



Functional Airspace Block Europe Central

Six States improve common air traffic management

Luxembourg, 8 October 2015. –The Ministers of Transport of the member States of FABEC (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland) met in Luxembourg on 8 October. The Ministers underlined their joint commitment to organising air traffic management within the airspace of the Functional Airspace Block Europe Central (FABEC) irrespective of national borders and based on the principles laid down in the FABEC States Agreement. Ministers noted with satisfaction the achievements of FABEC since its establishment. Operational quality has reached record high levels in some areas. With its institutional setup and governance FABEC is fully functional to develop initiatives and implement projects to improve the collective performance of the overall ATM system. Therefore the Ministers encouraged the national aviation administrations, the national supervisory authorities and the air navigation service providers to continue their cooperation with the aim to work towards the further integration of the ATM system. This will fulfil the needs of civil and military traffic in this area and contribute to the steady enhancement of the performance of air navigation services in the heart of Europe. Ministers are committed to further improve their cooperation on FABEC and to keep the European Commission informed on its progress. Finally, FABEC Ministers stressed that FABEC contributes significantly to the success of the Single European Sky.

Statement Mrs Doris Leuthard; Federal Minister of Transport Switzerland: “We have convened to demonstrate that FABEC has its important role to play in the Single European Sky. FABEC should be seen as a driver and not as a stopper in the modernization of the European ATM system.”

Outstanding operational performance

Since the establishment of FABEC, service quality has improved significantly, reaching record high levels in places. In the last three years – the first reference period – the total amount of delays caused by air navigation service providers, excluding delays out of their control (i.a. delays due to bad weather conditions and industrial action), were reduced by 46.1 percent (2014 vs. 2011). In 2014, 97.1 percent of all flights controlled were on time, meaning that they were not affected by air traffic flow management measures. On average, the route extension per flight compared to the direct route improved by 9 percent, to 8.9 kilometres – a value which is close to the optimum.

Cross-border projects in implementation

FABEC air navigation service providers are developing cross-border projects to improve safety and punctuality, to decrease the environmental footprint and to provide the capacity needed to strengthen European aviation. Two examples which are currently under implementation are the South-East and Free Route projects.



The South-East project aims to improve a complex airspace structure in the upper airspace at the intra-FAB border of Switzerland, France and Germany. In a first step, France and Switzerland have reshaped a common military training area. This will allow FABEC partners to reshape military training airspaces in France and Germany, to remove two crossing points of civil air routes in March 2016 and to implement a safe and efficient air route structure. In 2018 the first common Franco-German military airspace will be established. The optimised traffic flows will shorten route length by 1.5 million kilometres, reducing CO2 emissions by 16,000 tonnes per year.

The FABEC Free Route project was set up in 2013. In the first two years, 411 direct routings (DCTs) of different length and availability had already been implemented in FABEC airspace. A great amount of them are cross border DCTs. By using these routes, airlines can shorten their total flight distance by 3.3 million kilometres per year. Due to the less fuel consumption CO2 emissions can be reduced by 36,000 tonnes per year.

Notes to editors

About FABEC

FAB Europe Central is based on a treaty ratified in June 2012 by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The Single European Sky initiative was launched by the European Commission to improve the performance of air navigation services. Although Switzerland is not a member of the EU, it is participating in the Single European Sky project.

The airspace of the six States Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland, located as they are in the core of Europe, is one of the busiest and most complex in the world. Most of the major European airports and major civil airways and military training areas are located in this area. FABEC airspace covers 1.7 million km², with about 5.5 million flights per year – 55 percent of all European air traffic. 17,000 people work for the air navigation service providers of FABEC.

The results of the Ministerial Meeting have been summarised in a common declaration, which can be found on www.FABEC.eu.

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