

Europe and Singapore Meet to Discuss Air Traffic Management

To explore further cooperation in the area of air traffic management, Singapore hosted an inaugural Joint Technical Workshop between the European Commission (EC), the SESAR Joint Undertaking (SESAR JU) and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) on the future of air traffic management on October 6 – 7, 2011.

The workshop was a select event, attended by more than 40 civil aviation officials and industry representatives from CAAS, the EC, the SESAR JU, Eurocontrol, Thales, Selex and Frequentis. Mr Marc Ungeheuer, the Ambassador of the European Union to Singapore, opened the event jointly with Mr Soh Poh Theen, Assistant Director-General of Air Navigation Services of CAAS. In his opening address, His Excellency Mr Marc Ungeheuer commented that the joint workshop was organised to facilitate an in-depth exchange of views on ATM developments, and expressed optimism that the workshop could eventually lead to future synergistic collaboration between Europe and Singapore.

Collaboration in ATM Modernisation

Globally, States and Air Navigation Services Providers are facing difficulties in meeting the demands of rapidly growing air traffic without a corresponding increase in airspace. The Europeans envisaged a “Single European Sky” to be the solution. In 2000, the EC launched the ambitious initiative to reform the European air traffic management through a legislative approach at a European level. Forming the foundation for the implementation of the initiative is a paradigm shift to trajectory-based operations and the transformation of ATM systems by leveraging on state-of-the-art and innovative technologies. SESAR (SES ATM Research) represents the technological dimension, and is expected to bring about ATM modernisation through a coherent programme which will provide guidance and leadership to all ATM-related initiatives in Europe with a view to achieve global interoperability. In its aims to eliminate fragmented approach to European ATM, SESAR will transform the ATM system by synchronising all stakeholders and federate resources.

Today, the Asia/Pacific region faces the same set of challenges. With a phenomenal growth in air traffic volume projected for the coming years, there is an urgent need to

modernise the regional ATM systems in order to ensure continued safety and efficiency in operations.

To avoid proliferation of different regional ATM programmes leading to disharmony, ICAO initiated the “Aviation System Block Upgrades” (ASBUs) initiative taking references from major modernisation programmes such as SESAR. The ASBUs initiative is designed to be a pragmatic framework that develops a set of ATM solutions through capability upgrades, take advantage of current equipage, establish a transition plan, and ultimately ensuring global interoperability. Singapore shares this forward-thinking by ICAO and will support the ASBU initiative, bringing ATM modernisation initiatives by the EU and Singapore closer together through alignment of common objectives.

This Joint Technical Workshop has given SESAR JU and CAAS the opportunity to exchange information and share experiences on ATM needs and solutions. Moving forward, both sides decided to explore possible areas of ATM collaborations so as to deepen their respective understanding of potential ATM improvement areas.

