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A EURÓPSKA ÚNIA**

17th International Scientific Conference
**SECURE SLOVAKIA
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**RECENZOVANÝ ZBORNÍK
PRÍSPEVKOV
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17th International Scientific Conference SECURE SLOVAKIA AND EU**





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European Aviation Safety and Security Regulatory Framework: A Case Study of Slovakia

Európsky regulačný rámec bezpečnosti a ochrany letectva: Prípadová štúdia Slovenska

Grzegorz K. ZAJĄC¹

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Abstract:

The goal of the paper is to examine the multi-layered framework for aviation safety and security, beginning with the international framework, including the Tokyo-Hague-Montreal system, Chicago Convention with Annex 17, ICAO, and its Universal Security Audit Program, all aimed at safeguarding civil aviation. The author shows a detailed analysis of the European Legal Framework, highlighting Regulation (EC) No 300/2008, Regulation (EU) No 2015/1998, and the role of EASA in standardizing safety norms across the EU. Further sections analyze National Implementation and Oversight measures, such as NCASPs and ECAC's Doc 30, alongside passenger safety through EU Regulation No. 2111/2005. Finally, a case study on Slovakia explores its compliance with EU and ICAO standards and its cooperative efforts to strengthen aviation security.

Key words: aviation safety, aviation security, EASA, air transport, Slovakia.

Abstrakt:

Cieľom tohto príspevku je preskúmať viacvrstvový rámec pre bezpečnosť a ochranu letectva, počnúc medzinárodným rámcom, vrátane systému Tokio-Hague-Montreal, Chicagského dohovoru s prílohou 17, ICAO a jeho programu univerzálneho bezpečnostného auditu, zamerané na ochranu civilného letectva. Autor uvádza podrobnú analýzu európskeho právneho rámca s dôrazom na nariadenie (ES) č. 300/2008, nariadenie (EÚ) č. 2015/1998 a úlohu EASA pri štandardizácii bezpečnostných noriem v celej EÚ. Ďalšie časti analyzujú opatrenia národnej implementácie a dohľadu, ako sú NCASP a dokument ECAC 30, spolu s bezpečnosťou cestujúcich prostredníctvom nariadenia EÚ č. 2111/2005. Napokon, prípadová štúdia o Slovensku skúma jeho súlad s normami EÚ a ICAO a jeho spoločné úsilie o posilnenie bezpečnosti letectva.

Kľúčové slová: bezpečnosť letectva, ochrana letectva, EASA, letecká doprava, Slovensko.

1. The goal of the research and methodology

European aviation safety and security is a complex framework of regulations and policies aimed at ensuring safe and secure functioning of this mode of transport across Europe. It is based mainly on international norms set up by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the regional European system of aviation law created mainly by the European Union, and primarily through its agency called European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). It sets rigorous standards for all member states, covering aspects from aircraft design and maintenance to aircrew qualifications and airport security standards. In the Slovak context, adherence to EASA standards has been instrumental in adjusting Slovakia's aviation practices with European norms, strengthening its safety and security infrastructure, and enhancing its position within the broader EU aviation system.

The legal framework surrounding air transport safety and security in Europe is multifaceted, designed to address potential threats from unlawful interference, such as hijackings, bombings, and other forms of terrorism. Ensuring a secure environment for air travel requires robust legal, regulatory, and operational measures that balance passenger safety with efficient airline operations. European legislation, influenced by international standards and evolving security needs, provides a critical foundation for addressing these threats. The goal of this research is to explore the legal instruments, regulatory frameworks, and operational policies established in Europe to safeguard air transport against unlawful interference, with a focus on both EU and Slovakian approaches. Taking into account Slovakian case, this essay will examine how Slovakia implements and adapts to EU and ICAO frameworks, the specific measures Slovakia has adopted to counteract unlawful interference in aviation, and the unique challenges and contributions of the Slovakian perspective on air transport safety and security.

The subject of the author's research is the issue of European safety standards, the scope of application of aviation safety and security aspects in bilateral agreements, the role of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), protection of air passengers' rights, national implementation of safety rules and safety oversight, as well as indicating the Slovakian case. The applied research methods helped to comprehensively analyze the issues and draw the right conclusions from a broad context. The methodology used in this paper combines qualitative content analysis of regulatory documents, legislative texts, and secondary sources to understand Slovakia's air transport safety framework within the European and international context. The methods are appropriate in the field of social sciences, i.e. the method of examining documents, the method of analysis and criticism of literature, and the case study method.

