From Geneva it was announced on 16th September by CANSO further progress across Europe in reducing emissions and noise from aircraft, as part of the industry’s commitment to a sustainable future.

The European Continuous Descent Approach (CDA) Action Plan, announced at the Aviation and Environment Summit a year ago, has gained further momentum with the launch of an interactive internet map showing the status of CDA implementation across Europe. The application, developed by EUROCONTROL as part of its work to support CDA implementation and in close collaboration with ACI EUROPE, CANSO, ERA and IATA, was presented for the first time at the ATAG Aviation and Environment Summit in Geneva.

EUROCONTROL is co-ordinating this effort through its CDA Implementation Team which has met with operational stakeholders covering a total of 104 airports across Europe. Experts from EUROCONTROL, CANSO and IATA are also contributing to the development of a new ICAO manual on Continuous Descent Operations, which may lead to an update of EUROCONTROL’s existing European CDA Guidance in 2011.

The support that the CDA Implementation Team has received from aircraft operators, airport operators and air navigation service providers has been crucial to commitments given thus far to implement CDA at 83 airports across 25 European States. Of these airports, 33 already offer CDA at some point in the day and a further 13 are currently carrying out flight trials. At least 15 new implementation support visits are already in the pipeline. This confirms that the project is clearly on track to reach the Joint Action Plan’s target of CDA implementation at 100 European airports by 2013.

Operational flight trials and work in aircraft simulators confirm that a CDA from an altitude of about 10,000 feet should save approximately 100kg of fuel, and over 300kg of CO₂ compared to the classical stepped approach. As there are over nine
A million flights in European airspace every year, the widespread application of CDA in which aircraft fly higher for longer, has the potential to provide major cost savings for aircraft operators through reduced fuel use, reduced noise exposure for those who live near airports and considerable reductions in the emission of greenhouse gases.

Said Andrew Watt, Environment Manager at EUROCONTROL, “Following the last Aviation and Environment Summit, ACI EUROPE, CANSO, EUROCONTROL, ERA and IATA have been working closely together to implement the Joint European CDA Action Plan. We are already seeing tangible benefits of which the CDA internet map is but one. Over the coming months we will be focussing on promoting the widespread usage of CDA and establishing a CDA culture which will pave the way to more advanced performance in the future.”

ATAG Executive Director Paul Steele commented, “The close co-operation between ACI EUROPE, CANSO, EUROCONTROL, ERA and IATA is just one of many great examples of joined-up thinking that the aviation industry is applying to the challenge of lowering its emissions. Through innovative tools like the interactive map, the CDA Action Plan is ahead of schedule in its aim to reduce emissions by 500,000 tons of CO2 a year, and shows the industry delivering on its commitments to cap net carbon emissions from 2020 and half net emissions by 2050.”

ACI EUROPE = European Region of Airports Council International
ATAG = Air Transport Action Group
CANSO = Civil Air Navigation Organisation
ERA = European Region Airline Association