signed the EASA Working Arrangement;
- the broad dissemination of SAFA ramp inspection results through a centralised database;

- its bottom-up approach: the Programme is built around ramp inspections of aircraft;
- its focused attention: primarily focusing on third country aircraft flying to the EU and SAFA participating States (although SAFA inspections may continue to be performed on aircraft from EU Member States);
- its inherent objective of checking for compliance with safety international rules (ICAO Standards) which are commonly applicable internationally to all inspected aircraft .

1.4. Major contribution of the EU SAFA programme to the overall aviation safety chain

Based upon the SAFA inspections performed over the last few years, experience shows that these give a general indication of the safety of foreign operators. However, this indication is limited in the sense that no full picture is obtained about the safety of any particular aircraft or operator. This is due to the fact that certain aspects are difficult to assess during an inspection (e.g. crew resource management, full airworthiness status, etc.) owing to the limited time available to perform an inspection and consequently the limited level of detail possible during such an inspection. The value of those indicators will be further enhanced by increasing also the level of harmonisation across the participating States in the performance of SAFA inspections.

A full assessment of a particular aircraft or operator can only be obtained through the continuous oversight by the responsible national civil aviation authority (State of Operator or State of Registry). In this manner, the information gained through the EU SAFA programme is useful:

- Primarily as a pre-emptive tool helping to identify potential negative safety trends whereby a numerous and/or recurring number of findings concerning a particular operator, is a very good indicator of potential structural weaknesses both with regard to the quality control management of that operator as well as the level of safety oversight exercised by the responsible national civil aviation authorities of the state where that operator is certified; similar negative trends may also be identified concerning specific aircraft types.
- More directly, SAFA inspections may contribute in real-time to the safe operation of the particular aircraft which has just been inspected, prompting the inspecting authorities to ensure that corrective actions are taken immediately prior to any further operations being conducted by that aircraft.

Additionally, since the coming into force of Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005⁴ establishing a list of carriers which are banned from flying into the EU, SAFA inspections have acquired an increased importance as one of the criteria considered by the Commission in taking its decisions on the inclusion of carriers in the Community list. Indeed, this has been the case since the establishment of the first Community list in March 2006 and its subsequent regular updates.

⁴ OJ L 344, 27.12.2005, p. 15.

1.5. Progress of the programme during 2009

The Commission services together with EASA are continuously monitoring the functioning of the current SAFA programme with a view to identifying any room for further improvement.

In particular, as tasked under Commission Directive 2008/49/EC⁵, EASA has issued and published a second set of detailed Guidance Material on Ramp Inspection Procedures. The procedures cover all applicable areas: planning, preparation, and execution of inspections as well as follow-up activities.

A number of initiatives started in 2007 have also continued in 2009, becoming regular standard activities under the EU SAFA programme. These are for example the database quality review of reports entered by participating States in the SAFA database and the database analysis. Conducted on a four-monthly basis this analysis attempts to identify as early as possible potentially negative safety concerns and trends in order that they may be addressed in a timely manner before indeed becoming a threat to international aviation safety. The methodology for conducting this analysis was further refined and enhanced to maximise the use of the available SAFA data.

In addition, during the year 2009 and pursuant to the request of the Commission, EASA engaged in negotiations with various aviation authorities around the world aiming at enlarging the participation in the EU SAFA programme while maintaining a high level of standardisation and harmonisation.

Finally, EASA started a Standardisation programme to ensure that all SAFA inspections are done in a standardised manner in all SAFA participating States. All States are audited in order to verify the transposition of the applicable EU Directives as well as the adherence to the common procedures for the qualification of inspectors and for the performance of inspections. The audits are carried out in accordance with the same working methods employed by EASA for standardisation visits dealing with other aviation safety domains, namely those contained in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 736/2006.⁶ In 2009, 5 audits were performed in: Luxembourg, Lithuania, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

1.6. Introduction of a risk-based approach

Commission Regulation (EC) No 351/2008⁷ introduces the concept of prioritisation of SAFA inspection from a pan-European perspective whereby participating States are required to prioritise a portion of their ramp inspections on certain subjects (either operators or all the operators certified in a certain state). The prioritisation list is compiled by the European Commission and updated regularly whenever the need arises according to the set of criteria established under the said Regulation, namely:

- information transmitted by EASA following the analysis of SAFA database;
- information stemming from the meetings of the Air Safety Committee;
- information received by the Commission from the Member States.

