



Q&A on Flight FR4978 incident

Do you condemn this incident?

The incident is one of great concern. We strongly condemn any interference or requirement for landing of civil aviation operations that is inconsistent with the rules of international law. A full independent investigation by competent international authorities must establish the facts and ensure this should never happen again.

To that end, we strongly support the ICAO Council decision to establish an investigation under Article 55(e) of the Chicago Convention.

Do you agree that airlines should avoid Belarus airspace?

The European Aviation Safety Agency have recommended that airlines avoid Belarus airspace for now. That respects the responsibility of all airlines to manage their operations based on risk-assessments performed on the basis of information and advice received from their regulators and other credible sources.

What implications does this have for delays, costs and increased emissions?

At current traffic levels the implications are limited and will be manageable. If traffic ramps up this will become more of a problem, particularly for some flights between Asia and Europe where extended flight times could result in payload restrictions.

Has IATA been approached to take part in an investigation?

IATA has received an invitation from the Belarus Ministry of Transport and Communications, Department of Aviation to participate in an investigation of the events surrounding flight FR4978. The invitation did not detail the role IATA would play or specify the terms of reference or legal framework under which the proposed investigation would take place. IATA believes that an independent investigation by competent international authorities is required.

What is the list of countries that have restricted Belarusian airlines in their airspace, or banned flights to or over Belarus?

We do not collate this information.

Do you support the ban on Belarusian airlines in European airspace?

Belavia is and remains an IATA member airline. There has been no suggestion that it had any role to play in this incident.

We hope for an early resolution to this issue by the countries concerned so that we can get back to normal business.

What is the process behind alerting security threats on flights? Did Belarus follow this process?

There are procedures set down by the International Civil Aviation Organization for managing security risks in flight. Whether these procedures were correctly followed is exactly what an independent investigation needs to establish.

[What is the process for when a government suddenly designates an airspace as off limits? Is it difficult for the industry to make these changes quickly?](#)

Whenever any portion of airspace is closed, or Operators are forbidden to use it by their State Authorities, a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) must be issued by the Competent Authorities. As long as the NOTAMs are timely published, Airlines can make the necessary changes in their flight planning systems quite rapidly.

[What is your position on Russia denying access to its airspace for European carriers who are requesting to avoid Belarus airspace?](#)

There have been some incidents of this. It is disruptive for airlines, and for the people and businesses that rely on connectivity.

There are established procedures for approving changes to the routings used by aircraft. It is important that these are followed by both the airline and the airspace operator.