



TWELFTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montréal, 19 to 30 November 2012

Agenda Item 6: Future direction

6.1: Implementation plans and methodologies

HARMONIZED TRANSITION ALTITUDE

(Presented by the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations)

SUMMARY

This paper presents the view of IFALPA with regard to the harmonized transition altitude in the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) airspace. A harmonized transition altitude will result in standardized and harmonized procedures and will bring a positive benefit to safety.

Action: The Conference is invited to encourage the implementation of a harmonized transition altitude in the ECAC area.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The transition altitude (TA) as defined in the ICAO *Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Aircraft Operations* (PANS-OPS, Doc 8168) is “the altitude at or below which the vertical position of an aircraft is controlled by reference to altitudes”.

1.2 The PANS-OPS recommends the harmonization of the transition altitude on a regional basis.

1.3 The European Region currently lacks a harmonized transition altitude. This has implications on the flight deck procedures as it cannot be incorporated into standard operating procedures (SOPs).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The European area has a variety of transition altitudes. From a flight deck perspective, there is a potential for confusion during the descent and approach phase, and also during the climb-out. The variety of transition altitudes across Europe can cause a potential for confusion and errors on the flight deck. A change in altimeter setting during the critical phases of the flight does imply a safety risk, i.e. this could lead to level busts, risk of loss of separation and possible controlled flight into terrain (CFIT).

2.2 Standardized and harmonized procedures will become a key enabler for future air traffic management (ATM) procedures, leading to worldwide harmonization. As such the European States, in the context of the Single European Sky (SES), should be encouraged to implement a common and harmonized transition altitude.

2.3 The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) policy strongly advocates a globally harmonized transition altitude of 18 000 ft, thus contributing to commonly applied procedures and enhancing safety.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The European States are encouraged to implement a harmonized transition altitude of 18 000 ft. This would be a major step for globally harmonized procedures. Other States might follow this initiative resulting in a worldwide harmonized transition altitude of 18 000 ft. The Conference is invited to agree to the following recommendation:

Recommendation 6/x – Harmonized transition altitude

That the Conference:

- a) implement a globally harmonized transition altitude; and
- b) if this is not achievable then a harmonized transition altitude in each region.

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