



## **POSITION PAPER**

### **GLOBAL AIRCRAFT TRACKING SYSTEMS**

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The tragedies of Malaysia Airlines flight 370 and Air France flight 447 highlighted the public interest concerning the need to know the location of scheduled commercial airliners at all times. Notwithstanding this, it is important that new requirements are proportionate to all sectors of activity within the scope of associated legislation.

#### **1. Work towards global harmonisation**

The European Commission published a new regulation related to flight data recorders, underwater locating devices, and aircraft tracking systems on 11/12/2015. These new rules generally apply to EU commercial operators with (1) aeroplanes with a MOTW of more than 27,000 Kg and carrying more than 19 passengers and (2) aeroplanes with a MTOM of 45,500 Kg.

The Business Aviation community fully understands the need to legislate in order to find solutions to timely identify and localise aircraft in distress when a commercial airliner flies out of radar controlled airspace. However, aviation, by its very nature, crosses borders and oceans and success requires global airborne and ground solutions. A harmonised airline solution to global flight tracking is required. However, as recognised by ICAO, such a solution will not fit well with Business Aviation specificities.

#### **2. Ensure proportionality**

Business aircraft operations are not public operations and carry only small numbers of passengers in aircraft generally operated by very small companies. It is therefore important that monitoring requirements placed on these small operators are both proportionate and manageable. There can also be business sensitivity, security and competition issues were the location of business aircraft widely available.

In addition, airline flight tracking systems (ACARS) are not compatible with most business jet operations. A simple airline solution to the need for real time visibility of the aircraft's location is not therefore readily available for business jet operators. Whereas nearly all of the scheduled airlines utilise a satellite based digital communications network with their dispatch centres (ACARS), and this existing airline equipment and service can be easily adapted to their needs. Business aircraft do not typically utilise ACARS equipment or services. Moreover, as already highlighted many companies operate only one or two aircraft and do not have an active dispatch office and therefore ACARS does not make sense.

Recent work at ICAO in the area of global flight tracking has recognised that it is not an appropriate solution for business aircraft and therefore will limit application to aircraft that carry more than 19

passengers. The recent proposals related to global flight tracking in Europe have included a weight based cut-off of 45,000Kg which only segregates a portion of business jet operations. It is recommended that any EU mandate for flight tracking be aligned with ICAO to assure that business jet operations are not exposed to an inappropriate mandate ill-suited to the needs and capabilities of the sector. Specifically, any EU mandate should also use 19 passengers as a discriminator as some business jet aircraft do weigh more than 45,500Kg. If there is concern that such a passenger based discriminator neglects large cargo aircraft operations, perhaps other avenues could be explored, such as the inclusion of a cargo capacity figure into the mandate, in order to address the needs of that community.

As with all Regulations, one size does not fit all. An inclusive and innovative European policy is a prerequisite for a sustainable and competitive air transport in Europe. The requirements for flight tracking in Europe, as well as enhancing safety, must fully address the operational needs of all airspace users; consider current regulatory requirements, and accept technical means of compliance existing elsewhere in the world.

EBAA, GAMA and are committed to supporting the European Commission in this undertaking and EASA if it is enabled to undertake a rulemaking activity which addresses the issues of global flight tracking outlined above.

***For more information please contact:***

**EBAA**

Vanessa Rullier-Francaud  
Senior Manager, European Affairs  
At email: [vrullier@ebaa.org](mailto:vrullier@ebaa.org)  
Phone: +32 2 290 01 63

**GAMA**

Brian Davey  
Director, European & International Affairs  
at email: [bdavey@gama.aero](mailto:bdavey@gama.aero)  
Phone : +32 (0)2-550-3900