HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY CONFERENCE 2026

Regional Conflicts and Aviation Safety
Building Aviation Resilience in Europe and the Middle East

6 November 2026 | Nicosia, Cyprus

KEY MESSAGES AND EMERGING SAFETY PRIORITIES

Introduction

The High-Level Regional Aviation Safety Conference, organised by the Flight Safety Foundation – Southeast Europe – Cyprus (FSF SE–EUR–CY), with the support of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works of the Republic of Cyprus, brought together representatives of civil aviation authorities, international and European aviation organisations, air navigation service providers, airports, airlines and aviation professionals.

Through two thematic panels and a High-Level Regional Roundtable, participants exchanged experiences and perspectives on the impact of regional conflicts on civil aviation, crisis management, business continuity and the practical measures needed to strengthen resilience across Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

The following key messages and emerging safety priorities reflect principal themes raised during the discussions. They are presented by the Foundation as a synthesis to encourage further dialogue and cooperation; they do not constitute formally adopted commitments or recommendations of participating States or organisations.

1. Flight safety must remain non-negotiable

The protection of aviation safety must guide decisions during regional conflicts, rapidly evolving threats and operational disruptions. Proactive and continuous risk assessment, supported by timely and proportionate mitigation measures, is essential to maintain an acceptable level of safety. Operational pressures must not displace sound safety judgement.

2. Aviation resilience must be built before a crisis

Resilience is developed through preparedness long before a crisis occurs. Realistic contingency plans, clearly assigned responsibilities, exercises, workforce readiness and the ability to respond flexibly are fundamental. Aviation systems and organisations must be equipped to absorb disruption, adapt to changing circumstances and recover safely.

3. Communication, collaboration and harmonisation are essential

Timely, verified and actionable information should be shared among competent authorities, air navigation service providers, airlines, airports and flight crews. A common operational picture, early warning and coordinated procedures can reduce uncertainty and support effective decisions. Flight crews should receive clear, reliable operational guidance from their airlines and air traffic services, particularly when circumstances change rapidly.

4. Regional cooperation must be strengthened

Disruptions often extend beyond national borders, affecting neighbouring States and the wider aviation network. Closer cooperation between neighbouring Civil Aviation Authorities, effective civil–military

coordination and designated regional focal points of contact are therefore essential. Structured exchanges of safety-relevant intelligence and operational information, including through existing mechanisms such as IRAG, can help improve situational awareness; support from States with greater information resources may be especially valuable to smaller States.

5. Crisis management requires clear operational leadership

Competent aviation authorities and relevant operational stakeholders should have clearly defined responsibilities, escalation arrangements and effective mechanisms for coordinated decision-making during crises. Structured risk assessment, including dedicated assessment arrangements where appropriate, should inform timely mitigation action. Political-level coordination may be necessary, while safety-critical operational decisions should remain grounded in the expertise and responsibilities of the competent authorities.

6. People remain at the heart of aviation resilience

Technology, digital systems and analytical tools can improve awareness and support decisions, but people remain central to crisis response. Professional judgement, leadership, training, adequate staffing, fatigue management and cross-organisational trust are essential for effective action under pressure. Strengthening workforce resilience is therefore as important as investing in systems and infrastructure.

7. Business continuity and safe recovery require greater attention

Preparedness must address not only the immediate response but also the continuity of essential operations and the safe restoration of normal services. Airports, airlines, air navigation service providers and authorities need flexible, dynamic and coordinated recovery arrangements, including the management of diversions and changing capacity. Recovery should be as timely as circumstances allow, without creating secondary risks or undermining the safety gains achieved during the crisis response.

8. Emerging threats require continuous monitoring and proactive responses

Regional conflicts, airspace restrictions, cyber threats, GNSS interference and other evolving risks demand continuous monitoring, early warning and the regular reassessment of contingency measures. Their effects may extend across aircraft operations, air traffic management, airport systems and neighbouring networks. Lessons learned from actual disruptions and exercises should be translated into improved preparedness, information-sharing arrangements and practical mitigation measures.

Conclusion and the way forward

The discussions underscored a shared direction: aviation resilience depends on preparedness, trusted information, competent people and sustained cooperation across borders and institutions. The Foundation intends to use these emerging messages to encourage continued exchanges among aviation stakeholders and to explore practical opportunities for stronger regional coordination and safer crisis response and recovery.