

FABEC ready for take-off

3 November 2008, third Stakeholder Forum: The Functional Airspace Block Europe Central (FABEC) is ready for take-off. The CEOs of the participating Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) were upbeat at the third Stakeholder Forum, held in Amsterdam. 'We as CEOs urge the community within FABEC to keep the momentum and move forward', Paul Riemens, aCEO of Air Traffic Control the Netherlands (LVNL), said as host of the meeting. Representatives of airlines and trade associations described the meeting as a genuine stakeholder forum on account of the seriousness with which their proposals were discussed by the parties.

'Today, the question is how - and not if - FABEC will be implemented', said Dieter Kaden, CEO of DFS Deutsche Flugsicherung, characterizing the FAB spirit among his colleagues. 'As CEOs we want to act as one company'. At the meeting, held on 3 November 2008 a stone's throw away from Schiphol Airport, participants devoted the morning to examining the results of the feasibility study into the creation of FABEC. Paul Riemens described the learning process the parties had gone through since August 2006, when the study was launched as 'a multicultural journey, since we had never before built a FAB'.

FABEC important and ambitious

Patrick Gandil, Director-General of the French Civil aviation authority DGAC and representing the States as chairman of the High Level Implementation Board (HLIB) of FABEC, stressed that the outcome of the study corresponds to the States' view and also meets the requirements of the Single European Sky project (SES) of the European Commission. 'States and ANSPs embrace the common spirit and the necessity of FABEC', Patrick Gandil confirmed. Jean-François Vivier, Chairman of the independent Performance Review Commission (PRC), called FABEC the most important and also the most ambitious FAB project of a total of nine FAB initiatives.

Way forward defined

In the afternoon the speakers, together with the audience, looked into the implementation phase that now stretches out before the FABEC community. Patrick Gandil stressed that all possible cooperation models were being examined, including cooperation agreements, alliances between ANSPs and the consolidation of service provision. He also gave a first overview of the topics of the Declaration of Intent, to be signed on 18 November in Bordeaux, and announced five States task forces (State Agreement, Liability, Charging, Regulation, Performance Targets) which would prepare the signing of a State Agreement in the first half of 2010. Daniel Weder, CEO skyguide and Chairman ANSP Strategic Board, introduced the new '3-pillar' project structure and eight task forces chaired by the ANSPs. He emphasized the common spirit and willingness to make the FABEC a reality. A first major milestone will be the signing of an ANSP Agreement, which will be the cornerstone for robust cooperation.

Stakeholders 'on board'

At the forum, representatives of several stakeholders expressed their concern that they would be forgotten in the coming implementation process. Their main point was that 'the good consultation process that took place in the first phase is not enough for the next phase. We want to be more involved'. The CEOs of the ANSPs underlined that the stakeholders would be taken 'on board' at different levels and on specific topics. In his presentation on the structure and governance of the implementation phase, Daniel Weder confirmed that 'a solid partnership is very necessary'. He also stressed that in early 2009 the ANSPs would start a process to define FABEC social dialogue.

A key message from the airlines in relation to FABEC was their demand for management by performance. According to the Association of European Airlines (AEA), the current cost-effectiveness target for FABEC is not ambitious enough. 'Target-setting should be fully in line with the SES II package', AEA representative Vincent de Vroey emphasized. The AEA also stressed that the implementation of FABEC must lead to less, rather than more, bureaucracy.

ETF Vice President Olivier Joffrin said in Amsterdam that his organization promoted cooperation or maybe an alliance rather than consolidation to reduce fragmentation. ETF argued that the staff of ANSPs may not be viewed as opponents but as a key element in making FABEC a reality. According to ETF, FABEC may not be realized at the cost of staff. The Federation proposed setting up a permanent social forum with a consultative and coordinating role.

Eugenie van Kalshoven, Director strategy and Charges of Air France-KLM, reassured the audience that the airlines did not want to participate in the FABEC process just to criticize - they simply wished to put forward their own requirements. Eugenie van Kalshoven also called upon the European Transport workers Federation (ETF) to maintain a more open approach towards FABEC, adding that the implementation of FABEC will be a step-by-step process.

The Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC), through Mosaic delegate Nicolas Hinchliffe, also underlined that FABEC would only become a reality when a social dimension was added to the process. ATCEUC would support the implementation of FABEC.



Panel discussion during Stakeholder Forum, with: Patrick Gandil - Director-General of the French Civil aviation authority DGAC, Jean Paul Apon - Military Aviation Authority the Netherlands, Daniel Weder - CEO Skyguide and Peter Naets - Project Manager FABEC.

Aviation Summit: 240 signatures for the FABEC

It may well be a historical date for the aviation industry as a whole, and it is certainly one for air navigation services in the core of Europe - on 18 November high-level civil and military representatives from Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland signed, at the Aviation Summit in Bordeaux, a Declaration of Intent to jointly build up a common functional block of airspace, called FABEC (Functional Airspace Block Europe Central). In parallel, the civil air navigation services designated in these countries signed an agreement which will be the basis for the first, immediate steps to build cooperation. In total, more than 240 signatures were gathered, which are now the cornerstone for robust cooperation. Both agreements seek to increase the performance of air traffic in the heart of Europe in terms of safety, environmental impact, capacity, cost-effectiveness, shorter routes and military mission effectiveness. Therefore, Dominique Bussereau, the French minister in charge of transport, referred to them as 'major European agreements'.

During the Aviation Summit, the FABEC initiative received several positive comments, for example from Giovanni Bisignani IATA, who stated that 'FABs are critical building blocks for SES. The Europe Central FAB, signed today is an important step forward. Congratulations to all involved - the States, ANSPs and military authorities.' In addition, he stressed the need to speed up: 'Now we need to push ahead with more ambitious efficiency targets and faster timelines that match the speed of the industry.'

Daniel Weder, CEO skyguide, stated on behalf of the seven civil Air Navigation Service Providers that by signing the agreement they were demonstrating their 'strong conviction, shared by all partners, that closer cooperation in the FABEC is necessary.' Meanwhile, the implementation phase has been launched among the air navigation service providers and the State authorities, starting with the further development of the

operational and technical components leading to implementation. In addition, the States are starting to jointly create an institutional framework for the construction and implementation of FABEC. This will be based on an agreement which will be ready to be signed in 2010 at the latest, and enter into force upon ratification.

The positive impact of this close cooperation was proven in a feasibility study report delivered in summer 2008. More than 230 experts share the opinion that the expected fifty per cent growth in air traffic volume by 2018 can be handled at the same high level of safety. In addition, the experts concluded that, thanks to the FABEC initiative, delays per flight will be kept low, and emissions per flight will be reduced. This will be enabled by several activities proposed by the experts (redesign of airspace, common operational concept, et cetera). In addition, a cost-benefit analysis shows a potential benefit of €7,000 million for airspace users by 2025.

On www.FAB-Europe-Central.eu you can find the declaration of Intent and a summary from the ANSP Agreement and further detailed information.



Bordeaux, 18 November 2008, the CEOs: Daniel Weder - skyguide (Switzerland), Paul Riemens - LVNL (The Netherlands), Marc Hamy - DSNA (France), Jean-Claude Tintin - Belgocontrol (Belgium), Dieter Kaden - DFS (Germany), Ender Ulcun - ANA (Luxembourg) and Karl Heinz Kloos - MUAC (Eurocontrol), sign a cooperation agreement for the implementation and operation of FABEC.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

AEA	=	Association of European Airlines
ANA	=	Administration de la Navigation Aérienne
ANSP	=	Air Navigation Service Provider
ATCEUC	=	Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination
CEO	=	Chief Executive Officer
DFS	=	Deutsche Flugsicherung
DGAC	=	Direction générale de l'Aviation civile
DSNA	=	Direction des Services de la Navigation Aérienne
ETF	=	European Transport workers Federation
FABEC	=	Functional Airspace Block Europe Central
HLIB	=	High Level Implementation Board
LVNL	=	Air Traffic Control the Netherlands
MUAC	=	Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre
PRC	=	Performance Review Commission
SES	=	Single European Sky

FORTHCOMING EVENT:

**ATC Global - Amsterdam RAI
17-19 March 2009, Booth 620**

WEBSITE

www.fab-europe-central.eu

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