⁵ OJ L 109, 19.4.2008, p. 17.

⁶ OJ L 129, 17.5.2006, p. 10.

⁷ OJ L 109, 19.4.2008, p. 7.

In addition, operators which are listed in Annex B of the Community list of banned air carriers (established under Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005) as well as the other operators certified in the same state as any operator featuring concurrently on the Community list are also subject to prioritised inspections.

EUROCONTROL further supports this concept of prioritisation by means of its European Air Traffic Management centrepiece which provides participating States with real time information on the flight planning situation of prioritised operators.

During 2009, out of a total 11.349 SAFA inspections, 2.253 (19,85%) were conducted on subjects indicated in the prioritisation list.

2. THE SAFA CENTRALISED DATABASE

The SAFA centralised Database has been managed by EASA since December 2006, when it was transferred from the Central Joint Aviation Authorities (CJAA) in the Netherlands to EASA in Cologne, Germany. The inclusion of reports in the database remains a responsibility of the individual National Aviation Authorities (NAA) of the 42 SAFA participating States.

In 2009 the SAFA participating States performed a record 11,349 inspections which revealed some 9.688 findings (*see Appendix A to the Staff Working Paper*).

Data contained in the database is considered confidential. The database can be accessed by all National Aviation Authorities of participating States via the (secured) internet. In 2009, on-line access was also granted to aviation authorities of third countries with regards to reports on operators licensed in their respective country.

3. AREAS OF INSPECTION

According to the 'SAFA Directive', aircrafts suspected of non-compliance with international safety standards (based on e.g. regular analysis of the database by EASA) are to be inspected with priority by the Member States. Furthermore the SAFA ramp inspections may be carried out using a spot-check procedure.

There are five areas on which the inspections can be focused:

- (1) Specific State of Operator (checking operators from a particular State).
- (2) Specific aircraft type.
- (3) Specific nature of operations (scheduled, non-scheduled, cargo, etc.).
- (4) Specific third country operator.
- (5) Specific aircraft identified by its individual registration mark.

Appendices B, C and D to the Staff Working Paper list the states of operator, aircraft types and operators inspected during the year 2009. They highlight the wide coverage of the EU SAFA programme and its non-discriminatory application on EU and non-EU operators.

The smooth operation of the programme can also be illustrated by the table below, which aggregates the information in the Appendices and provides an overview of activities.

Inspections	11,349 inspections...
Operator	...on more than 1,100 different operators...
State of Operator	...from 131 states...
Aircraft type	...operating 220 different aircraft types and variants

The table below meanwhile reflects the fact that the vast majority of all flights within EU Member States are carried out by EU operators and that in general, SAFA participating States were still using the broader criteria of the former ECAC SAFA programme.

	Inspections on EU Operators	Inspections on non-EU Operators
2009	5,917	5,432
Percentage	52.1%	47.9%

Out of 11,349 inspections, 9,462 (83,4%) were performed by EU member states (see Attachment A). 47.9% (5,432) were performed on operators licensed in third countries while the remainder 52.1% (5,917) were conducted on EU operators.

4. MAIN RESULTS OF THE SAFA INSPECTIONS

4.1. Inspection findings in general

During any SAFA inspection, a checklist, comprising a total of 54 different inspection items, is used by the SAFA inspector to examine the compliance of the aircraft with international rules (ICAO standards). These inspections may reveal a number of findings (usually called "deviations from ICAO Standards") The following chart provides an overview of the number of total findings (F) compared to the total number of inspections (I) and the inspected items (II). However, in the majority of cases, not all items are checked during an inspection because the time between the arrival of the aircraft and its departure is not sufficient to perform a complete inspection. Therefore, the relationship between the total number of findings and the total number of inspected items might give a better understanding rather than a ratio based merely on the number of inspections.

