

SPEECH from Matthias Ruete (DG MOVE, European Commission) for ICAO-GANIS 21 September 2011

Need for GANIS

It is an honour and a pleasure to speak at this Global Air Navigation Industry Symposium on behalf of the European Commission. I would like to thank ICAO for taking the initiative to organising this important event, giving both states and industry a unique opportunity to exchange views in depth on ICAO's approach to Air Traffic Management (ATM) modernisation throughout the world. What we do this week in Montreal is the crucial step paving the way towards the 12th ICAO Air Navigation Conference.

Air traffic growth is pushing air transport systems to their limits worldwide, and certainly this is the case in Europe. More and more airspaces and airports are becoming congested, causing delays, increasing flight distance and fuel consumption, damaging our environment, and imposing costs and discomfort on passengers. ATM is one of the key areas where action is needed to open new perspectives for a safe, efficient and environmentally friendly air traffic growth. And I want to stress the word "safe": whatever we do to reform ATM must go hand in hand with our mission to improve aviation safety.

European cooperation

Today, Europe is confronted with a heavily congested airspace. A key contributor to this congestion is the 'fragmented' composition of Europe's airspace on the basis of the systems of individual states (36 air navigation service providers and 58 en route air traffic control centres). The additional costs for airspace users caused by this fragmentation are significant. This was the reason that the European Union took a historic decision, ten years ago, to establish the Single European Sky (SES).

We are still climbing this mountain, and although we are not yet at the top, it is gratifying sometimes to look behind and see how far we have come, how much progress has been achieved. A first regulatory package was established in 2004 with the overall objective of deploying an interoperable ATM network in the Member States of the European Union and other neighbouring states cooperating with the EU. To this end, one of the principal regulations focuses on the interoperability of ATM systems. In the Single European Sky we have also worked out a performance based approach, including binding targets to be achieved at the European Network level, to be achieved through the achievement of targets at national level or even but also at the level of what we call Functional Airspace Blocks, nine groupings of states who will by 2012 be integrating airspace between them.

The corner stone for success in Europe is *cooperation*. We work extremely well with Eurocontrol, the independent agency for air traffic control in the European Union, and we have just appointed Eurocontrol as the network manager for the European Union. And the European Union has also created its own European Aviation Safety Agency, EASA, which is rapidly progressing in its work, once again in full cooperation with Eurocontrol. This is important for an overall safety approach for the future.

We realised however that existing technologies are close to reaching their limits, and we need to fast track future technologies into our system. Therefore we developed in 2005 a joint ATM modernisation programme named SESAR. The Commission and Eurocontrol are both

founding members of the SESAR Joint Undertaking which kicked-off in 2007, with industry as the third member.

SESAR and other programmes need global interoperability

Europe is of course not alone in looking to bring in new technologies. Many regions of the world are already at work, defining new operational concepts to meet their specific requirements, developing and validating new technologies and procedures to support the implementation of a new generation of ATM systems.

So far, so good. Should we just develop our own systems, and then compete to sell them to an expectant world? Of course, competition is good, and we strongly believe that we are on the right track in Europe in the SESAR plan to upgrade and update our ATM systems. But if we don't work together in cooperation to ensure *global* interoperability, we could be making a fatal collective mistake. No transport system is so interconnected at global level like aviation. Our planes fly around the world. Our ground systems need to connect with planes fitted with technology made elsewhere. So we must ensure global interoperability.

Hence the crucial role for ICAO in providing platforms such as GANIS where the States and industry can share their expertise, best practices, and identify the steps required to achieve global interoperability, which – once again – will be essential to ensure the timely, effective and efficient deployment of SESAR, NextGen, CARATS or other programmes from other states and regions. We therefore want to cooperate with other programmes, and already doing so with NextGen and CARATS.

Planning by ICAO is needed to deliver on time

Whilst different regions may have different needs requiring different solutions at different times, these solutions must be kept globally compatible. Airspace users – and those in charge of investment decisions in airlines – need to be reassured that they will be provided with the minimum global interoperability they require to fly any aircraft anywhere with the same avionic suite on board.

ICAO is essential in this as it will play a key role in continuing to deliver the necessary standards and recommended practices to States and industry in a prompt and timely manner. But this is not a case of 'one-size-and-one-time-fits-all'. We need to develop packages of improvements, or blocks. The Aviation System Global Block Upgrade initiative defines the key steps in ATM modernization and highlights the operational and technical improvements which require standardization efforts whilst providing enough flexibility for every region to adopt only what it needs and when it is needed. For Europe it is important to deliver in terms of accrued performance of the entire aviation system. The Aviation System Global Block Upgrade initiative will translate into a revised Global Air Navigation Plan, supported by a clear planning of required ICAO standards. This then would be the end result we are working towards: a framework for worldwide ATM modernization.

Step towards 12th Air Navigation Conference

I see the ICAO 12th Air Navigation Conference in November 2012 as the next milestone in this process. This conference should not be the starting point of development but the endorsement of what we have developed together so far and to agree on the way forward. This also requires careful planning from ICAO on how to manage its standardisation effort and to deliver on time.

I would like to assure ICAO in the name of the European Commission that you can fully rely on us in the European Union to work closely with you and support you in this crucial and challenging task we face. I am sure this conference will be a resounding success in opening up ICAO's thinking to industry in particular, and I look forward to learning in detail of your deliberations.

Many thanks for your attention.