Sir/Madam,


2. Since EANPG/48, various activities have taken place, including a meeting which was held on 12 January 2007 with participation from the EUR/NAT Office, Airbus and Direction Générale de l’Aviation Civile (DGAC) France. Attached is a copy of the minutes of this meeting which clarified that Conclusion 48/23 does not imply any interruption of ongoing evaluation of the proposed system for compliance with safety/airworthiness certification requirements.

3. Further activities completed to date, relating to the implementation of a pico-cell system to provide service to mobile phones on board aircraft, include:

   a) radio regulatory provisions have recently been developed by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Wireless Forum (AWF). These provisions, agreed in close cooperation with ICAO, should form the basis for similar material to be developed in other regions;

   b) RTCA and EUROCAE have recently published documents DO294B and ED130, respectively. These documents provide, inter alia, guidance relevant to the use of mobile phones on board aircraft, including its effect on the airworthiness of the aircraft;

   c) in June 2007, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) successfully certified the airworthiness of a pico-cell system, limited to Airbus A318 MSN 3009 and other A318 aircraft of identical standard. This certification included the use of a model of the emission of a representative number of mobile phones. In addition, the Australian civil aviation authorities have authorized a pico-cell system installation on a trial basis, on a Boeing 767 aircraft; and

   d) two service providers (Aeromobile and OnAir) have implemented a system to provide mobile phone services on board aircraft.
4. While pico-cell systems for provision of GSM service on board aircraft remain outside the scope of ICAO standardization, there are certain issues which need to be monitored and followed up, as necessary, by ICAO. Issues of particular concern expressed by States in the ICAO EUR Region include:

   a) potential interference to systems providing for communications, navigation and surveillance functions essential for the safety and regularity of flight;

   b) human factors, including elements such as added cabin crew workload and passenger confusion due to service being provided only on certain aircraft and only in certain airspace; and

   c) harmonization of radio regulatory provisions on a global basis.

5. ICAO is continuing its efforts with the view to developing any guidance material that will allow for a global implementation of the pico-cell system, while ensuring that the usage of mobile phones on board aircraft will not affect the safety of flight. This matter will be given further consideration at the next meeting of Working Group F of the Aeronautical Communications Panel (ACP) which will be held from 17 to 25 September 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. Supporting material for this meeting can be found on the web site of the ACP at http://www.icao.int/anb/panels/acp.

6. I wish to inform you that the information provided in this letter supersedes my letter, reference no. T 7/9.2 [TEC/CNS/NAV/GEN] – 06-0393.SLG, of 11 December 2006. In this regard, EANPG Conclusion 48/23, in the light of the recent developments, will be reconsidered at the next EANPG meeting.

   Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Karsten Theil
ICAO Regional Director
Europe and North Atlantic

Enclosure:
Minutes of Meeting (Paris, 12 January 2007)
— Usage of GSM phones on board of aircraft
MINUTES OF MEETING
USAGE OF GSM PHONES ON BOARD OF AIRCRAFT
(PARIS, 12 JANUARY 2007)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A meeting on the usage of GSM phones on board of aircraft was held upon request from Airbus in ICAO European and North Atlantic Office on 12 January 2007.

1.2 The meeting was attended by Mr. Claude SCHMITT (Senior Director Strategies and Policies Engineering/Product integrity, Airbus), Mr. Alain DELRIEU (Spectrum and radioelectric frequencies division, Aeronavigation Servies Directorate, DGCA, France) and Mr. Elkhan NAHMADOV of ICAO EUR/NAT Secretariat.

1.3 The subject of the Meeting was to discuss/clarify the ICAO European Air Navigation Planning Group (EANPG) Conclusion 48/23 on the use of GSM on board of aircraft. The EANPG/48 recalled that use of mobile phones on-board of aircraft has been a long-standing topic for discussion within the aviation community. When the issue was originally raised in the 1980s there was mutual agreement between the mobile phone operators and the aviation to ban use of mobile phones on-board of aircraft. Following recent advances in technology, a number of companies have re-ignited the debate proposing that mobile phones be used onboard provided the so called “pico-cell” devices are fitted within the cabin reducing the radiated power of the phone.

