

EU-US Joint Declaration on Aviation Security

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Spanish Interior Minister, Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba and Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security.
Jesus Carvajal

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The Ministers of the Member States of the European Union, together with the Vice President of the European Commission and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security of the United States of America, meeting informally in Toledo, (Spain), have discussed current terrorists threats, in particular the attempted attack on an aircraft approaching Detroit on 25th December 2009, ways to strengthen international security measures and standards for aviation security, and an upcoming global dialogue on securing international travel.

The Ministers of the Schengen Associated Countries and the Candidates Countries present at the meeting associate themselves to this statement.

The rights threatened by terrorism, such as life, liberty and security of person, are among the most cherished human rights. The preservation of those rights is a fundamental task and a shared responsibility. Likewise, international air transportation is a global resource on which we all rely. When someone threatens one part of the system, they can cause harm throughout it.

The European Union and the United States of America share the responsibility to prevent terrorists and serious criminals from conducting, planning, and supporting operations with the intention to cause harm to our populations including by exploiting civil aviation, while upholding the rule of law and observing and promoting respect for international law, including international human rights law.

The last attempted attack on 25th December by an individual who flew from Africa to the United States via Europe highlights the international nature of this threat. An international threat demands an international response.

The participants agreed that the following objectives should be pursued:

- * To identify individuals who pose a risk to our security as early as possible by bolstering the security of and our confidence in travel documents, the use of biometrics, and passenger screening, so we can prevent such individuals from travelling and posing a threat.
- * To identify the illicit materials that such people may be carrying, sending via cargo, or transporting, including through enhanced technologies, to prevent the entry of such materials onto aircraft.
- * To work with other partners worldwide to implement necessary changes to their aviation security regimes, including by enhancing aviation security capacity.
- * To continue to work together and with other international partners, including at the ministerial level, toward greater international travel security.

To this end, they wish that, as a matter of urgency, several measures are prepared (at expert level) in the following areas, to be considered at the high level Meeting, in April, 2010, on Justice and Home Affairs between the EU and the United States within the context of the transatlantic dialogue.

Aviation Security

- * Continue the excellent cooperation between the EU and the United States on aviation security issues based on the EU-U.S. Air Transport Agreement.
- * Intensify regular discussion on transport security by way of the EU-U.S. Transport Security Working Group.

- * Support the provision of predeparture information to aid in screening.
- * Enhance measures for onboard flight protection and improve mechanisms for emergency communications.
- * Share best practices on search techniques, including behavioural detection training and methods.
- * Exchange research results, technical expertise, and practical experiences, including concerning explosives.
- * Promote international co-ordination of efforts to build sustainable solutions to the current threat, including through ICAO.

Information Sharing

- * Examine, as a matter of urgency, the functioning of and the opportunities for our data information exchange mechanisms, including via avenues such as liaison officers and operations centers, to ensure that we do the utmost to reduce the risk to air travellers and others, while ensuring effective protection for our citizens' privacy and civil liberties.
- * Draw on the results of the joint review of the July 26, 2007 EU-U.S. Passenger Name Records (PNR) Agreement and the reviews under way in the United States on use of passenger information in the prevention of terrorism in considering what and how operational cooperation sharing could be further improved and compatible approaches could be developed among partners committed to aviation security, the rule of law, and international humans rights.

Research activities

- * Prioritise national and cooperative research and development in related subjects such as physical and behavioural explosives detection and mitigation through the Agreement for Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the United States and the European Community, as extended and expanded to include security research in July 2009.

International Activity

- * Work together with and in affected third countries and regions in the field of capacity building and development to support counter-terrorism work in those areas where terrorist groups operate and prevent these areas from becoming zones where terrorists can train and prepare their criminal acts.
- * Co-ordinate efforts to strengthen aviation security worldwide, to ensure the most efficient use of resources to promote effective screening and other security techniques in countries with flights to our countries.
- * Cooperate in the establishment and acceptance of international standards in aviation security, including in passenger and cargo information.