

## **FABEC ANSPs recruiting over 300 air traffic control trainees to cope with the traffic recovery**

31 August 2021: Functional Airspace Block Europe Central (FABEC) Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) are preparing for traffic recovery following 18 months of unprecedented decline caused by the pandemic. European air traffic demand is growing continuously, in line with the highest Eurocontrol traffic scenario which predicts a return to 2019 levels by 2024<sup>(1)</sup>. To ensure airspace users continue to access safe and efficient services ANSPs have started campaigns to recruit over 300 air traffic control trainees to start training in 2022.

Airspace management relies on highly skilled personnel to operate and maintain advanced electronic infrastructure and a shortfall in human resources can have an immediate effect on airspace capacity. A high number of FABEC controllers are due to retire within the next few years so these ANSPs – who control some of Europe’s busiest airspace - are planning ahead to ensure new recruits qualify in time to meet rising demand, a process which typically takes between three to four years.

Michel van Dorst, FABEC Champion Human Resources and CEO LVNL: “We have to think three to four years ahead in our investment strategy to be sure we have sufficient qualified personnel to meet future demand. Controller expertise is not only necessary for a safe and reliable day-to-day operation, but also in projects, innovation programs as well as for training and education. We have intensified simulator training to maintain competencies and for skill training purposes in ATC academies. Recruitment and selection of new personnel have remained a top priority in the past 18 months.”

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important in the transition to the European Digital Sky and attracting the right competencies is crucial to a process where many do not attain final qualification. It is by planning resources effectively to meet traffic recovery that FABEC ANSPs can ensure they continue to provide safe airspace management and meet rising capacity needs in the future.

<sup>(2)</sup> STATFOR traffic forecast: <https://www.eurocontrol.int/sites/default/files/2021-05/eurocontrol-four-year-forecast-2021-2024-full-report.pdf>

*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 km<sup>2</sup> and handles over 55% of European air traffic. In 2020, FABEC won the ATM Environment Award for the second consecutive year.*

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