

## **Skyguide, DFS and DSNA to conduct feasibility study for new joint control centre**

**Geneva, 17 November 2009.** The national aviation authorities of France, Germany and Switzerland have commissioned their respective air navigation service providers – skyguide, DFS and DSNA – to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a joint control centre in the French/German/Swiss border region. Its findings should be available this time next year. For skyguide, the study will go some way towards resolving the issue of future operating locations.

### **Harmonising Europe's airspace**

The new feasibility study is closely connected with the drive by the European Union to create a “Single European Sky” (SES). The SES initiative is intended to harmonise the continent's air traffic management system to raise its efficiency. This can only be done, however, by amalgamating the present airspace areas into larger interlinked blocks. Under these endeavours, Swiss airspace should become part of “Functional Airspace Block Europe Central” (FABEC). The first foundations were laid here in November 2008, when representatives of the civil and military aviation authorities of Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland signed a joint declaration of intent.

### **One of six possible options**

The planned harmonisation of Europe's airspace has prompted skyguide to investigate various possible organisational options over the past few months for the company's further development. In November 2008, skyguide presented six such options, four of national and two of international dimensions. One of the latter is to create a new control centre in the French/German/Swiss border region which would be jointly operated together with France and Germany's air navigation service providers, the Direction des Services de la Navigation Aérienne (DSNA) and Deutsche Flugsicherung (DFS). This option now needs to be analysed in more detail together with the projected partners, to enable it to be compared with the other five scenarios: the information currently available here does not provide an adequate foundation for any decision on the future organisation of the control centres needed to manage Switzerland's airspace.

### **Close collaboration between companies and authorities**

In view of this, the aviation authorities of the three countries concerned have commissioned skyguide, DFS and DSNA to analyse, in the form of an extensive feasibility study, the option of establishing such a joint control centre. The study will look in detail at the organisational, institutional, operational, technical, financial and social aspects of this joint-centre approach, and will report back in a year with its findings. The commissioning of the study does not imply that any decision has already been taken to establish such a centre; but the study's findings should provide a firmer foundation for the subsequent decision-making process.

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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 – around 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 372 million and employs some 1 400 people at 14 locations in Switzerland. Skyguide is also a member, together with its partner organisations in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, of the FABEC initiative to create a common functional airspace block that will bring greater efficiency to Central Europe's air traffic management services and activities.

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