

Skyguide's 2017: air navigation services maintain high punctuality levels despite further rise in volumes of traffic handled; sound economy in Europe encouraging air traffic growth

Geneva, 31 January 2018. Skyguide, Switzerland's air navigation services provider, experienced a 3.2% rise last year in its air traffic volumes. En-route traffic volumes rose by as much as 5.0%, while the volumes of traffic to and from Switzerland's airports remained virtually unchanged from 2016 (-0.01%).

Skyguide handled almost 1.24 million flights in 2017, almost 40 000 more than the previous year. Despite the sizeable increase in traffic volumes, skyguide's performance remained very high. Some 97% of all flights were handled without any air traffic control-related delay, compared to 97.2% in 2016. The reduction in delays at airports was especially encouraging: these declined by 21% in Geneva and by 24.5% in Zurich.

The relatively low oil price again helped raise annual traffic volumes, as did the Eurozone's economic recovery and the more favourable security situation with Europe remaining free of major terrorist attacks.

High punctuality maintained

With 97% of all flights handled without delays, skyguide again achieved very high punctuality levels for the year.

The average delay to en-route flights was 0.17 minutes or around ten seconds per flight. The delays that did occur here were attributable primarily to unfavourable weather conditions (31%), short-term capacity shortages (31%), sickness-related personnel shortages (22%) and system outages (13%).

Delays reduced at Zurich and Geneva

Both Zurich and Geneva airports saw substantial reductions in the volumes of delays in 2017. Delays at Geneva declined by 21%. The delays incurred were attributable to adverse weather conditions (57%), sickness-related personnel shortages (21%), insufficient runway capacity (19%) and inadequate approach capacity (2%).

Delays were also reduced at Zurich, by 24.5%. The causes of these delays were adverse weather conditions (53%), insufficient runway capacity (28%), environmental constraints (11%) and inadequate approach capacity (7%).

Growth in all sectors

The overall growth in skyguide's air traffic volumes showed sizeable variations among the different traffic segments. Traffic volumes in the air cargo sector grew by 7.7% (having declined 6.7% the previous year). The low-cost segment continued to expand, and registered further 7.9% growth (following 7.7% growth the previous year). The traditional airlines recorded slightly higher year-on-year growth: 0.9%, compared to the 0.4% of 2016. And business aviation volumes were up substantially with an increase of 8.4% (compared to 0.2% the previous year).

Instrument flight rules¹ flights handled in 2017:

	2017	2016	Change
Total IFR flights	1 237 098	1 198 663	+3.2%
of which en-route traffic	751 946	716 159	+5.0%

Skyguide handled an average of 3 389 flights a day in 2017. The peak traffic day was 8 September, whose 4,253 flights were a new daily record in the company's history.

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Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services in Switzerland and in certain adjacent parts of neighbouring countries. With its workforce of some 1 500 employees who are active at 14 locations in Switzerland, skyguide safely and reliably guides some 1.2 million civil and military flights a year through Europe's busiest airspace.

Skyguide is well integrated into the international air navigation services community and, with its innovative and customer-minded solutions, helps enhance Switzerland's appeal as a place to live, work and do business. The company is majority-owned by the Swiss Confederation, and is headquartered in Geneva.

¹ Instrument flight rules or IFR flights are flights that are performed in controlled airspace and require air traffic management services to ensure their safe and efficient operation.