

A successful 2019 in a challenging environment – COVID-19 pandemic also affects skyguide

Geneva, 31 March 2020 - In 2019, skyguide again delivered a good operating performance in the management of Europe's most complex airspace. Skyguide handled 96.7 per cent (previous year: 96.5 per cent) of all its flights without any air navigation services-related delays. Operating revenues declined in 2019 due to reduced fees and lower compensation for activities in delegated airspace. The net result is slightly negative.

Skyguide's total revenues declined by 2.8 per cent to CHF 468.1 million (previous year: CHF 481.8 million). Operating expenses of CHF 434.4 million were 3.4 per cent lower than the CHF 449.7 million of the previous year. The net result was CHF -5.5 million (previous year: CHF -8.2 million).

Weak traffic growth

In 2019, the volume of air traffic controlled by skyguide increased moderately to 1.304 million flights. This represents an increase of 0.5 per cent in total movements. The growth was thus well below the forecast of Eurocontrol, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation. Airport arrivals and departures declined by 0.8 per cent. Traffic at Swiss national airports fell by 0.6 percent at Geneva and by 0.9 percent at Zurich.

Service agreement with Luftwaffe fulfilled

Skyguide was again able to fully comply with its service agreement with the Swiss Air Force in 2019. In doing so, the company has made a major contribution to the sovereignty of Swiss airspace and has once again proven itself a reliable partner for the Swiss Air Force.

Impact of COVID-19 on skyguide and Swiss air traffic

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented decline in air traffic in Switzerland. In March, traffic in the airspace controlled by skyguide fell by some 90 per cent. Skyguide's revenues have consequently declined sharply.

Skyguide has been doing everything it can to protect the health of its employees and maintain its operations in both civil and military flight operations since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis. Skyguide is also taking every action available to counteract the economic consequences of the crisis.

Air traffic control is a critical infrastructure

Air traffic control is a critical national infrastructure. Particularly in times of crisis, it must handle e.g. repatriation, state and cargo flights safely and efficiently. These are necessary for the health of the population and the economy. The framework conditions determined at European level, in particular the so-called Performance Plan and its cost regulation, must now be rapidly adapted to the current crisis. The cost reduction measures taken by air navigation service providers will not be sufficient to secure the economic future of air navigation services.

Walter T. Vogel, Chairman of the Board of Directors of skyguide: "After a solid 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the aviation industry hard. Despite an extremely difficult operating environment, we are doing all we can to continue to fulfil our mandate from the Swiss Confederation in full, while at the same time preparing ourselves for the time after the crisis. I would like to thank all skyguide's employees for their daily commitment, with which they bear witness to our company's resistance to the crisis."

The Annual Report 2019 is available on the internet at

<https://www.skyguide.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/E-sky-RA-2019-LR-v2.pdf>

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Skyguide provides air navigation services in Switzerland and neighbouring countries with 1,500 employees at 14 locations. Some 1.3 million civil and military aircraft are guided safely and efficiently through Europe's busiest airspace. Skyguide is well networked internationally, and contributes to Switzerland's attractiveness as a business location by providing innovative and customer-oriented solutions. Headquartered in Geneva, the company is majority-owned by the Swiss Confederation.
