



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**AVIATION 122**

**NOTE**

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From: Commission  
To: Council  
Subject: Aircraft tracking  
- Information from the Commission

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Delegations will find annexed information from the Commission on the above-mentioned subject for consideration under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 5 June 2014.

## Information note by the Commission on aircraft tracking

The disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 has brought the problem of aircraft tracking, which was already identified following the loss of Air France flight AF447 in 2009, back into public view.

The public no longer accepts that an aircraft with hundreds of people on board can simply go missing. Indeed, positioning and communication technologies already available today should enable the tracking of aircraft for the entirety of the flight. Most large aircraft have the essential equipment already installed, and a number of air carriers are operating flight position transmission. However, this is not yet a universal practice for all air carriers, and a number of technical issues need to be addressed to make flight tracking systems sufficiently robust.

Therefore, the Commission supports the recommendations made by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) meeting on Global Tracking on 13 May and envisages taking implementing measures to ensure that the position of public transport aircraft is known at all times, even in very remote locations. The measures would aim to avoid that an aircraft becomes invisible to air traffic management because certain systems become inoperative and to improve emergency location equipment and to provide search and rescue teams with all possible information firstly to conduct urgent rescue operations and secondly, if necessary, to locate the wreckage and the flight recorders in case of an accident, so that the safety investigation authorities can establish causes and effective corrective actions can be taken to prevent similar accidents.

Such measures would be based on the following principles:

- A technologically neutral, performance based requirement will be defined for large public transport aircraft to automatically transmit trajectory information sufficiently, regularly and accurately for search and rescue and investigation purposes.

- The requirement should specify that, provided the relevant equipment can be operated safely, it should have a backup power supply and it should not be possible to disable the flight tracking function during the flight.
- The requirements must allow air carriers and aircraft manufacturers to opt for the most cost efficient solutions.
- At the same time, building on the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Opinion No 01/2014, the requirements for underwater locator beacons will be enhanced, which will significantly increase the likelihood to recover the flight recorder data with valuable information in case of an accident over water.

They would be taken at several levels:

- The Commission would endeavour to adopt the necessary amendments to the EU aviation safety Regulations in 2014/2015, following scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council.
- We should support ICAO efforts to define short-term, mid-term and long-term solutions for flight tracking, because only a global approach will bring the greatest practical benefit.
- The Commission will work with the EASA, Eurocontrol, the SESAR Joint Undertaking and the aviation industry:
  - to encourage air carriers to use their existing equipment and procedures to the extent possible to support flight tracking, and
  - to promote the practical development and implementation of technical solutions which meet the performance requirements.