	Period
	01 January 2009 – 31 December 2009
Total Inspections (I)	11,349
Total Inspected Items (II)	408,217

Total Findings (F)	9,688
Average no. of Inspected Items during an Inspection	35.99
Findings/Inspections (F/I)	0.854
Findings/Inspected Items (F/II)	0.0237

4.2. Inspection findings and their categories

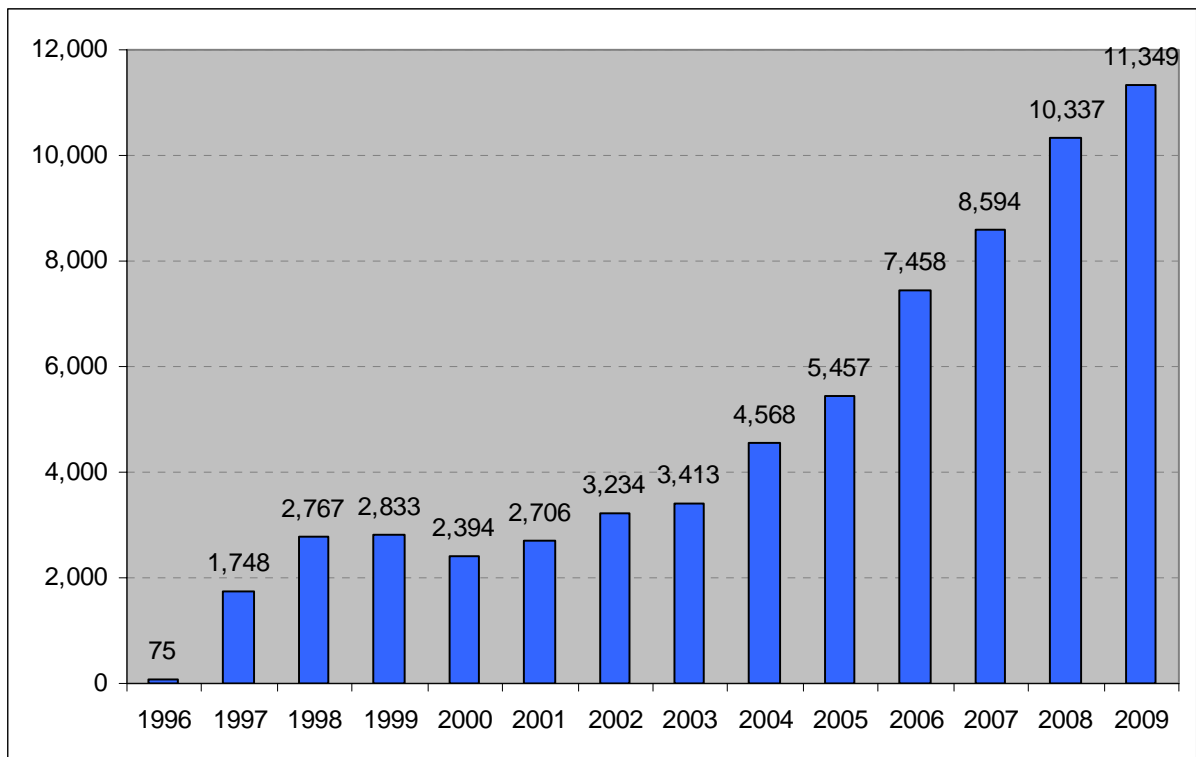
Not only the absolute number of inspection findings needs to be considered, but also their “severity”. To this end, three categories of findings have been defined. A “Category 1” finding is called a minor finding; “Category 2” is a significant finding and “Category 3” a major finding. The terms “minor”, “significant” and “major” relate to the level of deviation from the ICAO Standard. The prime purpose of categorising the findings is to classify the compliance with a standard and the severity of non-compliance with this standard.

