A sense of great achievement was felt by Joint Undertaking (SESAR JU) members and staff in 2016 as we saw the results of nearly a decade of work really take shape. We brought to a successful close some 350 projects – the culmination of thousands of hours of research, validations and demos. These results are encapsulated in a first-edition Catalogue of more than 60 solutions aimed at tackling pressing air traffic management (ATM) challenges. 2016 also saw the launch of SESAR 2020, another significant milestone. Two of the programme’s three research strands – exploratory and industrial – were kicked off by the end of the year, while the publication of a call for very-large-scale demos set in motion this important innovation stream.

Remember, SESAR JU was created in 2007 to fast-track the delivery of a “family” of tangible ATM solutions, guided by the European ATM Master Plan. Last year’s progress shows we are on track, and comes at a critical time for Europe as it reconciles growing air traffic with aviation safety, costs and the environment.

The SESAR Deployment Manager (SESAR DM) plays a critical role coordinating, synchronizing and harmonizing diverse modernization actions in Europe’s airspace. SDM translates the innovative technological and operational solutions into timely deployment by supporting the industry that makes them a daily reality. Today we have 28 finalized SESAR projects starting to provide benefits for air traffic management operations and EU passengers. More selected projects will start to deliver during the year. By playing its role, the SESAR Deployment Manager aims to maximize the benefits of real Single European Sky implementation. SESAR DM will keep on modernizing air traffic management in Europe, proven by managing the ongoing modernization through another 197 projects running in 29 Member States. I consider 2017 a point of no return for an improved network performance and the Single European Sky actual implementation. Therefore, it is crucial that the co-funding of air traffic management investments is continued.

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