

PRESS-RELEASE

FABCE – FABEC ANSP Joint Declaration to deepen interFAB cooperation in support of the Single European Sky

17 June 2020: Air Navigation Service Providers from Functional Airspace Block Central Europe (FAB CE) and Functional Airspace Block Europe Central (FABEC) today signed a Joint Declaration to deepen cooperation with the aim of enhancing Air Traffic Management (ATM) performance. The adjacent functional airspace blocks already collaborate on many existing projects, including improved descent and ascent profiles around major airports, optimising traffic flow in congested airspace, harmonised procedures for the delivery of aeronautical information management data and training activities. The Joint Declaration frames this longstanding cooperation and identifies six key areas that will accelerate progress towards the creation of a Single European Sky to be validated in the light of traffic recovery.

FAB CE CEO Committee Chairperson and Managing Director of Austro Control Valerie Hackl commented: “Traffic downturn as a result of COVID-19 provides European ANSPs with an opportunity to work towards the long-term goals of the Single European Sky and continuing to make cross-border operations as seamless as possible. We look forward to strengthening our lasting collaboration – with a special focus on how to reduce the environmental impact of aviation.”

FABEC Chairman CEO Board and CEO DFS Klaus-Dieter Scheurle said: “FAB CE and FABEC ANSPs already collaborate in many areas, including free route airspace and environmentally friendly arrivals. By signing a Joint Declaration these activities will continue to grow. For us, it is the next step to further enhance InterFAB cooperation – for the benefit of airspace users, passengers and European citizens.””

The Joint Declaration identifies six priority areas for collaboration:

- **Single European Sky:** Common activities to understand and promote the functioning of ATM;
- **Safety:** Shared best-practices, new technologies and procedures;
- **Airspace structures:** Implementation of free route airspace, extended arrivals management and airspace re-sectorisation;
- **Capacity management:** Increased cooperation to manage volatile traffic demand;
- **Training:** Continue development of harmonised training protocols;
- **Aeronautical Information Management:** Continued harmonisation of data sets for cross-border operations and free route operations.

FAB CE is a joint initiative of seven States and air navigation service providers (ANSPs) from Central Europe - Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia – sitting in the heart of Europe and managing critical air traffic flows across the continent. Our airspace covers more than 529,000 km², which we manage within 63 airspace sectors and from eight area control centres (ACCs). www.fab-ce.eu

The airspace of the six FABEC States of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland is one of the busiest and most complex in the world. The majority of major European airports, major civil airways and military training areas are located in this area. FABEC airspace covers 1.7 million km² and controlled about 6.2 million flights in 2019 – 55% of European air traffic. www.fabec.eu

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Joint Declaration Close cooperation for the success of the Single European Sky

This Declaration is between the air navigation service providers from Functional Airspace Block Central Europe (FABCE) and Functional Airspace Block Europe Central (FABEC).

Purpose of the Declaration

The purpose of this declaration is to deepen cooperation between FAB CE and FABEC which until now has taken place on a project-by-project basis. These cooperative activities have included exchange of information and best practices, notably concerning the introduction of free route airspace (FRA), complex airspace redesign to optimize en-route efficiencies, harmonised procedures for the delivery of aeronautical information management data, improved descent and ascent profiles around major airports, better management of traffic flows in congested airspace, cross-border airspace management measures to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, harmonised procedures for training activities and new measures to reduce disruption to en route services as a result of severe weather over the Alps.

While these measures have helped bring the vision of the European Union's Single European Sky (SES) closer, a new impetus to further improve InterFAB strategic cooperation has been generated by a number of industry, regulatory, social and technical factors, including (but not limited to) the publication in 2019 of the Airspace Architecture Study and the 2020 edition of the European ATM Master Plan - which has set a clear direction towards a digital European Sky – and the launch of the European Union's 2020 Green Deal Initiative.

In light of these factors, FAB CE and FABEC have recognised the need to enhance systematic cooperation more widely and broadly, to ensure continuing improvements in ATM performance can be achieved, building on the initial blueprint of the SES. Further steps of InterFAB cooperation are key for the future of the Single European Sky.

Areas covered by the Declaration

FAB CE and FABEC recognize the importance of developing InterFAB cooperative planning to continue to improve the safe, punctual, cost-effective and increasingly environmentally sensitive air transport and ensuring the connectivity for the European Single Market. FABCE and FABEC have identified a number of key areas of priority for collaboration.

Single European Sky

- A common approach to researching fundamental aspects of SES impacts on a fast-changing sector - such as subsidiarity of the network at local, regional and European levels; stability of the air transport network in an extremely volatile market; and the contribution of air navigation services to the well-being of both the travelling and non-travelling public.
- InterFAB cooperation in the areas of operational performance, communications and related services. FABCE and FABEC endeavour to enhance InterFAB cooperation through common measures such as sharing of information, joint workshops or think-tank activities and communications actions for both external and internal audiences.

Safety

- Safety remains the priority focus for FAB CE and FABEC aiming to enhance the exchange of information on best-practices, new technologies and procedures.

Airspace structures

- FABCE and FABEC are working closely to make cross-border operations as seamless as possible. This includes the implementation of cross-border free route airspace (FRA) – so national programs to implement FRA procedures are managed in parallel to cross-border initiatives.
- Cross-border extended arrivals management (XMAN) – FAB CE and FABEC experts intend to advance their work on cross-border, inter-FAB data exchanges between en-route centres and aircraft operators so traffic can fly optimized descent profiles into the region's busiest airports.
- FABCE and FABEC intend to examine airspace re-sectorisation proposals to ensure optimized sector designs and flight profiles are in place and interfaces between FAB CE and FABEC operational centres are improved.

- FAB CE and FABEC aim to enhance InterFAB cooperation within the context of the Operational Excellence programme.

Capacity Management

- FAB CE and FABEC contemplate to build for the upcoming challenging years on the cooperation put in place with the Network Manager to handle peak traffic loads during 2019/2020 which have resulted in flight delay reductions as a result of the distribution of traffic during peak periods to less busy neighboring sectors.
- Both FAB CE and FABEC aim to continue the development of new adverse weather procedures to mitigate disruptive weather conditions, such as thunderstorms over the Alps, to allow controllers to re-route traffic to less busy sectors, regardless of national boundaries, within the FAB CE/FABEC airspace area.
- FAB CE and FABEC intend to share experience in the usage of tools.

Environmental impact

- Inter-FAB environmental sustainability programmes such as cross-border FRA and extended arrival management procedures (XMAN) have been developed in alignment with the upcoming EU's Green Deal and this work could be further refined.

Training

- FAB CE and FABEC training experts aim to continue working on harmonised training protocols for ATM professional personnel – these are starting on an inter-FAB basis with the development of common Questionnaire for ATSEP Standard Assessment Routines (QUASAR) for the licensing of Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEP).

Aeronautical Information Management

- FAB CE and FABEC intend to improve and harmonize data sets for cross-border operations and free route operations.



17 June 2020 at Vienna and Langen,

representing FAB CE CEO-Committee

representing FABEC ANSP Strategic Board.