The article is a concise approach to this complex research issue. The author has synthetically presented a broad issue and has analyzed the research problem in an orderly manner. This topic is rarely discussed in the literature.

2. Research outcome

The research results, taking into account the assumed research goals, were presented in the structure of this article. The first part of the paper explores the complex regulatory framework governing aviation safety and security on international, European, and national levels. It has been examined the Tokyo-Hague-Montreal system, the

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Chicago Convention with Annex 17, and ICAO's Universal Security Audit Program, all aimed at preventing and addressing unlawful interference in civil aviation. The study then delves into the European Legal Framework, including Regulation (EC) No 300/2008 and Regulation (EU) No 2015/1998, which establish uniform security standards across the EU. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the role of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in harmonizing aviation safety practices across member states and strengthening regional security through collaboration and oversight. Additionally, the research addresses National Implementation and Oversight mechanisms, such as National Civil Aviation Security Programs (NCASPs) and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Doc 30, which facilitate standardized practices across EU states. A dedicated section on Passenger Safety in the EU evaluates protective measures, including the EU air carrier blacklist governed by Regulation No. 2111/2005, which ensures high safety standards for passengers within EU airspace. Finally, the case study on Slovakia reviews its compliance with EU and ICAO standards and examines its cooperation with European institutions to enhance national aviation security. This paper underscores the importance of multi-layered regulatory frameworks and cross-border cooperation in safeguarding civil aviation.

Due to the analysis of legal regulations and their application, the presented study mainly used source materials and legal acts, also in English. Numerous legal acts of individual international organizations or political guidelines in the form of opinions and recommendations regarding safety and security in civil aviation were analyzed.

This article presents the role and tasks of individual institutions, including ICAO, EASA and ECAC, in connection with the organization of the civil aviation safety system. The article presents key policy documents, such as the National Civil Aviation Security Program, the Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP), and ECAC's Doc 30, providing a detailed analysis of each. Their role and impact on aviation security standards in the context of European and international regulations are assessed.

In the literature, there are few studies devoted to the subject of safety and security against terrorist attacks in the European civil aviation system, but these are almost exclusively legal studies that do not reflect the entire conditions for the creation of a specific legal order in the discussed situation, and are only an analysis of individual legal provisions. Therefore, this study presents a rarely described political and legal approach, which has not been the subject of broader research so far.

3. The International Framework for Air Transport Safety

The fundamental issue in the functioning of the aviation industry is to ensure the safety of all users and entities that it concerns. Every user wants to benefit from the best possible conditions in terms of quality, organization, and scope of their offer. At the same time, safety issues are the foundation, because failure to meet the appropriate minimum directly affects the quality of services, the organization of the system, and the availability of the offer. The aviation authorities of the state will not allow the use of a given entity if it does not meet the appropriate formal conditions in the field of safety.

First of all, it should be mentioned some safety aspects which are essential in this paper. It is mentioned that the term "safety" is discussed in different ways [1]. Wróblewski states, that there are many studies on this subject, which focus on selected issues from the

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broadly understood safety issues [2]. Gierszewski presents a systemic analysis of security and indicates that the security system is based on the internal sphere of the state as well as external activity within the international environment [3]. Kitler emphasizes that there is no area of state activity that would not concern the issue of security in the broad sense of the word [4]. Jurczak notes that due to various threats of contemporary world, states should adopt new solutions to ensure protection against such new threats and adapt them in individual security areas to the dynamically changing international environment [5].

There is no single international definition of aviation safety. The term aviation safety is multi-layered and there are no definitions in any multilateral agreement, nor is it practiced to define this category in bilateral agreements. The normative definition of aviation safety usually functions at the level of the national legal order. Aviation safety is understood as a set of legal regulations concerning the production and maintenance of aircraft and the functioning of service providers and users in the aviation environment, while aviation security covers the entire organizational, legal, operational and technical framework for preventing illegal acts against civil aviation [6].

These two terms are complementary. Air transport safety is a fundamental issue for states, carriers, airports, passengers, institutions ensuring the safety of air navigation (air navigation services), air traffic control authorities.

