

Swiss ATC delays likely during multiple international events

Geneva, 17 January 2014. With the World Economic Forum in Davos, the international peace conference on Syria in Montreux and the 2014 Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie watch fair in Geneva, Switzerland will be in the global spotlight several times over this month. Skyguide expects the World Economic Forum alone to generate some 1,000 additional flights. And numerous further high-priority official flights are likely to be operated to bring the various delegations to the Montreux peace talks. Skyguide will be maintaining security zones for both events in collaboration with the Swiss Air Force and FOCA (Federal Office of Civil Aviation).

In addition, January traditionally brings large numbers of international visitors to Geneva by air on their way to alpine winter sports resorts. In view of all this, Swiss air traffic is highly likely to experience delays and restrictions in the period from 20 to 26 January.

Ensuring the safe handling of these higher traffic volumes and the generally greater operating complexity which the above measures will entail in air traffic management terms are bound to result in some disruption to civil aviation over the period concerned. Skyguide and the Swiss Air Force are fully aware of this, but are convinced that all the actions envisaged must be taken in view of the vital global importance of these Davos and Montreux events. Skyguide is asking its partners, its clients and affected passengers for their comprehension in regard to the measures taken.

Security entrusted to the Swiss Air Force and skyguide

To fulfil the Swiss government's obligation to ensure adequate security for the Syria peace conference and the World Economic Forum, the Federal Council has resolved to establish two separate "restricted-fly zones" within a 25-nautical-mile (46.3-kilometre) radius of Montreux and Davos, the respective venues of these events. A further "coordination zone" will be created around each of these. The Davos zone will be maintained between 20 and 26 January, and the Montreux zone will be in operation from 21 to 24 January.

The actions planned will inevitably lead to bottlenecks in Switzerland's already complex and heavily-used airspace. Skyguide, which is mandated to provide the country's civil and military air traffic services, will be raising its staffing numbers for the period concerned. And to ensure the full operability of the air bases involved and of Tactical Operations Control, 18 civil air traffic controllers and air navigation services specialists who have been specially trained for the purpose will be seconded to provide round-the-clock management of the two no-fly zones.

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Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services in Switzerland and in certain parts of neighbouring countries. With its workforce of 1,400 employees who are active at 14 locations in Switzerland, skyguide safely and reliably guides some 3,200 civil and military flights a day – or 1.2 million a year – through the busiest and most complex airspace in Europe.

Skyguide is committed to continuous improvement, targeted innovation and creative collaboration. Together with its partner organizations in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, skyguide is a member of the FABEC alliance to manage Central European airspace. Skyguide is a non-profit limited company, the majority of whose shares are held by the Swiss Confederation. Its head office is in Geneva.