The inspections and the categories of findings are recorded in the database and the results are presented in the table below:

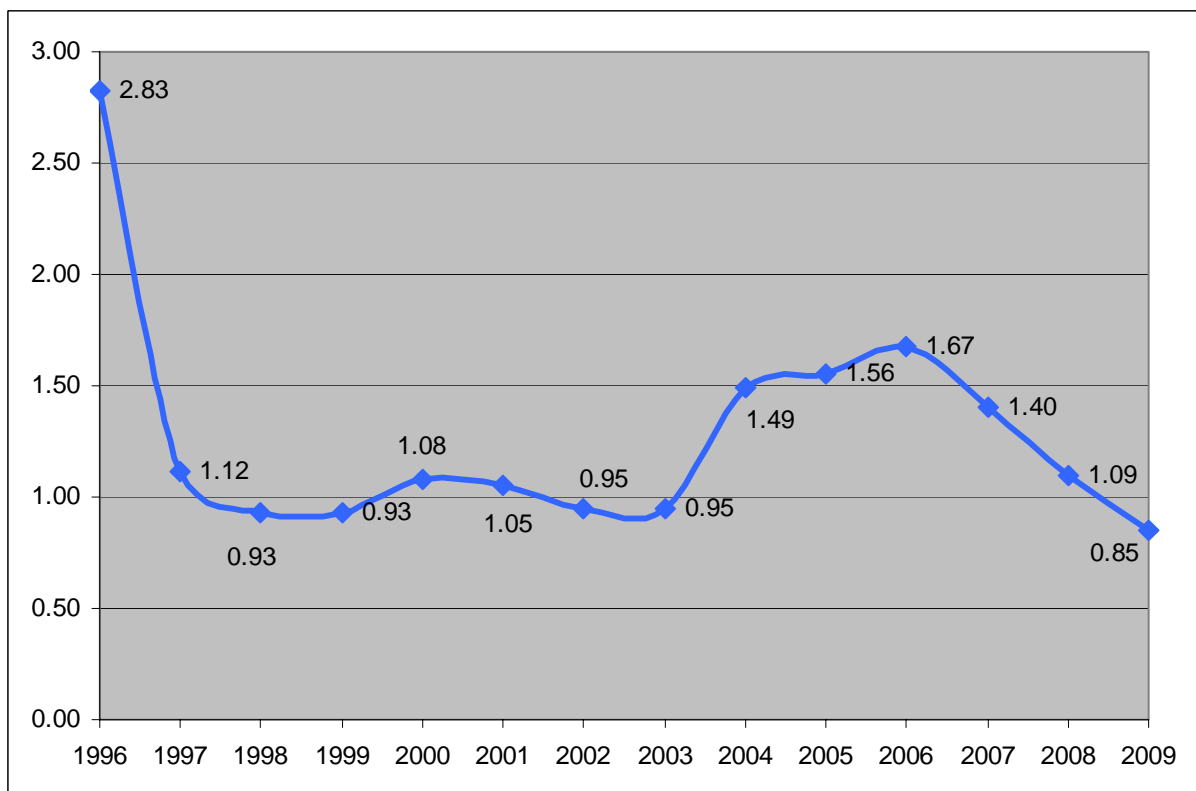
Year	No. inspections (I)	No. findings (F)				Ratio of findings (Fcat./I)			
		Cat. 1 (minor)	Cat. 2 (significant)	Cat. 3 (major)	total	F cat.1 / I	F cat.2 / I	F cat.3 / I	F total / I
2009	11,349	3,880	3,816	1,992	9,688	0.342	0.336	0.176	0.854
		40%	39.4%	20.6%	100.00%				