The emergence of terrorist attacks in the mid-20th century aimed at the safety of civil aviation forced states to make rapid changes towards unifying the rules of conduct with persons violating the safety of air transport. An individual approach is pointless, because aviation is mainly international in nature and international transport constitutes the essence of the development of civil aviation. Wiśniewski emphasizes the important opinion that it is necessary to ensure the safety of citizens against acts of unlawful interference [7]. Therefore, it was necessary to develop common standards and implement them as soon as possible. As a result of such action, an international system was created to counteract acts of aviation terrorism (the so-called Tokyo-Hague-Montreal system). This system is shaped on the basis of the following conventions:

- a) Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, signed in Tokyo on 14 September 1963 (Tokyo Convention),
- b) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at The Hague on 16 December 1970 (the Hague Convention),
- c) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on 23 September 1971 (Montreal Convention).

At the same time, new international regulations on aviation security were introduced by adopting Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention. This happened relatively late, on 22 March 1974, i.e. thirty years after the adoption of the convention itself. The damage, not only to people, but also to property, caused by terrorist acts was enormous at that time. This primarily concerned the use of aircraft as a means of destroying a specific target on Earth.

The adopted system constitutes an organizational, legal and functional framework for safety in international air traffic. It is worth emphasizing that these multilateral regulations only concern the impact in the international sphere, while domestic flights,

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which are subject to national regulations, are excluded. In turn, bilateral air transport agreements concluded at present or modified already existing ones also contain provisions on safety. This is a response to the need to strengthen cooperation between countries in the field of safety and security, as well as to combat aviation terrorism more effectively [8]. There are two types of agreement clauses: safety clause and security clause.

Analyzing the first aspect, provisions in bilateral agreements generally refer to consultation procedures or "ramp inspections", or both, in relation to the air carrier. States reserve the right to request consultations at any time on the safety standards observed by the other country concerning the air carrier operating between the countries in question, in terms of crews, aircraft and their operation. In the case of EU (horizontal) agreements, they contain references to EU aviation safety legislation that a third-country carrier must comply with if it wants to operate in the EU. Bilateral agreements may also contain provisions on so-called ramp inspections of aircraft registered in third countries.

As regards the provisions on aviation security in bilateral agreements, they contain references to the relevant conventions in this area (Tokyo Convention of 1963, Hague Convention of 1970, Montreal Convention of 1971 and Montreal Protocol of 1988). The Parties confirm their mutual obligations to protect aviation against acts of unlawful interference. In turn, the EU's bilateral horizontal agreements contain references to EU acts on the principles of law for carriers and airports concerning aviation security. In addition, agreements concluded by Member States contain references to compliance with the standards and recommended practices on aviation security established by ICAO and the annexes to the Chicago Convention.

Aviation policy is crucial for safety and security because it establishes standardized regulations and procedures designed to protect passengers, crew, and cargo. By setting stringent requirements for aircraft maintenance, pilot training, and operational protocols, aviation policy helps to minimize risks and prevent accidents. Additionally, it incorporates security measures, like passenger screening and airspace monitoring, to protect against potential threats such as terrorism.

There are international regulations, standards and recommendations that must be respected in the field of safety [9]. Not all of them are legally binding, there are many recommendations that, due to the specificity of air transport, must be observed in the interest of all entities (users and service providers).

The global nature of aviation necessitates a harmonized approach to safety and security. International standards are primarily governed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), established by the Convention on International Civil Aviation, signed in Chicago, December 7th (so called Chicago Convention).

The Chicago Convention is the foundation that was adopted by states in order *that international civil aviation may be developed in a safe and orderly manner and that international air transport services may be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically*, and taking into account, *that the future development of international civil aviation can greatly help to create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world, yet its abuse can become a threat to the general security*. There must be one basic aviation

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safety order for each operating entity to safely perform its activities. The Chicago order is based on the provisions of the convention and annexes and documents regulating various aspects of aviation safety and is one of the best functioning in the world. ICAO's Annex 17 outlines Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for safeguarding civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference, including measures to prevent hijacking and ensure passenger safety [10].

