Subject : Convening of the first meeting of the EANPG Task Force on the Flexible Use of Airspace (EANPG FUA-TF - Paris, 20 - 22 May 2008)

Action required : As indicated in paragraph 3 below

Dear Colleague,

1. Further to my memo MTG/PIRG/EANPG/49/FLW/08-0067.TEC of 15 February 2008 regarding the above subject, I am pleased to send you herewith a copy of the draft agenda as well as an Information Paper providing background material. Practical information regarding hotels and transport can be found at http://www.paris.icao.int/practical_info/main_practical_info.htm.

2. The objective of the Task Force meeting would be to identify a way forward to extend the implementation of the flexible use of the airspace in the European Region to include High Seas airspace taking account of the constraints inherent in the Chicago Convention. To accomplish this, it is proposed that we review the task received from the EANPG, that we examine the ICAO provisions related to access to high seas airspace and that we consider the proposals being put forward by Eurocontrol to implement flexible use of airspace over the High Seas. This would be done against the background of the current methods used by States to manage special use airspace over the High Seas.

3. On the basis of the information presented and analysed by the meeting, it should then be possible to agree on a way forward so that a recommendation can be made to EANPG/50 in December 2008. However, I wish to stress that, in order to ensure success, it is very important that States be prepared to share their experiences with the other participants in the Task Force. I therefore strongly recommend that you avail yourself of the time and opportunity being made available during the meeting to present an outline of the ways and means that your State would view the expansion of the flexible use of airspace over the High Seas. Without this pooling of information, it will be very difficult to find a consensus on the way to move forward.

4. Please note that a meeting site has been opened on the ICAO EUR/NAT Web Site at the following URL: http://www.paris.icao.int/documents_open_meetings/subcategory.php?id=66. It is our intention to post all meeting documentation and follow up on this site so as to facilitate work between meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Karsten Theil
ICAO Regional Director

Distribution: EANPG Members, Canada, Iceland, the United States, Eurocontrol, the European Commission and NATO Air Traffic Management Committee