4.3. Historical overview

	Year															Total 1996-2009
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009		
Total Inspections (I)	75	1,748	2,767	2,833	2,394	2,706	3,234	3,413	4,568	5,457	7,458	8,594	10,337	11,349		66,933
Total Inspected Items (II)	1,675	31,413	88,400	95,524	80,454	82,935	93,681	100,014	148,850	181,440	260,524	300,035	358,046	408,217		2,231,208
Total Findings (F)	212	1,951	2,573	2,631	2,587	2,851	3,064	3,242	6,799	8,492	12,481	12,073	11,298	9,688		79,942
Findings/Inspections (F/I)	2.8267	1.1161	0.9299	0.9287	1.0806	1.0536	0.9474	0.9499	1.4884	1.5562	1.6704	1.405	1.093	0.854		1.194
Findings/Inspected Items (F/II)	0.127	0.062	0.029	0.028	0.032	0.034	0.033	0.032	0.046	0.047	0.048	0.040	0.032	0.024		0.036



Annual No. of SAFA inspections since the beginning of the programme in 1996.



Average number of findings per inspection (1996-2009)

4.4. Inspection findings on a regional basis

Region	No. of States inspected	No. of Operat. inspected	Inspect. (I)	No. of findings (F)				Ratio of findings (Fcat./I)			
				Cat. 1 (minor)	Cat. 2 (signif.)	Cat. 3 (major)	Total	F cat.1/I	F cat.2/I	F cat.3/I	F total/I
EU ⁸	27	528	5,917	1,603	1,562	845	4,010	0.271	0.264	0.143	0.678
EUROPE (ECAC) ⁹	43	677	7,570	2,202	2,173	1,064	5,439	0.291	0.287	0.141	0.718
Russian Federation, Belarus & Central Asia ¹⁰	7	88	931	408	381	219	1,008	0.438	0.409	0.235	1.083
North America ¹¹	3	111	633	263	159	139	561	0.415	0.251	0.220	0.886
Latin America & the Caribbean ¹²	20	43	171	86	105	44	235	0.503	0.614	0.257	1.374
Middle East and North Africa ¹³	18	94	1,284	618	650	345	1,613	0.481	0.506	0.269	1.256
Africa ¹⁴	22	40	410	140	204	98	442	0.341	0.498	0.239	1.078
Asia ¹⁵	17	47	315	155	136	80	371	0.492	0.432	0.254	1.178

⁸ EU - Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

⁹ Europe (ECAC) - Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

¹⁰ Russian Federation, Belarus and Central Asia - Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

¹¹ North America (NA) - Bermuda, Canada, United States of America.

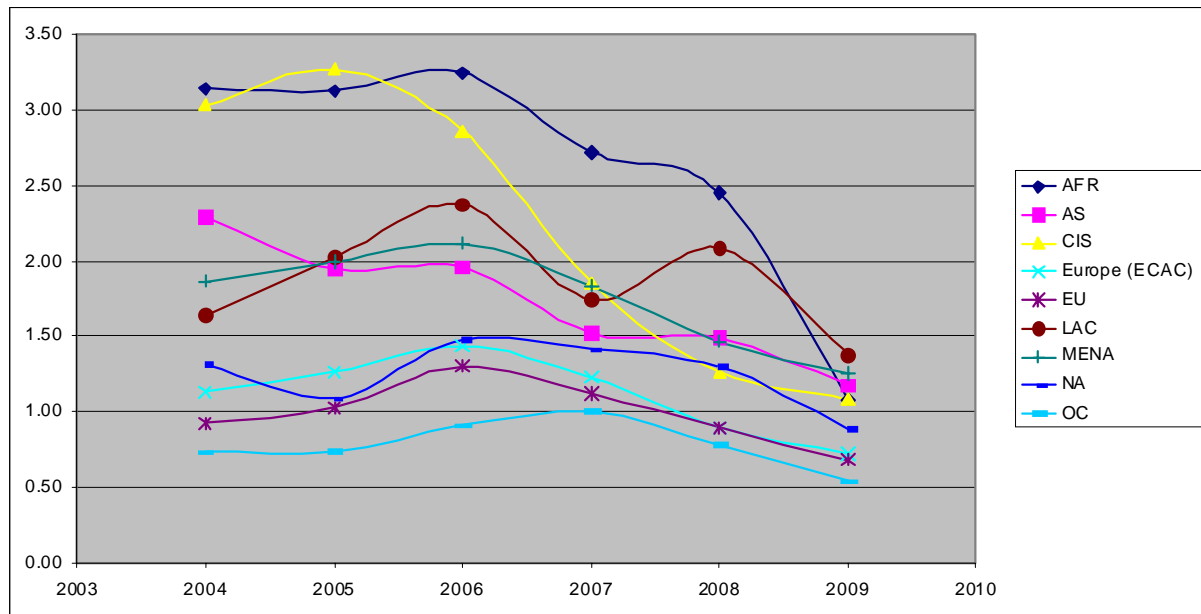
¹² Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) - Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

