

Implementation of free route airspace moving closer

The introduction of Free Route Airspace (FRA) in the areas of responsibility of MUAC and DFS were the focus of a workshop in Langen on 25 April 2017, since implementation is planned to start by the end of 2017 and at the beginning of 2018 respectively. The aim of this workshop was to ensure the technical feasibility of our FRA solution in terms of flight planning well in advance of AIRAC implementation and in a coordinated manner together with the Computer Flight Plan Service Providers (CFSPs) and our customers.

Aside from MUAC and the DFS with its branch offices (Bremen ACC, Karlsruhe UAC, Langen ACC and Munich ACC) the event was attended by 30 representatives of all the major CFSPs (Airsupport, Aviationcloud, Avitech, Jeppesen, LH Systems/Lido, and Sabre), Scandinavian Airlines, the Network Manager and the FABEC FRA partners DSNA and skyguide.

At the workshop, the representative of the FABEC group gave a general overview of all the FABEC FRA plans. Afterwards, the experts went into greater detail and focused specifically on FRAM2 (the MUAC FRA project) and the DFS FRA project, presenting the conceptual design and the specific plans for the foreseen step-by-step implementations.

Phase 1 of the FRAM2 Project (FRA at night) will be implemented on 7 December 2017. With Phase 2 (planned for the first quarter of 2019), MUAC will also introduce a cross-border free route area with our Danish and Swedish partners. This cross-FAB FRA initiative will bring significant benefits for aircraft operators. An explanation on how users will be able to enter and exit MUAC FRA (both for overflights and arriving and departing traffic) was also provided.

DFS's FRA roadmap is envisaging 2 major implementation steps, the Solution 1 comprising FRA at night DFS-wide at and above Flight Level 245 and FRA H24 in the less complex North-Eastern part from FL 285 and above, and Solution 2 aiming for FRA H24 at and above FL 245. Solution 1 is scheduled 1st of March 2018, whereas Solution 2 is foreseen becoming operative in October 2019.

The primary objective of the event was to clarify whether the system partners are able to cope with the aforementioned FRA plans of MUAC and DFS. All the users were very positive about FABEC's plans for FRA implementation at MUAC and DFS and they all agreed that the ANSPs' projects are well on track. The participants expressed their wish to receive all the necessary information as soon as possible in order to allow them enough time to implement the FRA airspaces in their systems and allow them to validate it properly. MUAC and DFS confirmed that the CFSPs would receive the necessary documentation four months prior to the implementation date, i.e. by August 2017 for MUAC and by December 2017 for DFS, providing more than sufficient preparation time.





The committed discussion showed that the CFSPs are in principle able to meet the requirements presented. The Network Manager confirmed that the operational concept complies with the European recommendations for the introduction of Free Route Airspace. There are no outstanding problems on any side which could delay the introduction of the FRA at MUAC (December 2017) or the DFS (March 2018) and prevent its efficient use by airspace users.

According to Kris Scicluna of the MUAC FRA Project Team, *“Until we, at MUAC, have implemented free route round the clock, we will be offering free route operations to airline operators as a third flight planning option. This means that they will be able to use either the current ATS route network or our extensive DCT network of over 500 DCTs or free route during the availability times laid down.”*

DFS’s FRA Project Manager Dr. Morten Grandt assured that *“In the high-complexity airspace in the European Core Area DFS is keen to find the best possible balance between Airline Operators’ freedom of route planning in a Free Route Airspace, the flexibility and mission effectiveness to be ensured for military airspace users and the resulting capacity on network level – and all this without jeopardising the commonly appreciated high safety level”.*

The participants agreed that this meeting was a good beginning and that continued close cooperation is required between the project partners for the successful execution of this project.

