

Safety

ANSPs take a further step towards cross-border cooperation

22 February 2017; On 6 February, DFS and skyguide signed an agreement to support each other with CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) in the case of a major incident. The contract stipulates that trained employees – known as peers – of the partner organisation will help employees of the other organisation affected by or involved in such an incident. The peers are certified according to the standards of the International Critical Stress Foundation (ICISF) to help employees deal with the stress and emotions caused by critical incidents. One key factor for the success of CISM is that the people helping the air traffic controllers are truly peers, that is, they are employees of an air navigation service provider. In addition, experience has shown that it is even more effective if the peers come from a non-affected unit, as they are not directly involved. The sensitive nature of the cases also makes it advantageous to have support in one's own language.

“Safety is the core of our business and it is provided by human beings,” explained Daniel Weder, the CEO of skyguide and Champion Safety in FABEC. “CISM ensures that the people in charge of safety are taken care of professionally when incidents occur. The peers help them overcome difficult situations and prepare for a full reintegration into their job. Thanks to collaborations with other ANSPs, we can continuously improve.”

The tragic mid-air collision in the airspace near the town Überlingen in July 2002 was the initial case that provided the impetus for the long-lasting cooperation between the two ANSPs. In addition to DFS and skyguide, the FABEC ANSPs ANA Luxembourg, Belgocontrol, LVNL and Maastricht UAC also actively practice CISM. Alongside the contract with DFS, skyguide has also signed a similar contract with Belgocontrol.

The airspace of the six FABEC States of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland is one of the busiest and most complex in the world. The majority of major European airports, major civil airways and military training areas are located in this area. FABEC airspace covers 1.7 million km² and handles about 5.5 million flights per year – 55% of European air traffic.

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