

Skyguide reports tangible traffic growth and top punctuality in 2011

Geneva, 25 January 2012. Skyguide, Switzerland's air navigation services provider, saw a 3.1% increase in the volume of flights it handled last year: 1.19 million, compared to 1.16 million in the prior-year period. While the numbers of landings and departures handled were a substantial increase on 2010, the rise was far more modest in en-route traffic volumes. On the punctuality front, skyguide posted a further improvement on its prior-year performance: an average of 96.9% of all daily flights were handled without delays, setting a further new record in punctuality terms.

Steady traffic growth in the first half-year

2011 got off to a dynamic start: skyguide's traffic volumes for January were 6.4% above their prior-year level. The tangible increase was due largely to the relatively low traffic levels in January 2010, as a result of adverse weather conditions and strike action abroad. From February onwards, the traffic volumes handled per month were some 2-3% above their 2010 levels. The growth levelled off in the second half-year, however, as Europe's financial crisis began to bite. Skyguide saw a 2.1% year-on-year decline in its November traffic volumes. On average, the company managed and monitored 3,268 flights a day in 2011. The peak traffic day was 16 September, with 4,051 flights.

IFR flights¹ handled in 2011:

	2011	2010	Change 10-11
Total IFR flights	1,192,940	1,156,960	+ 3.1%
of which en-route traffic	712,830	706,165	+ 0.9%

Substantial growth in landing and departure traffic

The total number of landings and departures handled at airports managed by skyguide in 2011 amounted to 517,314 movements, a 5.9% increase on the previous year. Skyguide's Zurich Airport operations handled 268,384 movements (up 4.5%), while its Geneva operations managed 176,009 movements (an increase of a sizeable 7.0%). The company's area control centres in Dübendorf and Geneva, which are primarily responsible for managing and monitoring en-route traffic, reported aggregate traffic growth of 3.2%. As in 2010, Europe's financial crisis clearly had less impact on the volumes of arrivals and departures at Swiss airports than it did on en-route traffic levels.

Punctuality maintained consistently high

Skyguide handled 96.9% of its daily traffic volumes without delays in 2011 – a new record annual performance that surpassed the previous 96.0% high for 2010 by almost a full percentage point. In en-route traffic, the number of delays attributable to air traffic management was reduced by as much as 60%. The favourable

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

punctuality performance is attributable to various actions taken to increase system capacity, including steps at the end of 2009 and 2010 to reorganise Switzerland's upper airspace. In addition, the efforts that the company intensified over the past few years in its recruitment activities have resulted in an increase in air traffic controller numbers. 2011 also saw skyguide adopt a new planning tool that permits more precise forecasts to be made of expected traffic volumes. This allows both capacity and personnel resources to be aligned even more closely to projected traffic levels.

On the airport operations front, delays at Geneva were halved from their prior-year level – a substantial achievement, given that the airport also saw a 7% increase in its movement volumes. At Zurich, by contrast, adverse weather conditions led to an increase in the number of delays.

Flight punctuality: a key indicator

Flight delays can occur for any of a wide range of reasons on the ground (such as baggage handling or security requirements) or in the air (such as the weather). Around 12% of all delays to flights can be attributed to air traffic management. These ATM delay levels are a key indicator when it comes to monitoring the performance of an air navigation services provider. ATM delays occur when the number of flights planned exceeds the capacity available in the airspace concerned. For safety reasons, a maximum number of flights per hour is specified for every airspace sector monitored by an air traffic controller. If demand exceeds the capacity available, Europe's Central Flow Management Unit will reschedule some of the "slots" it has assigned to the flights concerned. And this in turn will result in the flights' delay.

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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 3,270 flights a day or 1.2 million a year – through 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 generated total operating revenue of over CHF 365 million in 2010, and employs some 1,400 people at 14 locations in Switzerland. Skyguide is also a member, together with its partner organizations 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.