As signatories to the ICAO, European states adhere to these standards, incorporating them into national laws and the European Union's legal framework. The ICAO also introduced initiatives such as the Universal Security Audit Program (USAP), which assesses member states' security implementations, urging them to align with international best practices to ensure a standardized approach across borders [11]. The history of introducing such legal solutions dates back to the events of 2001. The tragic attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 initiated a series of changes in the aviation security system at the international, regional, and national levels. States and international institutions reacted immediately. One of the actions was the adoption of a resolution by the ICAO Assembly on the misuse of civil aircraft as weapons of destruction and other terrorist acts involving civil aviation [12]. The resolution condemned terrorist acts as contrary to the fundamental principles of humanity, norms of social conduct and a violation of international law. Paragraph 7 called on the Council and the Secretary General of the Organization to take immediate action to establish a Universal Security Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP), which would include all actions deemed necessary to improve airport security, and would also regulate in a more precise way the shape and nature of various civil aviation security programs. After just a few months, in 2002, this instrument was adopted, immediately implemented, and audits covered almost all Member States [13]. ICAO also publishes Safety Oversight Audit Reports. They are the results of audits carried out by ICAO in the Member States assessing the quality of national oversight of civil aviation safety and compliance with international standards.

4. European Legal Framework for Air Transport Safety and Security

Similar to ICAO, the regional civil aviation system in Europe was also modified to meet the new reality following the September 2001 attacks. The European Union has established a rigorous legal framework to protect air transport security. The primary legislative instrument is Regulation (EC) No 300/2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation security, which sets out basic security measures, including airport and in-flight security procedures [14].

This act constitutes an extremely important foundation in the European aviation law system in the field of aviation security and aviation safety. It constitutes the legal basis for the creation of the following instruments in the discussed scope:

- a) the national civil aviation security program,
- b) the national quality control program,
- c) the airport security program,
- d) the air carrier security program,

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- e) the security program of each entity listed in the national civil aviation security program.

It applies to both service providers, i.e. in particular airports and air carriers, but also to other operators or external entities that provide services to airports or through them.

Regulation No 300/2008 is a cornerstone of European aviation security as it establishes common rules across EU member states to protect civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference, such as terrorism. This regulation harmonizes security standards by mandating procedures for passenger and baggage screening, access control, and in-flight security measures, ensuring a unified approach across EU airports. By creating consistent baseline requirements and allowing for targeted adjustments based on risk assessments, the regulation enhances the safety of air travel within Europe, facilitates cooperation among member states, and promotes a secure, efficient aviation network aligned with international standards. It ensures that all EU member states implement a standardized security rules while allowing for specific national requirements based on risk assessments.

The regulation is supplemented by Implementing Regulations, such as Regulation (EU) No 2015/1998, which provide more detailed security requirements, including list of prohibited items, screening procedures, security of cargo and mail, and security requirements for personnel. This EU framework mandates systematic screening processes at all major European airports and emphasizes the need for passenger and baggage checks, staff vetting, and control over access to restricted airport areas [15]. This regulation ensures a consistent, high level of security at all EU airports, helping to keep air travel safe.

5. The Role of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) plays a critical role in enhancing aviation safety and security. EASA has been established in 2002 [16]. This organization has increasingly extensive competences and actively participates in the adoption of EU law within the scope for which it was established [17]. Its three most important functions are:

- a) operational function: certification of aircraft and aircraft equipment, crew, institutions providing air traffic management (ATM) services, design and production organizations, or organizations training air traffic controllers,
- b) regulatory function: creating law, and
- c) control function: control of the application of the adopted aviation regulations in the EU Member States.

The establishment of EASA contributes to increasing and maintaining a high level of aviation safety in Europe. It supports the Commission in negotiating and concluding bilateral agreements with various entities regarding technical requirements and standards in environmental protection. Darono Yakti underlines, that EASA plays crucial role in aviation safety and security, because it has a formal legal instruments to act in this regard in Europe [18]. The European institution EASA has far-reaching independence and an extensive system of prerogatives. Laurens Van Kreij notices, that

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through EASA's inspection powers, it has a stabilizing effect on aviation safety [19]. EASA effectively performs its function and is a complementary element of the European Union's activities in the field of aviation safety. EASA collaborates closely with member states, ICAO, and industry stakeholders to maintain a secure air transport environment, providing guidance, inspections, and audits to ensure compliance with security requirements.

Initially focused solely on safety, EASA's responsibilities expanded to include certain aspects of security, such as cybersecurity. On 10 February 2017, EASA and the Cybersecurity Service of the Institutions, Bodies, Offices and Agencies of the European Union (CERT-EU) signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of aviation cybersecurity [20]. One of the important provisions was the establishment of European Centre for Cyber Security in Aviation (ECCSA). Its main role is to strengthen cybersecurity within the aviation sector. ECCSA provides a central platform for sharing information, best practices, and threat intelligence between aviation stakeholders, such as airlines, airports, manufacturers, and national aviation authorities. Membership in ECCSA is voluntary and open to all entities mentioned [21].

