



ASSEMBLY — 39TH SESSION

TECHNICAL COMMISSION

Agenda Item 36: Aviation safety and air navigation implementation support

EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES TO RAISE AWARENESS AND IMPROVE SAFETY IN RELATION TO THE OPERATIONS OF STATE AIRCRAFT OVER THE HIGH SEAS

(Presented by Slovakia on behalf of the European Union and its Member States¹, the other Member States of the European Civil Aviation Conference²; and by EUROCONTROL)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper gives information on the European initiatives aimed at raising awareness and improving safety with respect to operations of State aircraft over the High Seas.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives : Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency and Safety.
------------------------------	---

<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
--------------------------------	-----

<i>References:</i>	Circ 330, <i>Civil/Military Cooperation in Air Traffic Management</i> ICAO EUR Doc 032
--------------------	---

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom

² Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Civil / Military Co-operation Symposium which took place in the European and North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Office of ICAO in Paris on 14-15 April 2015 decided to take a number of actions to improve the interface between civil and military operations with the overarching aim of preventing aircraft collisions. The impact of such interactions is the most significant when TMA operations close to airports take place over the High Seas where State aircraft are operated only partially in accordance with ICAO Provisions. The Baltic Sea is such area in Europe. As a consequence the matter was further discussed during the EANPG COG 62 meeting that took place in Lisbon on 25-29 May 2015, where it was agreed to set-up a Baltic Sea Project Team to address specific issues relating to any *State aircraft operations when conducted partially in compliance with ICAO provisions*, i.e. operating with 'due regard', over Baltic Sea High Seas airspace.

2. ICAO EUR/NAT OFFICE CIVIL/MILITARY CO-OPERATION SYMPOSIUM

Civil / Military Cooperation Symposium

2.1 The second ICAO High-level Safety Conference on 2-5 February 2015 noted the increased number of occurrences involving civil and military aircraft in High Seas airspace. Strengthening the coordination between civil and military operations was strongly supported and agreed by the conference. Based on the outcome of the conference and after further coordination with the EANPG chairman as well as the RASG chairman the decision to arrange a dedicated ICAO Civil/Military Cooperation Symposium in Paris on 14-15 April 2015 was made.

Conclusion of the Symposium

2.2 In the symposium there was a clear and consistent view that safety is the prime consideration for all stakeholders with the overall objective to prevent mid-air collisions. The symposium acknowledged the need to ensure the regularity of commercial operations as well as the right of State aircraft to access High Seas airspace. The participants of the symposium also expressed their general desire to increase predictability of flights operated in partial compliance with ICAO provisions when possible.

2.3 It was noted that since there are a number of different airspace scenarios to be considered (costal TMA, en-route airspace either in or straddling the territorial airspace, oceanic airspace etc.) and no single measure or action would improve the safety of the operations but rather a range of activities is needed. It was also considered important to encourage States to comply with the requirement of Article 3 of the Chicago Convention and invite them to make available their State aircraft regulations to ensure due regard for the safety of civil aviation and enhanced transparency.

2.4 Various examples of good practices were recognized but the lack of an international harmonised/consistent approach seems to lead to potential for confusion and misunderstanding. In general it was considered important to increase awareness of the operations over the High Seas. The Symposium was also supportive to ICAO activities to improve its provisions of which the current activities like the development of the new ICAO Civil/Military manual (replacement of Circular 330) was a good example.

2.5 The establishment of the Baltic Sea Project Team with tasks to address operational issues (FPL aspects, Operation of State aircraft over the High Seas, information exchange etc.) amongst all

involved States and stakeholders (NATO, EUROCONTROL, EASA, IATA etc.) in the Baltic Sea area was initiated as a consequence of the symposium.

3. BALTIC SEA PROJECT TEAM (BSPT)

3.1 The Baltic Sea Project Team was established by EANPG COG in its 62nd meeting on 25-29 May 2015 in Lisbon. It was decided that all the States surrounding the Baltic Sea would be invited to participate, i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation and Sweden. Also ICAO, NATO, EASA and EUROCONTROL were invited to participate. All invited States and organisations participated to the work of the group. The group was chaired by Finland.

Task of the Baltic Sea Project Team

3.2 Based on the initial proposal from the Russian Federation and considering the recommendations from the EASA Report (Report-ED0.1-2015³) on occurrences over High Seas involving military aircraft in 2014, the BSPT was tasked to address the following aspects amongst all involved stakeholders in the Baltic Sea area:

- a) Create a forum to provide a better understanding of the key activities performed by all the parties involved, at operational level.
- b) Create a list of known incidents and/or operational issues where interactions occur between civil aircraft and State aircraft when State aircraft operations are conducted only partially in accordance with ICAO provisions and, as a consequence, flight safety may be impaired.
- c) Having created the list of operational issues and incidents, identify suitable mitigations to reduce risk that is created to tolerable level.
- d) Make proposals to amend procedures that result in operational improvements to flight planning, notification or conduct of flights in the vicinity of TMAs or those flights that have the potential to create an operational impact.
- e) Create a list of suitable focal points that are likely to be available at short notice out of normal working hours to facilitate decision-making, dialogue or efficient information flow. Create the appropriate escalation process to be followed in the event of abnormal circumstances.
- f) Make recommendations for any changes that the BSPT considers to be appropriate for changes to current regulations or the need for new ones.
- g) Notification to ICAO EUR/NAT Office of those residual issues that go beyond the terms of reference.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/news/doc/2015-04-14-civil-military-coordination/report-on-occurrences-over-the-high-seas-involving-military-aircraft-in-2014.pdf>

Outcome / Conclusions of the BSPT

3.3 The BSPT identified a number of aspects that would need to be addressed before the potential safety risk could be evaluated and mitigations proposed. Many of the identified issues were related to the awareness of the operational aspects (different set of rules for civil operators and military operations in the same airspace). It was also noted that enhanced information sharing on cooperative and uncooperative aircraft by using civil/military information exchange, flight plan data, radar data, shared picture etc. is needed.

3.4 Some of the agreed actions are presented below:

- To raise awareness the BSPT initiated an “Awareness Campaign” for flight operations over the High Seas. For the purpose EUROCONTROL, EASA, ICAO and NATO agreed to develop an information document, which was then discussed in the BSPT meeting. The BSPT concluded to publish this material as an ICAO EUR-OPS-Bulletin:
- <http://www.icao.int/EURNAT/EUR%20and%20NAT%20Documents/EUR%20Documents/EUR%20OPS%20BULLETINS/EUR%20OPS%20Bulletin%202015%20002%20final.pdf>
- The BSPT also invited States to share their best practices and to provide description of their “due regard” procedures over the High Seas with the ICAO Paris Secretariat for inclusion in Chapter 3 of the ICAO EUR Doc 032. Denmark, Finland, Poland, Russian Federation and Sweden indicated that they would provide the required information. Doc 032 was approved by the European Air Navigation Planning Group in its 57th meeting on 23-26 November 2015 and published on the ICAO EUR/NAT website on 22 January 2016.
- In order to improve flight planning and thus predictability of the flight tracks the Russian Federation, Estonia and Finland agreed to define 7 new waypoints over the High Seas to be used by State aircraft instead of the current usage of LAT/LONG coordinates.

4. ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY

4.1 The Assembly is invited to note the information provided in this paper which is considered to reflect good practice that might be of value in other ICAO Regions.