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CANSO LEADS CALLS FOR VOLCANIC ASH RESPONSE

- **Need for better coordination and decision-making at European and global level**
- **Four recommendations for action**

CANSO, the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, has released a statement on volcanic ash effects, listing several recommendations to states. It has also called a meeting of European air traffic control experts in May to discuss future action.

The statement notes that coordination arrangements at European and global level need to be improved to allow for better decision-making. It also urges that research on the effects of ash on aircraft engines be speeded up, and new international regulations put in place. CANSO has made four recommendations to states and the International Civil Aviation Organization, to help ensure that airspace closures can be minimised. The recommendations include more research on the effects of volcanic ash, better monitoring and more flexible procedures for assessing the danger of ash plumes, and regional contingency plans to be put in place to deal with future events.

Graham Lake, Director General of CANSO, said:

“It is now clear that while air traffic control organisations were involved in developments and decisions at national level, it was left to the Directors-General Civil Aviation, as members of the Eurocontrol Provisional Council, to make decisions on European-wide coordination. The ANSPs were initially left out of these discussions and their expertise was not at the table when the decision was made to close the airspace.

CANSO is bringing together European air traffic control experts in May to urgently review the lessons learned from this event, and in June our Global ATM Summit will focus on providing international solutions to this vital issue.”

NOTES

CANSO Members recommend the following actions to minimise the effects of future similar events:

1. Based on lessons learned, improved collaborative decision-making processes and contingency planning is urgently needed. Region-specific contingency plans and arrangements need to be reviewed and/or modified for improved institutional and inter-State coordination and decision-making that is supported by the available information and relevant expertise. Roles and responsibilities for decision-making need to be more clearly defined, and it is essential that all stakeholders are involved.

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2. Consensus needs to be reached on what is an acceptable level of ash concentration for safe aircraft operation. A way to measure particle size and density also needs to be determined. Further, better and more accurate methods for monitoring ash clouds, their spread and concentration need to be investigated that are real-time based as opposed to theoretical modeling. A more dynamic method of ash cloud monitoring may make it possible to keep more airports open and re-route aircraft and change flight profiles.
3. In the short-term, States and industry should be encouraged to make use of all available data, including real-time engine monitoring, making this data/information readily available and allowing for better risk assessment.
4. In the medium/long-term, ICAO may need to develop new regulatory provisions on operations certification and procedures for the closure of airspace, contingencies and re-routing.

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CANSO – The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation – is the global voice of the companies that provide air traffic control, and represents the interests of Air Navigation Services Providers worldwide. CANSO members are responsible for supporting over 85% of world air traffic, and through our Workgroups, members share information and develop new policies, with the ultimate aim of improving air navigation services on the ground and in the air. CANSO also represents its members' views in major regulatory and industry forums, including at ICAO, where we have official Observer status.