

Skyguide and Austro Control sign cooperation agreement in flight preparation

Geneva/Vienna, 11 March 2009. Skyguide has concluded a cooperation agreement with Austro Control, Austria's air navigation service provider. The accord should lay a sound foundation for the partners to jointly further develop and market their web-based applications enabling pilots to prepare their flights.

The self-briefing flight preparation tool jointly developed and operated by skyguide and Austro Control has been available from self-service points at all Swiss and Austrian airports since 2006. Shortly after this self-briefing facility was established, the partners also delivered their "Homebriefing" tool, allowing pilots to prepare their flights online from home or wherever else they may be.

Having introduced the two services with such success, skyguide and Austro Control now intend to further intensify and expand their collaboration. Their new agreement envisages a joint presence in the flight preparation market, and the joint further development and marketing of their integrated briefing platform and the flight preparation services they offer to the European aviation market. The collaboration should also allow the partners to exploit various synergies – in development and operating costs, for instance, and in their flight plan processing.

"This is the first collaboration of its kind in this particular field that Europe has ever seen," says Johann Zemsky, Head of Operations at Austro Control and a member of the Executive Management. "I expect the resulting synergies to translate into a better service for our customers and core-business cost reductions for both partners."

Urs Ryf, Head of Operations and a member of skyguide's Executive Management, is equally enthusiastic. "Our web-based self-briefing and home briefing facilities, providing all the data needed for flight planning via a single integrated platform, are unique in Europe," he explains. "And we want to be Europe's number-one flight preparation platform."

The integrated service platform allows users to compile, administer and submit electronic flight plans and call up all the meteorological and NOTAM¹ data needed for safe and orderly flight operations. The system provides each user with all the information they require, specifically tailored to their needs. Pilots using the system are then notified by SMS text message and/or email as soon as their flight plan has been processed and approved by the relevant authority.

¹ NOTAMs are notices to airmen: short-notice messages which air navigation service providers make available to pilots planning their flights informing them of new installations, services, procedures or hazards and/or changes to or developments with existing ones, such as runway conditions, airspace restrictions and similar.

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Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services within Swiss airspace and in the airspace of certain adjoining regions in neighbouring countries. The company guides the civil and military aircraft entrusted to its care – almost 3 400 flights a day or 1.24 million a year – through some of the busiest and most complex airspace in Europe. Skyguide is a non-profit limited company which has its head office in Geneva. The majority of its shares are held by the Swiss Confederation. The company generates annual operating revenue of over CHF 369 million and employs some 1 400 people at 14 locations in Switzerland.

Austro Control is responsible for the safety of Austria's airspace. Its prime mission is to ensure safe, punctual and cost-effective air traffic operations that impact as little as possible on the environment, 24 hours a day and every day of the year. Austro Control handled almost 1.2 million flight movements last year. The company is a limited "GmbH" under private Austrian law, and is owned by the Republic of Austria. With its workforce of more than 950 personnel, Austro Control ensures that the highest quality standards are maintained for airlines and their passengers in safety, punctuality and comfort terms.
