

SUPPORTING EUROPEAN AVIATION

Skyway

magazine

EUROPE'S ATM CAPACITY CHALLENGE

EUROCONTROL TAKES URGENT ACTION

ATM MASTER PLAN UPDATE AND
THE AIRSPACE ARCHITECTURE STUDY

**“AIRLINES CANNOT AFFORD
MORE ATC DISRUPTION”**

JAVIER SÁNCHEZ-PRIETO, CEO VUELING

IAG INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES GROUP

air transport and guaranteeing the highest level of safety, which are the high-level goals of the Union's Single European Sky initiative.

Preparation of the document is an extensive and inclusive process, organised through a SESAR 2020 project (PJ20¹). All stakeholders are represented, namely: airspace users (including general aviation and the drone community); air navigation service providers (ANSPs); technology suppliers; airports; military; regulatory agencies; SESAR JU (SJU) and SESAR DM; Network Manager, and professional staff organisations. These organisations participate in the Master Planning Group, a gathering co-chaired between EUROCONTROL and the SJU, which compiles a proposed version of the document based on solid content integration and architecture input, through a series of monthly meetings. The document goes through a number of iterations before reaching the Master Plan Committee, a high-level group that provides feedback and advice to monitor and steer preparation of the Master Plan. Finally, the SESAR JU releases a version for consultation before delivering the final edition to the EC.

The Master Plan is made up of three levels. The top level (Level 1) provides an executive view, which starts with a vision of what ATM will be like in 2040 along with a summary of the key performance areas and operational changes relevant to achieve SES high-level goals. It also provides a deployment roadmap, cost benefit and risk analysis. Level 2 provides detailed planning and architecture information to support Level 1, while Level 3 deals with shorter-term coordinated implementation actions in the areas of safety, environment, capacity and cost efficiency, which help to achieve the high-level goals. The yearly Level 3 plan and report also comprise, among the whole set of implementation actions, the implementation actions of the mandatory SESAR Deployment Programme. ■

¹ This project has received funding from the SESAR Joint Undertaking under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 733018.

"The results of the Airspace Architecture Study show that the answers are not only there, but they are staring us in the face."

Florian Guillermet
Executive Director,
SESAR Joint Undertaking

A PLAN FOR ITS TIME



Florian Guillermet

Executive Director,
SESAR Joint Undertaking

The growth of traffic in recent months and the outlook for the future have increased the sense of urgency not just within the aviation community, but also among decision-makers and policy-makers, to forge ahead with ATM modernisation efforts. The scale and complex nature of ATM means that no one stakeholder can do it alone. The job can only be done through effective collaboration. That's why the European ATM Master Plan is a must-have in the SESAR toolkit, since it helps to ensure that stakeholders are on the same page when it comes to the vision, R&D and deployment priorities, and where and when investments should be made. Coordinated by EUROCONTROL, within the framework of the SESAR Project PJ.20, the plan is updated regularly to take account of changes in the landscape of European aviation. In doing so, the plan remains timely and relevant, enabling stakeholders to stay focussed on the way forward.

The latest update comes at a time of great debate and reflection. The much talked-about capacity crunch is outpacing our modernisation efforts and is shining a blinding light on the shortcomings of the aviation system, from the limited interoperability between bespoke systems and lack of flexibility in resource allocation, to an inability to scale up, and to low resilience. It is also prompting questions by politicians and stakeholders alike: can we do something more? Can we do something differently to affect change more quickly to our system?

The results of the Airspace Architecture Study show that the answers are not only there, but they are staring us in the face. We have technology enablers to increase progressively automation in the system and make it more productive. We have proof that by aligning ways of working across ACCs, we can maximise capacity. We also have the means to improve the design of the airspace and render its management more dynamic. We know too that the virtualisation of data services and enhancements to the CNS infrastructure have great potential for enabling capacity in the right place and the right time. All of this is known, but the tricky part is the glue that holds it all together. The study offers recommendations on how this can be done, and the timeline needed to achieve it. Integrating the findings of the study into the European ATM Master Plan, in addition to other elements such as the drone integration roadmap, sends out a clear call for action to the implementing stakeholders.