EASA's cybersecurity efforts are crucial for protecting against emerging threats, such as cyber-attacks on aviation systems, which can disrupt operations or compromise passenger safety.

6. National Implementation and Oversight

While EU regulations establish a baseline for air transport security, individual EU member states retain the authority to implement additional measures through their National Civil Aviation Security Programs (NCASPs). The NCASP consists of a number of key elements that are designed to ensure the safety of civil aviation and protect against acts of unlawful interference. The main elements of this program include:

- a) principles of airport and aviation infrastructure protection, including physical security, rules of access and stay in each airport zones,
- b) procedures for screening cabin and checked baggage, cargo and postal shipments, as well as personal checks of passengers before boarding, which are intended to prevent the introduction of dangerous items,
- c) rules for checking and monitoring cabin and checked baggage carried on board aircraft,
- d) procedures for checking and training flight crew and other employees having access to security areas,
- e) crisis response system,
- f) cooperation with entities responsible for security in order to coordinate activities and exchange information.

The National Aviation Security Program is a document that is regularly updated to adapt to new threats and changes in international aviation security regulations. These programs, mandated by EU law, enable member states to address specific security threats unique to their region. For instance, countries with high-profile airports, such as Germany, France, and the UK, often adopt stricter security protocols, including enhanced passenger profiling and physical checks, based on intelligence reports or recent threats.

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Additionally, ECAC plays an essential role by setting standards for member states, promoting regulatory alignment, and conducting security audits. ECAC's Doc 30 provides guidance on best practices in aviation security, complementing the EU's regulatory framework and supporting member states in their implementation efforts (ECAC, 2021). ECAC's Doc 30 was first developed in December 2001. It contains guidelines and other instructions to facilitate the understanding and implementation of protection measures in the national legal systems of its members. ECAC's Doc 30 initially focused on passenger facilitation [22], has expanded to cover a broad range of topics, including security procedures, airport and aircraft protection, accessibility for passengers with reduced mobility, health issues, risk management [23]. It serves as a crucial reference for ECAC member states, helping them align with international standards and ensure consistent, high-quality service and security across the aviation sector.

7. Passengers safety in European Union

Ensuring the safety of society is one of the basic duties of the state. Its relevant bodies deal with specific categories of safety. Such an institutional approach to the role of state safety allows us to notice that the safety of air traffic of its passengers is the responsibility not only of the air carrier or the airport, but above all of the state through its bodies. By conducting its aviation safety policy, the state guarantees all passengers that the use of air traffic is fully safe. To this end, the state plays not only a regulatory role, which is performed by specific entities, but also a control (supervisory) role, consisting in monitoring compliance with all safety procedures of travelers.

Passengers benefit from protection in many areas of aviation activity. Their safety is based on principles such as: information about the carrier actually performing the flight, procedures related to baggage, safety in the event of a flight cancellation, delay or denied boarding, and many others. There are no uniform international standards for passenger protection, but in the case of European aviation policy, a number of solutions have been established that are beneficial to passengers, the aim of which is to ensure the safety of travel for every user.

The development of international aviation law to date within the Chicago system has not taken into account the issue of protecting the rights of air passengers. The Montreal Convention of 1999 sets out the principles of the carrier's liability for damage resulting from the death or bodily injury of a passenger, damage to baggage or cargo, and the limits of compensation [24].

In Europe, there are instruments for implementing the policy of protecting the rights of air passengers and taking care of their safety in these aspects. Passengers in Europe, but also all over the world, have the opportunity to use a new instrument of safety in civil aviation, the so-called "blacklist" of carriers. This is an EU list of Regulation No. 2111/2005 of all air carriers in the world outside Europe that do not meet international and European safety standards and/or specific aircraft of individual carriers that raise serious concerns regarding their technical condition [25]. Anyone can check whether a carrier is not on such a list. Being on the "blacklist" indicates a lack of compliance with minimum safety requirements according to European standards. "The "blacklist" therefore has four important functions: information, warning, control and

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compensation. You can freely use air transport performed within the EU, because carriers that do not guarantee flight safety are deprived of the possibility of entering EU airspace [26].

