

Skyguide achieves new record 95% punctuality for 2009

Geneva, 22 January 2010. Skyguide managed and monitored 1.15 million flights in 2009, some 7.2% fewer than the 1.24 million of the previous year. The decline in traffic volumes and the actions taken to increase its system capacity enabled skyguide to achieve new record punctuality levels: 95% of all flights in 2009 were handled without delays.

Tangible traffic decline

2009 saw a substantial decline in air traffic volumes, as a result of the global financial and economic crisis. With an average of some 3 143 controlled flights a day and a daily peak for the year of 3 792 flights (on 10 July), skyguide's traffic levels for 2009 were well below the 3 380 average and 4 153 peak (on 27 June) of the previous year. There is currently no prospect of any volume recovery: traffic levels at the end of 2009 were also below their prior-year equivalents.

Flight movement declines in all areas

Flight movement numbers are a key means of determining the workload being handled by an air traffic management unit. Generally speaking, the traffic declines in 2009 were experienced both at skyguide's Zurich and Geneva area control centres, which manage and monitor en-route traffic (down 8.1%) and at Arrival and Departure Control, which handle all arriving and departing traffic at airports (down 5.5%). En-route traffic, which accounts for most of the movements handled by the two area control centres, was hit somewhat harder by the crisis than traffic to and from Switzerland. Both the major Swiss airports managed by skyguide reported traffic declines, with Geneva suffering a little more than Zurich as a result of the tangible fall in business aviation volumes.

Flight movements handled			
	2009	2008	Change 08/09
Area control centres			
Geneva	622 781	686 941	- 9.3%
Zurich	755 102	812 149	- 7.0%
Total	1 377 883	1 499 090	- 8.1%
Arrivals /Departures			
Bern Belp	12 894	12 343	+ 4.5%
Buochs	1 510	1 606	- 6.0%
Donaueschingen	1 506	1 544	- 2.5%
Friedrichshafen	17 498	18 589	- 5.9%
Geneva	161 767	175 863	- 8.0%
Grenchen	5 207	4 867	+ 7.0%
Les Eplatures	1 577	1 685	- 6.4%
Lugano Agno	10 213	10 118	+ 0.9%
Sion	4 676	5 147	- 9.2%
St. Gallen Altenrhein	9 548	9 598	- 0.5%
Zurich	250 033	262 629	- 4.8%
Total	476 429	503 989	- 5.5%

Punctuality at a new record high

Skyguide handled 95% of its daily traffic volume on time in 2009 – some 30% fewer delayed flights than the previous year. The favourable performance can be partly attributed to the general decline in air traffic volumes, but is also due to the actions taken by skyguide to increase airspace and system capacity. These have included a further intensification of the company's efforts to recruit new air traffic controllers. Skyguide's training facilities were at full capacity in 2009, with a total of 123 controllers undergoing training and 28 completing their courses during the year. Further enhancements to operating processes and a more flexible use of the capacities available also played their part in the encouraging punctuality result.

Capacity raised for future increases in traffic volumes

While traffic levels have seen recent declines, they are expected to grow in the longer term. In view of this, skyguide continues to take action to raise its system capacity, to cope with these projected future traffic increases with no negative repercussions in punctuality terms. As part of these endeavours, the upper airspace above Western Switzerland was reorganised in December 2009, raising its capacity by around 10%. The upper airspace above Eastern Switzerland will also be restructured in the course of 2010; and this, too, will result in tangible capacity improvements.

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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 3 143 a day or 1.15 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 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.
