

Skyguide's 2014: very high punctuality levels maintained despite slight increase in traffic volumes

Geneva, 19 January 2015. Skyguide, Switzerland's air navigation services provider, saw a slight 1.3% rise last year in its annual air traffic volumes. The very high punctuality levels achieved for 2013 were also marginally increased. All in all, 96.7% of skyguide's flights were handled without delays, a 0.2-percentage-point improvement on the prior-year period.

Geneva Airport reported a 1.9% increase in its air traffic volumes, while traffic at Zurich Airport was up 0.8%. Once again, it was the low-cost carriers that were the prime engine of Switzerland's air traffic growth, with a further 5.8% year-on-year increase in their traffic volumes.

Punctuality consistently high

Skyguide maintained its punctuality performance at its already high levels in 2014, with 96.7% of all flights handled without delays. The result equals that of 2012 but with a higher traffic volume, and is only 0.2 percentage points below the all-time record of 2011. Skyguide's en-route punctuality performance was equally impressive, with an average delay per flight of just 0.09 minutes.

The delays that did occur were attributable primarily to short-term capacity shortages (52%), adverse weather conditions (22%), unforeseeable temporary personnel shortages (19%) and system maintenance work (6%).

Geneva delays substantially reduced

Delays for Geneva Airport were reduced by a substantial 24.2%, thanks largely to more advantageous weather and an easing of the previous personnel shortages. The main causes of the delays that were incurred were adverse weather (34%), insufficient runway capacity (32%), personnel shortages (19%), inadequate approach capacity (9%), the adoption of new procedures (3%) and maintenance work (2%).

Delays at Zurich Airport in 2014 were 5.7% up on the previous year. The delays here were largely the result of adverse weather conditions (45%), insufficient runway capacity (42%), environmental constraints (8%), inadequate approach capacity (2%), airspace management activities (1%) and the adoption of new procedures (1%).

Low-cost carriers driving growth

With further volume declines in the first three months of the year (January down 1.1%, February down 0.8% and March down 1.0%), it was not until spring 2014 that the recent downward traffic trends reversed. But from April onwards skyguide handled more monthly traffic than it had in 2013, with a peak increase in August of 4.0%. Traffic volumes for the year as a whole were 1.3% up, slightly below the STATFOR projection of 1.5% published in February 2014.

Once again, it was the low-cost carriers, with a year-on-year increase of 5.8%, that served as the engine of Switzerland's traffic volume growth. Charter flight volumes were up 0.9% and cargo flights were up 0.2%, while the traditional airlines saw their flight volumes fall 0.7% and the business aviation sector saw a 0.1% decline.

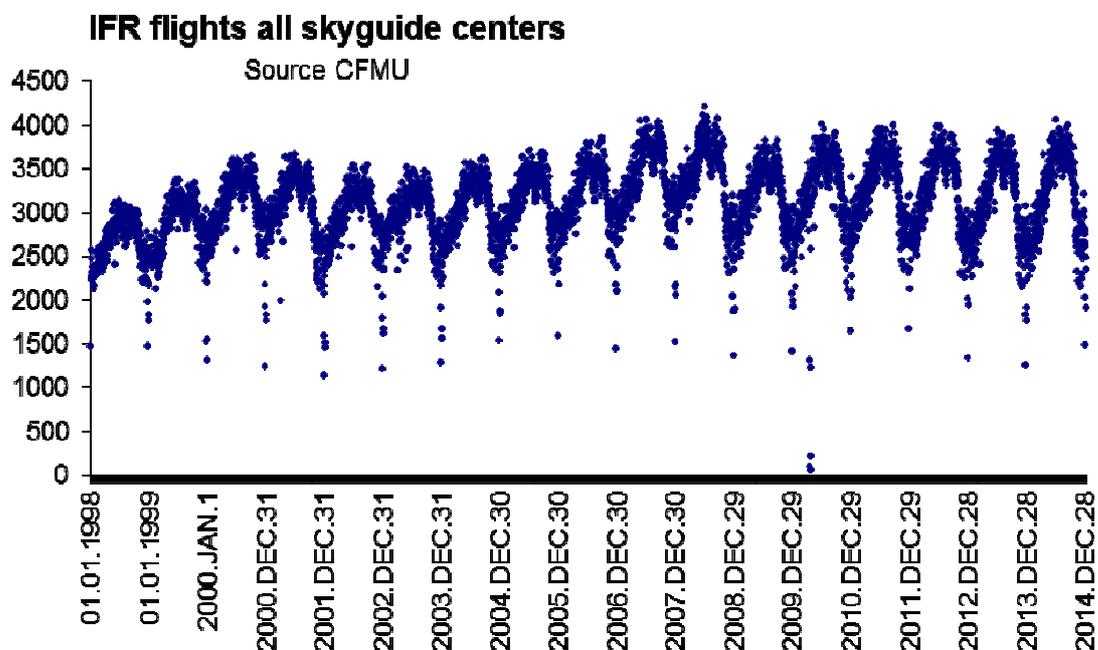
Instrument flight rules¹ flights handled in 2014:

| | 2014 | 2013 | Change |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Total IFR flights | 1,156,583 | 1,141,729 | + 1.3% |
| of which en-route traffic | 684,372 | 672,165 | + 1.8% |

Skyguide handled an average of 3,149 flights a day in 2014. The peak traffic day was 27 June 2014, with 4,026 flights. (By comparison, skyguide’s busiest year in traffic volume terms was 2008, with an average of 3,387 flights a day, while its busiest-ever day was 27 June 2008 with 4,153 flights.)

2014 traffic trends: a strong summer offsets low early- and late-year volumes

The graph below illustrates the seasonal fluctuations in the daily volumes of IFR flights handled by skyguide between 1998 and 2014. Each dot represents the number of such flights handled on a particular day.



The seasonal fluctuations in air traffic levels are typified by low volumes during the end-of-year period and strong increases between June and September, though August tends to see slight volume declines. Typically, in August a decline in volume compared to the rest of the summer months is experienced. 2014 proved an exception here, with August traffic also up.

Traffic levels can also be directly influenced by further factors, such as the entry into service of new technical systems (with corresponding temporary capacity reductions), strike action or meteorological conditions.

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

The graph shows a steady increase in air traffic volumes from 1998 to the first half of 2001, followed by a tangible decline from October 2001 and into 2002. After this, the graph shows strong volume growth again until the beginning of 2008, and a second visible decline at the end of that year which became even more pronounced in 2009, as the impact of the financial crisis began to be fully felt. 2010 saw a modest recovery in traffic volumes, with a few steep setbacks as a result of the volcanic eruption in Iceland and its ramifications. The first half of 2011 brought a clear volume increase, followed by a further weakening that persisted throughout 2012 and 2013.

2014 saw low traffic levels at the beginning and end of the year and a strong increase in the summer months, whose traffic volumes approached those of the record years of 2007 and 2008.

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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 over 3,100 civil and military flights a day – or 1.1 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.