8. Slovakia case

8.1. Compliance with EU and ICAO Standards

As an EU member, Slovakia adheres to the legal and regulatory frameworks established by the European Union, such as Regulation No 300/2008. Additionally, Slovakia is a signatory to the ICAO's Chicago Convention, and all Annexes adopted thereto, which stand for Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). One of such is ICAO's Annex 17 which provides a framework, that Slovakia incorporates into national law to ensure its policies align with international practices to counter unlawful interference. The Slovak Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) oversees adherence to both EU and ICAO standards, ensuring Slovakia's compliance through regular audits, security checks, and staff training [27].

Slovakia is also obliged to enforce the National Civil Aviation Security Program (NCASP). The country's compliance with these standards is essential for its integration into the European aviation network, and also it is compatible with international standards. The Program ensures passenger and operational safety while meeting EU-wide and global security expectations. The NCASP outlines the responsibilities of various stakeholders, such as airport authorities, law enforcement, and the Slovak Ministry of Transport, in implementing and maintaining security measures.

8.2. Cooperation of Slovakia with European institutions in the field of safety and security

The Slovak Civil Aviation, which is under the supervision of Ministry of Transport of the Slovak Republic plays a crucial role in implementing EU and ICAO requirements, conducting inspections and monitoring airport compliance. The Transport Authority in the area of safety and security is responsible for e.g. certification procedures, licensing of aviation personnel, supervision of air navigation, and conducting investigation of accidents and incidents. The authority also collaborates with European entities, such as the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), or EUROCONTROL (European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation) to be up-to-date with the best practices and innovations in aviation security, including measures against emerging threats like cybersecurity risks. In 2021, for instance, the Slovak CAA strengthened its cybersecurity regulations by incorporating EASA's guidelines, aiming to protect critical airport infrastructure and airline systems from cyber-attacks that could potentially endanger public safety. On January 7, 2021, the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted the National Cybersecurity Strategy for 2021-2025 [28]. It is addressed to all entities that operate in the digital sphere and are susceptible to threats in cyberspace. This is particularly true for civil aviation, which uses numerous digital solutions, and security depends on a properly functioning system in cyberspace.

Apart from the above mentioned institutions, Slovakia is also a member of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), which provides an additional layer of

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regulatory guidance and support to ensure robust aviation safety across Europe. ECAC's security recommendations, documented in its Doc 30, assist Slovakia in maintaining consistent standards and adapting to new safety challenges.

Due to its geographical location, Slovakia has unique security considerations, particularly concerning regional cooperation and border control. Sharing borders with non-EU countries, such as Ukraine, Slovakia faces additional challenges in controlling cross-border movements that could impact aviation safety and security. While Slovakia benefits from the Schengen Area's free movement principles, its proximity to Eastern Europe necessitates a more vigilant approach to monitoring external threats.

In this regard, Slovakia works closely with EU partners and neighboring countries to share intelligence and collaborate on anti-terrorism initiatives. For example, Slovakia is part of the Central European Initiative (CEI), a regional forum that promotes cross-border cooperation on security issues, including aviation security [29]. Through this initiative, Slovakia participates in joint security exercises and shares intelligence with its neighbors, strengthening its ability to respond to potential threats. One of the main goals of CEI is to promote stability and safety across Member States, also indirectly supports security in aviation sector [30]. Through an enhanced collaboration between members of this organization, the system of civil aviation is safer while different actions are coordinated. CEI helps Slovakia as well as other partners to address security challenges, for example in airspace management and cybersecurity or emergency response coordination.

Looking forward, Slovakia faces several challenges and opportunities in maintaining and enhancing its aviation security framework. One critical area is the growing risk of cyber threats to aviation systems, necessitating an increased focus on cybersecurity in coordination with EU and ICAO strategies.

Conclusion

The European legal framework for air transport security reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing unlawful interference. By harmonizing international standards, establishing EU-wide regulations, and supporting national implementation, Europe ensures a robust security environment that addresses evolving threats. The role of EASA and the increasing focus on cybersecurity highlight the EU's commitment to preemptively tackling emerging risks. Taking into consideration new challenges, legal and operational frameworks are being continuously adjusted, so that air transport sector is free from unlawful interference and safe for air travel.

Slovakia's approach to air transport safety and security demonstrates a strong commitment to adjust with EU and international standards. Through compliance with EU regulations, cooperation with ECAC, and a focus on cybersecurity, Slovakia plays an active role in Europe's collective aviation safety and security efforts. As Slovakia continues to modernize its security infrastructure and adapt to emerging threats, it remains well-positioned to contribute to the overall safety and security of the European airspace, ensuring a secure environment for both passengers and personnel.

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