

ELEVENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE

Montreal, 22 September to 3 October 2003

Agenda Item 1: Introduction and assessment of a global air traffic management (ATM) operational concept

1.1: The global ATM operational concept

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UPPER FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION “EUIR” IN THE COURSE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SINGLE EUROPEAN SKY

(Presented by Italy on behalf of the European Community and its Member States¹)

SUMMARY

For Europe a new framework for harmonisation of airspace is required to cope with the growth expected in air transport in the middle and long term. The Single European Sky initiative aims at this objective. The establishment of the single “European Upper Flight Information Region” (EUIR), although not a pre-condition, would provide the framework for airspace harmonisation within the Single European Sky programme. This action paper describes the reasoning behind this plan to establish the EUIR and the actions required for its implementation. The conference is invited to note the initiative for the establishment of the EUIR and the intention to ask for support for this initiative.

Action by the conference is in paragraph 4.

¹ The European Community comprises the following States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

* French and Spanish versions provided by Italy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The concept of flight information regions (FIRs) is provided for in Annex 11 to the Chicago Convention². Their establishment is to identify homogenous regions of regulated airspace, which should efficiently cover air route structures. So far the identification of the lateral limits of FIRs has been usually driven by operational and sovereign considerations and the need to cover portions of airspace of undetermined sovereignty, such as those over the high seas. There are in fact at present 26 FIRs and 19 UIRs (Upper Flight Information Regions) in the airspace under the responsibility of the Member States of the European Community, in the EUR and AFI regions.

1.2 ICAO recommends in Annex 11, paragraph 2.9.1 that “the delineation of airspace, wherein air traffic services are to be provided, should be related to the nature of the route structure and the need for efficient service rather than to national boundaries”. ICAO recommends furthermore in the Basic ANP, Appendix A, paragraph 5.1 “that states, taking into account the need for cost-effective introduction and operation of CNS/ATM systems, give consideration to cooperative efforts for introducing more efficiency in airspace management, particularly through globalization of upper airspace management, in order to facilitate the safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic”. Thus, ICAO encourages the implementation of a globalization concept for the establishment of FIRs, especially in relation to upper airspace.

1.3 An important element of the Single European Sky programme is the reform of the way in which airspace is divided into FIRs/UIRs today in the Member States of the European Community.

2. A FRAMEWORK FOR AIRSPACE HARMONIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

2.1 To create a more coherent framework for airspace harmonisation, the Single European Sky programme foresees the establishment of a single “European Upper Flight Information Region” (EUIR). The EUIR will encompass the upper airspace falling under the responsibility of the Member States and as appropriate may also include adjacent airspace of countries non-members of the European Community.

2.2 The implementation of the EUIR would:

- a) support the concept of a more integrated operating airspace and the operation of the air navigation services as a coherent and consistent whole within homogenous blocks of airspace;
- b) improve European planning to overcome regional bottlenecks;
- c) benefit intra-European and inter-continental air traffic;
- d) facilitate the transition to and implementation of future ATM operational concepts; and

² Annex 11, Section 2.9.2

- e) provide a framework for the coherent and timely introduction of new CNS/ATM technologies.

2.3 To harmonize aeronautical information within the area of the EUIR, a single publication of aeronautical information will be established, taking account of relevant ICAO requirements.

3. REQUIRED ACTIONS TO ESTABLISH THE EUROPEAN UPPER FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (EUIR)

3.1 Following the adoption of the Single Sky initiative, the European Community and its Member States will jointly aim at the establishment and recognition of the EUIR by ICAO and, with this in mind, will initiate and follow, in close cooperation with Eurocontrol, the preparatory work within the appropriate ICAO bodies. Once the preparatory work is completed, a change proposal to establish the EUIR will be forwarded to the ICAO Council via the ICAO Paris Office.

4. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

4.1 The European Community and its Member States call upon the conference to:

- a) note the intention of the European Community and its Member States to pursue the establishment of a single European Upper Flight Information Region (EUIR); and
- b) note that the European Community and its Member States will ask in due time for the support of the States of ICAO in their effort to establish the EUIR.

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