

## **ASD High Level Position Paper**

### **Aircraft Tracking and Flight Recorder Requirements (3/02/2015)**

#### **Background:**

In the aftermath of the accident of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370, ICAO has launched a fresh debate on aircraft tracking requirements (March 2014). ICAO has produced a concept of operations on aircraft tracking focusing on short-term, medium term and longer term solutions. A final report 'Global Aeronautical Distress & Safety systems (GADS)' was released on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014. In parallel, the airlines' (IATA) aircraft tracking Task Force has published in December 2014 a final report with recommendations mainly focusing on existing technologies. ICAO will host a High Level Safety Conference in February 2015 which is expected to issue recommendations to further progress on the implementation of new aircraft tracking requirements at global level.

Within Europe, EASA had, as a lessons learned from the earlier Air France AF447 accident (June 2009), already produced rulemaking proposals (NPA 2013-26) on Flight Data Recorders and Underwater Locating Devices (ULDs). Those proposals included among others requirements for 90 days ULDs (instead of 30 days) and a lower (8.8 kHz) frequency for the ULDs to increase their detection range as well as a requirement for automatic deployable flight recorders. In light of the MH370 accident, EASA has accelerated its rulemaking proposals and further requirements on aircraft tracking where added after EASA had published its final Opinion. In particular a requirement has been proposed to require all new production aeroplanes with a Maximum Certified Take Off Weight of 27000 kg and that operate under commercial rules to be equipped with an independent tracking system by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018. The issue is currently being finalized under an EU Commission 'comitology' legislative procedure involving the EASA Committee with Member State Representatives. The detailed EASA technical means to comply is not yet available and would only be published at a later stage.

#### **ASD Position**

ASD strongly supports the need to implement new aircraft tracking requirements and upgrades to flight recorder technology. Manufacturing Industry has therefore taken a leading role in global (ICAO) and European (EASA) discussions on this subject. Manufacturing Industry is ready to actively contribute to finding solutions for aircraft tracking and to ensure their subsequent industrialization based on still to be agreed technical standards.

ASD supports the EU initiative to take a strong position on aircraft tracking, politically and technically, in order to be able to influence the decisions that will be taken at international level and especially at ICAO. However, ASD also would like to stress that it would be inappropriate for the EU to take its own decisions on the issue, in isolation, and without coordination with ICAO, when it is a worldwide issue. In particular in light of the ICAO High Level Safety Conference (2-5 February 2015), it would be inappropriate for the EU to set in stone its own rules. Having the feedback from this High Level ICAO Conference could provide important information and recommendations on aircraft tracking implementation worldwide.

ASD also recommends to ensure agreement and common understanding from the main stakeholders concerned on the Acceptable Means of Compliance (AMC) to the Regulation, in preparation by EASA.

This is why ASD asks for postponing until at least February 2015 the adopting of the new EU legislation on aircraft tracking. This will allow for feedback from the ICAO High Level Safety Conference and a general agreement on the EASA AMC that will fix the conditions of compliance to this new regulation.

ASD is ready to continue working with EASA on the definition and timescale for the implementation of technical solutions for aircraft tracking that can be adapted to aircraft design and that are taking into account all the industrial and operational constraints for such new requirements. In any case, means of compliance should not be unique and if one could be recommended by EASA, flexibility should be given to the manufacturers and airlines to implement the best solution for complying with EU and international requirements. This is therefore a clear example where standardization bodies (EUROCAE together with RTCA) could play a role to define the detailed technical means to comply.

ASD supports the requirements for 90 days ULDs and for 8.8kHz ULDs. Since this issue has already been agreed at ICAO level, ASD believes that the adoption of the European rules on the new ULDs should not be further delayed (irrespective of the still ongoing debate on aircraft tracking) so that industry can start to industrialize the solutions based on agreed and stable rules. In this context, sufficient time should be given to allow industry to industrialize the new ULDs and for the customers to subsequently procure the new ULDs. .

ASD also supports the proposed requirement for automatic deployable flight recorders on the precondition that this will require more time for industrialization on all aircraft types. A phased approach with a different time-frame for newly type certified aircraft and existing types should therefore be envisaged.

Finally, ASD also would like highlight the fact that a different approach should be envisaged for commercial aircraft, rotorcraft and business-jets (which sometimes operate under commercial rules). A similar threshold as the one used for reinforced cockpit doors should be considered.



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