¹³ Middle East and North Africa (MENA)- Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

¹⁴ Africa (AFR) - Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

¹⁵ Asia (AS) - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's

Oceania ¹⁶	4	14	35	8	8	3	19	0.229	0.229	0.086	0.543
Average/all States								0.342	0.336	0.176	0.854



The five years evolution shows that the average number of findings (per inspection) has decreased for all geographic regions.

From this table, one may note that:

- Operators from States in the EU, ECAC and Oceania have fewer findings per inspection than average.
- The ratio Findings/Inspections shows the greatest improvement for the African region, although this is influenced by the very high number of inspections (163) on the Angolan carrier TAAG; those inspections were imposed after the partial removal of this carrier from the Community List of banned carriers.

¹⁶

Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam.

Oceania (OC) - Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

4.5. Distribution by ICAO regions

Region	No. of States inspected	No. of Operat. inspected	Inspect. (I)	No. of findings (F)				Ratio of findings (Fcat./I)			
				Cat. 1 (minor)	Cat. 2 (signif.)	Cat. 3 (major)	Total	F cat.1/I	F cat.2/I	F cat.3/I	F total/I
APAC ¹⁷	19	58	311	148	125	78	351	0.476	0.402	0.251	1.129
ESAF ¹⁸	10	19	312	75	82	36	193	0.240	0.263	0.115	0.619
EUR ¹⁹	56	784	8,957	2,931	2,833	1,428	7,192	0.327	0.316	0.159	0.803
MID ²⁰	18	85	953	334	418	221	973	0.350	0.439	0.232	1.021
NACC ²¹	10	127	652	288	178	144	610	0.442	0.273	0.221	0.936
SAM ²²	9	20	66	39	58	23	120	0.591	0.879	0.348	1.818
WACAF ²³	12	21	98	65	122	62	249	0.663	1.245	0.633	2.541
All States	134	1,114	11,349	3,880	3,816	1,992	9,688	0.342	0.336	0.176	0.854

From this table, one may note that:

- Operators from States belonging to the EUR have fewer findings per inspection than average.
- Operators from States belonging to the MID, SAM, WACAF, NACC, APAC and ESAF have more findings per inspection than average.

¹⁷ APAC-Asian and Pacific ICAO Region: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China (incl. Hong Kong and Macao), Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshal Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

¹⁸ ESAF-Eastern and Southern African ICAO Region: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

