

Skyguide achieves further punctuality record: 96% of all flights handled on time in 2010

Geneva, 27 January 2011. Skyguide saw only a small 0.8% increase in the total number of flights it handled last year, which rose from the 1.15 million of 2009 to 1.16 million. On the punctuality front, Switzerland's air navigation service provider further improved its annual performance: 96% of all daily flight volumes were handled without delays.

Uneven traffic trends

The volumes of flights managed and monitored by skyguide were particularly low at the beginning of 2010 – the lowest, in fact, for six years. But apart from a clear dip in April as a result of the volcanic ash cloud, the numbers of flights handled rose steadily from February onwards, and by July were some 4.4% up on the same month the previous year. Traffic handled then suffered a further decline, and volumes for December – prompted in particular by the adverse weather experienced – were a slight 0.4% below their 2009 levels. The eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland and the resulting ash cloud eroded revenue which accounted for some one per cent of total annual growth. Skyguide managed and monitored an average of 3 170 flights a day in 2010. The peak traffic day was 2 July, when 3 993 flights were handled.

IFR¹ flights handled in 2010:

	2010	2009	Change 09-10
Total IFR flights	1 156 960	1 147 230	+ 0.8%
of which en-route traffic	706 165	707 823	- 0.2%

Still no increase in en-route traffic

While skyguide handled 2.6% more landings and departures at the airports under its control in 2010 than it had the previous year, a further 0.2% decline was seen in its en-route traffic volumes. The two international airports of Zurich and Geneva registered volume increases of 2.7% and 1.7% respectively. A slight recovery was also seen in the total numbers of flights departing from or arriving in Switzerland. The same could not be said for skyguide's en-route traffic. This generally developed in line with broader European trends, owing largely to various strikes outside Switzerland, adverse weather conditions and the repercussions of the volcanic ash cloud.

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 at a new record high

Skyguide handled 96% of its daily traffic on time² in 2010. The performance was a further improvement on the previous year's outstanding result of 95%. In en-route traffic, the punctuality even increased by 6% in comparison with 2009. The strong punctuality performance is attributable primarily to the reorganisation of airspace over Eastern Switzerland which skyguide effected in June 2010, as well as to weak traffic growth. By comparison, the levels of delayed flights in Europe as a whole were a 54% increase on 2009, a trend that can be ascribed largely to various strike actions and harsh weather conditions. A slight increase was seen in the average length of the delays incurred in skyguide-controlled airspace, from the 15.2 minutes of 2009 to 16.6 minutes per flight. This is, however, still well below the European average for 2010 of 24.4 minutes per flight (2009: 19.8 minutes).

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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 3 170 flights a day or 1.16 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 generated annual operating revenue of over CHF 362 million for 2009, and employs some 1 400 people at 14 locations in Switzerland. Skyguide is also a member, together with its sister 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.

² The delays caused by air traffic management operations are a key yardstick for evaluating the performance of air navigation service providers. Such delays may occur whenever Europe's Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU) projects a future shortage of capacity in a particular airspace sector on the basis of the flight plans submitted, and therefore issues specific departure "slots" to individual flights involved.