**Title**: *The Case for Improved ICAO Guidance on Volcanic Ash*

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**ABSTRACT**

The consequences of the volcanic ash events of Europe in early 2010 included interruptions to air services that affected passengers in a ripple felt around the world. In 2011 a Chilean volcanic eruption disrupted Australian international and domestic air traffic when the airborne ash circumnavigated the globe twice. In both instances (one in congested airspace and one in uncongested airspace) the disruptions brought into sharp relief the reality that civil aviation is not prepared to manage such natural phenomena.

The system of ICAO guidance and notifications regarding airborne ash, the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW) system, will be described and analyzed. The absence in the IAVW of risk assessments and full use of ash concentration data regrettably remained in 2011, with the resulting disruptions to air services in Australia confirming the need for guidance which informs and empowers States and air carriers’ risk assessments.

A review will be made of the progress that has been made in this difficult subject area, in the hope that highlighting the benefits of the imminent IAVW changes will explain how both the negative European and Australian experiences can better be avoided in future.

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