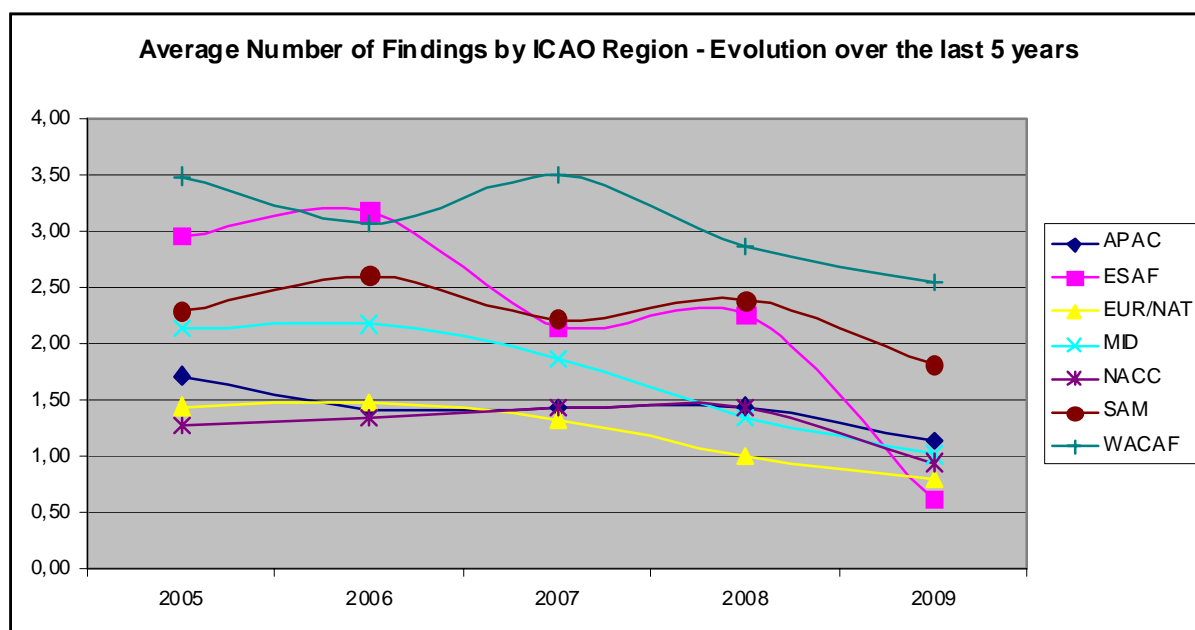
¹⁹ EUR-European and North Atlantic ICAO Region: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands (excl. Netherlands Antilles), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom (excl. Cayman Islands, Bermuda), Uzbekistan.

²⁰ MID-Middle East ICAO Region: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

²¹ NACC-Northern American, Central American and Caribbean ICAO Region: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America.

²² SAM-South American ICAO Region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela.

²³ WACAF-Western and Central African ICAO Region: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.



For all regions the ratio Findings/Inspections shows an improvement. Although the ESAF region appears to have the largest improvement this is caused by the fact that more than half of the inspections on operators from this region were carried on the Angolan carrier TAAG (163 inspections). TAAG was included in 2007 in the Community list of banned carriers. In 2009 TAAG was allowed to partially restart the operations into the European Union (with specific aircraft and only to Lisbon, Portugal) under the condition that every flight should be inspected by the Portuguese authorities.

Comparison between EU, ECAC and the rest of the world

Region	No. of States inspected	No. of Operat. inspected	Inspect. (I)	No. of findings (F)				Ratio of findings (Fcat./I)			
				Cat. 1 (minor)	Cat. 2 (signif.)	Cat. 3 (major)	Total	F cat.1/I	F cat.2/I	F cat.3/I	F total/I
EU	27	528	5,917	1,603	1,562	845	4,010	0.271	0.264	0.143	0.678
Rest of EUROPE (non-EU ECAC States)	16	149	1,653	599	611	219	1,429	0.362	0.370	0.132	0.864
EUROPE (ECAC)	43	677	7,570	2,202	2,173	1,064	5,439	0.291	0.287	0.141	0.718
Non-EU States	107	586	5,432	2,277	2,254	1,147	5,678	0.419	0.415	0.211	1.045
All States	134	1,114	11,349	3,880	3,816	1,992	9,688	0.342	0.336	0.176	0.854

4.6. Inspection findings related to checklist items

Appendix F to the Staff Working Paper provides the results regarding each individual inspection item (III) which has been inspected. It indicates the number of times that a particular inspection item has been checked, the number of findings and the ratio F/III.

