

**SimOACI**

**Comité environnement (CAEP)**

**Balanced approach on Aircraft noise**

## Cas n° 2 : Balanced approach on Aircraft noise

The first Standards and recommended practices related to aircraft noise were adopted on April 1971 and were designated as Annex 16 to the Chicago Convention. With the adoption of new SARPs on aircraft engines emissions, noise related rules became the Volume I of Annex 16, which has been updated regularly (7<sup>th</sup> edition – July 2014). Even if noise in the vicinity of airports is in essence a problem faced by national and local governments, ICAO's involvement have been essential in order to avoid unilateral measures which could hinder the development of international civil aviation. In its Resolution A16-3 adopted during its 16<sup>th</sup> session, ICAO's General Assembly recognized that:

*“the problem of aircraft noise is so serious in the vicinity of many of the world's airports that public reaction is mounting to a degree that gives cause for great concern and requires urgent solution”.*

Far from being outdated, the questions surrounding aircraft noise are still important nowadays, in light of the combined effect of traffic growth and urban extension, causing adverse reactions to the operation and development of airports. In recent years, some national or regional governments established night restrictions or curfews, which can affect the operation of air services, more specifically for all-cargo and long-haul flights, and aggrieve the problem of slot availability at congested airports. Hence, addressing the problem of aircraft noise is still an overarching objective, to avoid hindering the role of aviation in economic development.

ICAO's policy on aircraft noise is based on the so-called “balanced approach”<sup>1</sup>, a flexible understanding of noise problems on a case-by-case basis:

*“the balanced approach to noise management developed by ICAO consists of identifying the noise problem at an airport and then analysing the various measures available to reduce noise through the exploration of four principal elements, namely reduction at source, land-use planning and management, noise abatement operational procedures and operating restrictions, with the goal of addressing the noise problem in the most cost-effective manner”*<sup>2</sup>

In conformity with international environmental law, ICAO works towards a better reduction of noise at source, through the progressive phasing-out of aircrafts producing too much noise, while encouraging States and manufacturers to develop new technological solutions. However, there are still problems of national implementation of the “balanced approach” to noise management and a lack of harmonization of programmes, plans and policies, which causes uncertainty and may affect international air services. One of the major concern is the one of the lack of transparency when applying noise-abatement procedures, some Countries being suspected to, or even accused to, discriminate among air carriers, favoring the national ones. Hence, Resolution A39-1 requests ICAO's Council to assess the evolution of the impact of aircraft noise, to ensure the accuracy of the actual balanced approach and to promote its use. Meanwhile, it remains necessary to work on a better way to resolve difficulties with concerned States, through consultations or even dispute settlement mechanisms, to avoid increased difficulties in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> ICAO Doc 9829, Guidance on the Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management.

<sup>2</sup> ICAO General Assembly Resolution A39-1: Consolidated statement of continuing ICAO policies and practices related to environmental protection — General provisions, noise and local air quality, Appendix C.