1.4 The EANPG/48 has recognized that use of GSM on-board of aircraft is a complex matter, involving legal, technical, operational and human factor issues, thus, its’ resolution requiring multidiscipline and harmonised approach. Therefore the EANPG/48 has concluded that aviation needs to urgently discuss these issues and make a clear and easily enforceable global decision on the usage of GSM on board of aircraft to ensure continued safety of both aircraft and passengers. However, this cannot be done by the aviation industry alone as radio regulators also have an important role to play.

1.5 The following Conclusion was endorsed by the EANPG/48:

EANPG Conclusion 48/23 — GSM ON BOARD AIRCRAFT

a) the issue of GSM on board aircraft be brought to the attention of appropriate bodies within ICAO to address these issues such that unambiguous guidance/regulation can be provided on a global basis

b) EASA and States, as appropriate, are invited to withhold certification of the systems until all potential effects of GSM on board aircraft are studied and safety requirements are confirmed to be met;

c) States be urged to alert National radio regulatory authorities on the issues identified in the paper to ensure that a consistent set of spectrum protection requirements can be determined and raise the matter with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) such that a global approach can be adopted to the radio regulatory aspects, and

d) International Air Transportation Association (IATA) and International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) are invited to provide assistance in assessing the potential impact of the use of mobile phones from a flight crew’s perspective and practicality of enforcing any proposed regulation, and to ensure that, clear guidance be provided on the use of mobile phones on aircraft.
2. **DISCUSSION**

2.1 The phrasing of the abovementioned EANPG Conclusion 48/23 raised concerns of the Airbus representative at the Meeting, in particular its’ part related to the request to States and EASA to withhold certification of the systems until all potential effects of GSM on board of aircraft are studied and safety requirements are confirmed to be met. Airbus apprehend that this statement could be interpreted as calling to cease all technical evaluations processes within EASA machinery.

2.2 ICAO representative has outlined the Conclusion 48/23 was meant to warn the States and EASA not to authorize the operational use of GSM on board of aircraft until all safety impacts are studied and safety requirements’ compliance is confirmed. On the contrary, technical evaluations shall continue to ensure that proposed system meets aviation safety and airworthiness certification requirements.

2.3 It was noted that ICAO position on this issue was further clarified in WP/20 presented at Aeronautical Communication Panel Working Group meeting held in ICAO Headquarters on 12-15 December 2006 as well as in the material presented at Aeronautical Frequency Spectrum Consultation Group (AFSCG) meeting in Brussels on 9 January 2007.

2.4 It was also underlined that relevant airworthiness standards and guidelines are currently under development within the European Organization for Civil Aviation Equipment (EUROCAE) and RTCA, and Airbus is prepared to proceed with technical evaluations and certification of the system.

2.5 French DGCA representative has stressed that aviation security aspects need to be also taken into account when assessing the feasibility of GSM use on board of aircraft.

2.6 It was agreed that this issue is more than just aviation-related and requires active involvement of telecommunication authorities in providing global guidance for radio regulatory aspects.

2.7 Further opportunities to present the progress on the issue were discussed. ACP meeting in May 2007 or next WG/F meeting are possible fora to provide update on the global level. The EANPG FMG Study group meeting in June 2007 and FMG Meeting in September 2007 shall ensure the pan European awareness on the subject with the follow-up through EANPG preparation mechanism and involvement of airspace users’ representatives, such as IATA and IBAC.

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 The Minutes of this Meeting shall be forwarded to EASA and EUR Provider States for further actions, and, to reassure all parties that the EANPG Conclusion 48/23 does not imply any interruption of an ongoing technical evaluation of proposed system for compliance with safety/airworthiness certification requirements.

– END –