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Air traffic safety keeping up across Europe

Brussels, Belgium – Air traffic management continues to support the operational needs across Europe whilst maintaining safety levels according to a new report issued today by the EUROCONTROL Safety Regulation Commission (SRC).

The 2009 SRC Annual Safety Report says that in 2009, there was no fatal accident directly induced by ATM and only two non-fatal accidents with an indirect ATM contribution. This continues a trend seen over recent years where the number of ATM-related accidents has decreased year-on-year. At the same time, the safety maturity of both Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) and Regulators continues to improve.

The report notes that whilst there has been an improvement in reporting of safety occurrences, overall progress towards full reporting by States is too slow. In addition, States need to produce more detailed analysis and classification of risks. Safety oversight processes also need to be improved.

“It is clear that in the future safety will be tested even more rigorously than ever before,” said Jos Wilbrink, Chairman of the EUROCONTROL Safety Regulation Commission. “Whilst the overall situation is improving on a long-term basis, in order to meet the ten-fold safety improvement aim of the Single European Sky, further efforts will be needed.”

The report underlines the important role of national supervisory authorities (NSAs) in overseeing safety processes in European countries. In this regard, the lack of funding and resources at NSAs is a concern. With additional pressure being put on operating budgets for both ANSPs and Regulators, it is necessary to keep a rigid focus on safety and continue to invest in both developing a safety culture and the necessary infrastructure.

“Europe has an ATM system that can and does fully support the system’s operational demands. However, major changes are taking place in the way ATM safety is addressed in Europe. With the development of the Single European Sky, we need to continue to work to build the pan-European approach to European air traffic management safety,” Jos Wilbrink added.

European
Organisation for the
Safety of
Air Navigation

Organisation
européenne pour la
sécurité de la
navigation aérienne

Rue de la Fusée, 96
B-1130 Bruxelles
Tel: +32.2.729.90.11
Fax: +32.2.729.90.44

The report is available here: <http://www.eurocontrol.int/src>

For further information, please contact:

Kyla Evans / Catherine De Smedt Tel: +32 2 729 50 95

Email: press@eurocontrol.int

For more information via the website: www.eurocontrol.int

Note to Editors:

EUROCONTROL, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation, has as its primary objective to develop a seamless, pan-European air traffic management (ATM) system that fully copes with the growth in air traffic, while maintaining a high level of safety, reducing costs and respecting the environment. EUROCONTROL has 38 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. 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.