4.7. The top 3 significant and major inspection findings related to checklist items

The inspection checklist consists of four major parts. Part A concerns items to be inspected in the flight deck of the aircraft. Part B of the checklist concerns items to be checked in the (passenger) cabin, and mainly consists of safety equipment. Part C relates to the general technical condition of the aircraft which needs to be verified during a walk around check. Part D checklist items concern the cargo compartment of the aircraft and the cargo carried.

Any general findings not covered by Parts A, B, C or D can be administered under Part E (general) of the checklist.

When considering the findings established during a SAFA inspection, Category 2 (significant) and Category 3 (major) findings require the highest attention when it comes to the need for rectification. For each part of the checklist, the top 3 of Category 2 and 3 findings related to the number of inspections are given in the tables under Appendices D and E of the Staff Working Paper.

5. ACTION TAKEN PURSUANT TO RAMP INSPECTIONS

Based on the category, number and nature of the findings, several actions may be taken.

If the findings indicate that the safety of the aircraft and its occupants is impaired, corrective actions will be required. Normally the aircraft captain will be asked to address the serious deficiencies which are brought to his attention. In rare cases, where inspectors have reason to believe that the aircraft captain does not intend to take the necessary measures on the deficiencies reported to him, they will formally ground the aircraft. The formal act of grounding by the State of Inspection means that the aircraft is prohibited from resuming its flights until appropriate corrective measures are taken.

Another type of action is called “corrective actions before flight authorised”. Before the aircraft is allowed to resume its flight, corrective action is required to rectify any deficiencies which have been identified.

In other cases, the aircraft may depart under operational restrictions. An example of such a restriction would be the case where there is a deficiency regarding passenger seats. Operation of the aircraft is possible under the condition that the deficient seats are not occupied by any passengers.

It is standard practice that the captain of the aircraft which has just been inspected is debriefed about the findings. In addition, Category 2 and Category 3 findings are communicated to the responsible Aviation Authority and the home base of the operator with the request to take appropriate action to prevent reoccurrence.

In order to achieve best the objectives of the EU SAFA programme, close cooperation with the Civil Aviation Authorities of all those States whose operators and aircraft have been subject of SAFA inspections is imperative. As part of their responsibility regarding the safety oversight of their national operators according to the relevant international safety standards, these Civil Aviation Authorities are requested to ensure proper implementation of corrective actions in order to address the reported SAFA findings.

In some cases, when the findings on an aircraft are considered important, individual SAFA participating States may decide to revoke the entry permit of that aircraft. This means that the particular aircraft is no longer allowed to land at airports or fly in the airspace of that State. Such a ban can be lifted if the operator of the aircraft proves that the problems have been properly corrected. Such entry permit repercussions can therefore be, and usually are, of a temporary character.

As regards such bans and their subsequent lifting, those SAFA Participating States which belong also to the European Union shall be acting in accordance with the provisions laid down in Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005 on the establishment of a Community list of air carriers subject to an operating ban within the Community.

	No. of Inspections	11,349
	No. of Findings	9,688
ACTIONS TAKEN	information to the authority & the operator	3,328
	restriction on aircraft operation	95
	corrective actions before flight authorisation	1,358
	aircraft grounded	10
	immediate operating ban	1*

*not including bans/operational restrictions imposed by the EC pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005 EC

Pursuant to the requirement set forth by Commission Directive (EC) 2008/49, SAFA participating states monthly send to EASA reports on the follow-up actions taken. This information measures the ability and willingness of operators to rectify the findings identified during SAFA inspections.

6. CONCLUSIONS

During 2009 a record number of inspections has been reached and covered a higher number of operators when compared to previous years. As a result, the programme has become a better tool to identify potential negative safety trends worldwide, contributing as well as in real-time to the safe operation of the inspected aircraft.

During 2009, efforts were also undertaken to improve the functioning of the EU SAFA programme, in particular through the issuing of Guidance Material, the carrying out of quality review analysis of SAFA reports or the initiation of the Standardisation programme, which *in fine* aim at ensuring that all SAFA inspections are done in a standardised manner in all countries.