FOURTH MEETING OF THE ALLPIRG/ADVISORY GROUP

(Montreal, 6 - 8 February 2001)

Agenda Item 2.3.:   Interregional co-ordination and harmonisation mechanism – Other issues which have global ramifications

**EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO
AVIATION SPECTRUM ISSUES**

(Presented by the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL))

SUMMARY
This paper gives an overview of spectrum-related activities in Europe.

1.   **BACKGROUND**

1.1   Air traffic management is faced with an ever-growing demand. In Europe, it is estimated that air traffic will double by 2015 compared with the 1998 level. Failure to satisfy this demand will result in increased flight delays, airline dissatisfaction and passenger complaints.

1.2   The availability of VHF communications is essential for the optimisation of air traffic control sectors. Inefficient sectors reduce the air traffic capacity and therefore contribute to delay. However, it is estimated that in ten years the shortage of VHF frequencies will be causing a significant reduction in optimal air traffic capacity.

1.3   Aviation is a global industry and uses radio spectrum for safety of life services. As spectrum is becoming progressively scarce, it is essential that aviation needs be given utmost consideration.

1.4   **ECAC MATSE/6**

1.4.1   During the Sixth ECAC Transport Ministers' meeting on the air traffic system in Europe (MATSE/6) in January 2000, the Ministers recognised that radio frequency spectrum is a scarce resource with finite capacity limits and for which demand is constantly increasing. Following the debate they adopted the position detailed below:

> *"We note the importance to air traffic management in Europe of securing sufficient access to the radio frequency spectrum. In co-operation with ICAO, we shall seek to ensure that decisions made at the World Radio Conference later this year, and at subsequent Conferences, take account of the needs of the aviation community and set aside frequencies for Radionavigation systems and the future Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), for instance Galileo.*
>
> *We have taken steps to improve the management of the existing Radio Frequency Spectrum in European airspace for the purpose of aviation, and in particular, have called on EUROCONTROL to address the need for a strong mechanism for the management, assignment and audit of the use of aviation spectrum within the airspace of ECAC States, in close co-operation with States and ICAO."*

1.5   **The European Commission**

1.5.1   In July 2000, the European Commission adopted its "Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a regulatory framework for radio spectrum policy in the European Community". If this becomes a European Union Regulation, the Commission will be authorised to give a mandate to the Conférence Européenne des Administrations des Postes et des Télécommunications (CEPT) for the development of harmonisation measures for spectrum and frequency matters. However, it should be noted that the CEPT is heavily influenced by the telecommunications industry.

1.6   **European Parliament**

1.6.1   The European Parliament's Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy is dealing with this issue and will develop its Opinion on radio spectrum policy during a debate to be held in March 2001. This opinion will be taken into consideration by both the Council and the Commission when the final text of the legislation is prepared.

2.   **AD HOC SPECTRUM GROUP**

2.1   As a consequence of the task entrusted by the ECAC Transport Ministers, an Ad Hoc Spectrum group was established to develop the new mechanisms. It has held four meetings and has achieved a high rate of progress. The meetings have been chaired by ICAO EUR/NAT Office and EUROCONTROL has provided the technical support.

2.2   The group is expected to report on proposed new spectrum and frequency management mechanisms, supported by appropriate validation, by the end of the year.

2.3   Among other things, the group has identified the need for the common aviation position on spectrum to be endorsed by States at Ministerial level.

3.   **PREPARATION FOR WRC-2003**

3.1   In support of the ICAO position, EUROCONTROL is undertaking studies to analyse the impact of perceived threats, for example, the interference of mobile phone transmission on primary radar sensitivity.

3.2   EUROCONTROL is also participating in international meetings, including those convened by the CEPT. This permits the early identification of opportunities and threats. It also enables the CEPT final position to be influenced thereby avoiding unnecessary conflict whenever possible. This is achieved by presentation of briefs, co-ordinated through EUROCONTROL, to the European Commission, ITU, CEPT, NATO and Airlines.

3.3   A database is being created to contain the internationally agreed protection criteria used for all aviation spectrum.

3.4 Information is also being made available via the EUROCONTROL website.

http://www.eurocontrol.be/projects/eatchip/spg/index.html

4.   **CONCLUSION**

4.1   Co-operation between EUROCONTROL, ICAO and other international organisations has resulted in rapid progress towards the streamlining of spectrum and frequency management processes. This will enable effective contributions in support of aviation interests at the WRC-2003.

5.   **ACTION BY ALLPIRG**

5.1 The meeting is invited to note the information provided in this paper.

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