

Briefing for immediate release, 19h00 - 10 August 2006

Security Alert in the United Kingdom

A security alert was established in the early morning of Thursday 10 August 2006 in the United Kingdom and, as a result, exceptional security measures were adopted to check airline passengers and their baggage at British airports. This led to the disruption of flight operations into and out of the United Kingdom.

EUROCONTROL has taken all possible steps to help alleviate the situation. Its Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU) activated its Crisis Management Cell and is maintaining constant contact with the British authorities to deal with the evolving situation.

Heathrow was the most affected airport. Long-range flights were accepted into Heathrow but short-range flights were suspended during the entire morning. A gradual resumption of short-range flights took place from midday onwards and by 16h00, the airport was accepting all scheduled arrivals, but at a sharply reduced rate.

On the request of the London Air Traffic Control Centre and the British Airports Authority, the CFMU implemented and adjusted all necessary air traffic flow control measures to regulate the number of flights arriving at Heathrow (and at other affected airports).

The CFMU is also dealing with real-time enquiries from affected airspace users, and facilitating the necessary flight planning coordination necessary for traffic cancelling and/or diverting. It has also issued a series of information messages to all airspace users.

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At the time of publication of this briefing, traffic flows to Heathrow were subject to a maximum arrival rate of 35 per hour.

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navigation aérienne

There are no flow restrictions on departures. However, due to the security measures in place and the earlier cancellations of arrivals, the number of departures is significantly lower than normal.

Other British airports are less affected: delays of between 30 to 45 minutes per flight are being recorded at Gatwick, Stansted and Birmingham, for instance.

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COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Note to Editors:

EUROCONTROL, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation, has as its primary objective the development of a seamless, pan-European air traffic management (ATM) system which fully accommodates the growth in air traffic, while maintaining a high level of safety, enhancing cost-efficiency and respecting the environment.

EUROCONTROL has 36 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

On 8 October 2002, the Member States and the European Community signed a Protocol on the Accession of the European Community to the revised EUROCONTROL Convention. Pending its entry into force after ratification by all Parties, certain provisions of the Protocol are already being provisionally applied.

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