

High Level Conference on the Implementation of the Single European Sky and its extension beyond the European Union

Warsaw, 28 November 2011

Warsaw Declaration

The High-Level Conference on the implementation of the Single European Sky (SES) and its extension beyond the European Union took place at Warsaw on 28 November 2011 and was jointly organised by the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union represented by Mr Sławomir Nowak, Minister of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy, Mr Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Transport and Mr Jacek Krawczyk, the Vice-President of the European Economic and Social Committee.

The Conference built on the important previous conferences in Madrid, Bruges and Budapest. It focused not just on past achievements but stressed the need for a strong focus on implementation of the SES, on the extension of the SES and cooperation in aviation matters beyond the European Union and on the deployment of the technological pillar of the SES - the SESAR (Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research) programme. The conference took place against the backdrop of continued economic difficulties in the EU and participants noted the importance of the SES to the overall European strategy of innovation and growth.

The participants at the Conference discussed a number of issues and the following conclusions were drawn in closing the Conference:

Implementation of the SES:

The Commission's Report to the Council and the European Parliament on the *"Implementation of the Single European Sky legislation: time to deliver"*¹ was welcomed. In particular it was noted that the Network Manager (Eurocontrol) is in place, along side the regulatory framework, the performance scheme, the en-route charging system, the Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) requirements and the safety regulatory framework under the *aegis* of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

Member States were urged to continue to push ahead with full implementation of the SES in their respective fields of competence, and in particular to:

- make necessary revisions of the national or FAB-level Performance Plans to contribute, through close coordination between stakeholders and the Performance Review Body (PRB), to ensure delivery of the EU-wide performance targets and to drive improved performance of Air Traffic Management (ATM) service provision in Europe;
- establish under the leadership of respective Ministries the FABs in a timely manner as platforms of cooperation both between the service providers and the National Supervisory Authorities, and ensure that the FABs deliver real improvements in European airspace management;
- facilitate involvement of the non-EU Member States to the SES framework;

¹ COM(2011)731 final of 14.11.2011

- taking due account of the EASA oversight mandate and reinforce the capacities of the National Supervisory Authorities who play a crucial role in the effective oversight of the SES implementation at national level;
- further enhance civil-military cooperation and interoperability of the European ATM Network;

The human factor can and must play a central role, and in particular it was recognised that the professional competences, staff involvement, continuous training and the "just culture", as an important part of social dialogue gathering all stakeholders involved, are crucial elements for the successful implementation of the SES and the deployment of SESAR, particularly in the fields of safety and performance.

Eurocontrol, as the newly appointed ATM Network Manager was invited to continue to identify priority actions to contribute to an effective de-fragmentation of the European airspace and management of scarce resources in the pan-European dimension including non-EU States to an overall increase of performance of the European ATM Network, with effective Collaborative Decision Making mechanism.

This Conference also enabled a useful discussion of the military questions linked to the operational and technological challenges of SES thanks to the participation of the European Defence Agency (EDA).

The extension of the SES and cooperation of the European Union with non-EU Member States in aviation matters:

It was agreed that the SES Regulations represent the right legal framework to develop further pan-European dimension in the field of ATM, also with a view to enhancing safety and promoting interoperability. The air navigation service providers (ANSPs) from non-EU Member States were encouraged to participate actively in the process of SES extension. The expertise of Eurocontrol as the Network Manager for the EU was also recognised as essential in promoting pan-European service provision.

In particular the requests of some non EU Member States to be more strongly involved in the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) and in the SES initiative were welcomed. In that context, it was recognised that the European Common Aviation Area agreements constitute a vital comprehensive legal framework for cooperation in aviation matters, including promotion of the SES beyond the borders of the EU.

The Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "The EU and its neighbouring regions: a renewed approach to transport cooperation"² and associated conclusions of the Council of the EU³ were noted. In particular the ministerial Conference between the EU and the Eastern Partnership Countries which took place in Cracow on 24th October 2011 under the auspices of the Polish Presidency and a joint declaration on transport cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries emphasised the importance of strengthened transport cooperation and better transport connections with neighbouring regions, as a vital part of the EU Neighbourhood Policy that seeks to deepen the relationship between the EU and its closest neighbours.

² COM(2011)415 of 7.7.2011

³ conclusions of the Council of the EU: 14712/11 of 29.09.2011

There was agreement on the need to develop effective cooperation aiming at providing guidance, financial and technical assistance to non EU Member States for participating in the SES and for joining the FABs. Other initiatives, such as stronger participation of non EU Member States in the operational activities of the Network Manager were encouraged. EUROCONTROL's role in facilitating such initiatives, such as performance, was also discussed.

The European Commission and the stakeholders were invited to explore ways of developing cooperation with, and providing assistance to non EU Member States building on the legal framework of the European Common Aviation Area agreements and on the SES's legal and institutional set-up.

Safety was agreed to be the overwhelming continued priority and was also discussed extensively, with strong support for the role of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in promoting the single framework for ATM standardisation inspections and safety oversight and, through the cooperation of EASA with non EU Member States, the promotion and reinforcement of EU safety standards and procedures beyond the EU borders.

As a good example of developing cooperation with our neighbours, the Commission and Presidency reported on the progress in discussions between the EU and Russia in the context of the EU-Russia Aviation Summit of 12 October 2011 in St Petersburg and endeavour to develop joint approaches and close cooperation in all fields of aviation to solve the pending issues and maximise the economic potential of the rapidly expanding EU-Russia aviation market.

Deployment of the SESAR programme:

The approach of the European Commission, to be set out in the future Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on "the governance and incentive mechanisms for the deployment of SESAR, the SES's technological pillar, with accompanying implementation measures"⁴ was also discussed.

The participants agreed that SESAR, as a major innovation programme, must ensure the timely and synchronous deployment of SES technologies & procedures to modernise the European ATM system with the aim to increase safety, time- and cost-efficiency of ATM operations and reduce the environmental footprint of aviation.

In particular, it was felt that the upcoming Communication should lay down clear foundations for a framework for developing governance and generating finance to deliver a performance-driven deployment of SES technologies & procedures that in a balanced manner addresses various stakeholder expectations and both pan-European and local needs.

It was recognised that the financing schemes for deployment must provide necessary incentives for investments and increased performance of the European ATM network, build upon the existing SES framework and recognise the important role of the financial institutions in supporting financing of deployment.

⁴ a Communication of the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament to be presented in Winter 2011

Concluding remarks

The Member States of the European Union, the European Commission, EASA, Eurocontrol, EDA and non EU Member States – should actively cooperate in adopting a European strategy in the ATM domain, in the context of the 12th ICAO Air Navigation Conference. The Conference confirmed that that full implementation of the SES will deliver significant benefits to all actors involved.

It was finally agreed that the common underlying theme of the conference was that the “Single European Sky is too important to fail”.

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