



International Civil Aviation Organization

Middle East Regional Monitoring Agency Board

Thirteenth Meeting (MIDRMA Board/13)
(Bahrain, 9-12 March 2014)

Agenda Item 4: RVSM Monitoring and related Technical Issues

RVSM CERTIFICATION FOR STATE AIRCRAFT

(Presented by MIDRMA)

SUMMARY

This working paper discusses issues concerning the need for RVSM certification of State aircraft requesting to operate within the Middle East RVSM airspace.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCES

- Guidance Material for the Certification and Operation of State Aircraft in European RVSM Airspace.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Middle East Regional Monitoring Agency is responsible for the safety oversight of operations within the ICAO MID RVSM airspace. In addition to issuing RVSM safety assessment, the MIDRMA is responsible for verifying the approval status and the height keeping performance of aircraft operating with a 1000 ft. vertical separation minimum between FL 290 and FL 410.

1.2 Since the implementation of RVSM in the Middle East Region in November 2003 a number of issues have arisen regarding the operation of State aircraft within the RVSM airspace, in particular the validation of height-keeping performance requirements for some aircraft types and the necessity for an RVSM approval to be issued by the appropriate State Airworthiness Authority.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 It was a fundamental requirement for the implementation of RVSM that there was access to airspace for military users. It was necessary for the military flights to operate, as before the implementation of RVSM, with tactical freedom. There was also recognition that some military flights operating as General Air Traffic would not be able to meet the appropriate height-keeping performance to obtain RVSM approval. The exemption policy already developed and agreed by the MID Region States, participated in the MID RVSM Task Force during the pre-implementation phase of RVSM, provides for the operation of State designated aircraft in RVSM airspace with or without RVSM approval. However it is important to distinguish between those aircraft which have an RVSM approval and operate with a 1000 ft vertical separation and those which are not RVSM approved and which will be given a non-RVSM 2000 ft vertical separation.

- 2.2 The conditions under which state aircraft can operate in RVSM airspace are:
- a) The aircraft and crew that are RVSM approved. A 'W' should be filed in item 10 of the flight plan and the aircraft will be given a 1,000 ft. vertical separation.
 - b) The aircraft and crew are NOT RVSM approved. A 'W' MUST NOT be filed in item 10 of the flight plan. STS NON-RVSM must be entered in item 18 and the aircraft will be given a 2000 ft. vertical separation.
- 2.3 It is important to emphasize that the operation of an aircraft in a 1000 ft. vertical separation minima which does not comply with stringent altimetry system performance requirements, constitutes a significant risk to mid-air collision. The same risk exists for an approved aircraft which is configured differently to the configuration for which the approval was granted, e.g. by additional external loads.
- 2.4 The need to identify non-RVSM approved flights, both civil and military, led to specific changes for air traffic service systems support and flight planning requirements. It was essential that ATC be systematically aware as to the RVSM-approval status of all aircraft and that of a State aircraft requesting operation within the RVSM airspace of the MID Region. This was essential as ATC is selectively applying two vertical separation standards, since the separation 1000ft may only be applied between RVSM approved aircraft and 2000ft is the applicable vertical separation between non-RVSM approved State flights and any other aircraft operating within RVSM airspace.
- 2.5 In March 2013 the MIDRMA noticed a number of non-RVSM approved Military cargo aircraft type C17 registered for the State of Qatar and UAE started to fly within the RVSM airspace of the Middle East, Europe and Northern part of Africa. These aircraft were continuously filing "W" in their flight plans while they were not approved by the state of registry and not included in the RVSM approval list by both countries. The MIDRMA reacted very quickly to investigate the status of these aircraft with the concerned CAA Airworthiness Authorities in Qatar and UAE and received a positive confirmation that these aircraft are NOT approved by them and they are not involved with the certification of the military aircraft.
- 2.6 The MIDRMA coordinated with the concerned CAA Airworthiness Authorities in Qatar and UAE to stop this kind of violation immediately and circulated warning emails about these aircraft to all ATC Units in the Middle East Region and to all the RMA's in the world to treat them as non-RVSM approved aircraft.
- 2.7 Recently, the Airworthiness Authority in UAE managed to certify all their C17 aircraft and became the first and the only MID CAA Airworthiness Authority who certify military aircraft while the State of Qatar is still reviewing the certifications process.
- 2.8 The MIDRMA continuously monitor the activities of the non-approved military cargo aircraft operating in the Middle East airspace and expects an increase in the number of violations to the RVSM airspace in the near future due to lack of awareness by the military authorities as they consider if the aircraft is capable to fly RVSM they can file "W" in their flight plans and operate in the RVSM airspace.
- 2.9 The MIDRMA would like to address this issue to all the Member States especially to the States who operate and own military cargo aircraft and observed to fly within the RVSM airspace without RVSM approval issued from the concerned authority. Member States are reminded to report any violation of the RVSM airspace by military or civil aircraft to the MIDRMA as soon as possible and shall take all necessary action to stop the violation immediately.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to urge States to address with their relevant Military Authorities the provisions related to the use of RVSM Airspace and task their Airworthiness Authorities to resolve the issue of jurisdiction of certifying State aircraft.

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