EUROCONTROL GO AHEAD FOR CENTRALISED SERVICES

At the end of February it was announced from Brussels that the 40 EUROCONTROL Member States have decided to go ahead with developing, setting up and demonstrating six Centralised Services (CS 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

Feasibility studies will be carried out for another three Centralised Services (CS 2, 3 and 9).

The EUROCONTROL Agency intends in parallel to conduct a feasibility study for CS 8.

Centralised Services deal with ATM data and support the Air Traffic Control technology stemming from the Single European Sky Research and Development Program (SESAR). They are being put in place on a central pan-European basis to cover the airspace of the 40 EUROCONTROL Member States.

Following the Single European Sky Conference in Vilnius in 2013, where the EU Member States declared that they were ready to establish a limited market for some ANS support services, EUROCONTROL, with the full support of the European Commission, will now develop Calls For Interest in which the ANSPs of the EUROCONTROL Member States and ATM manufacturing industry as well as other stakeholders can declare their interest in developing and later on providing those services under a performance-based time-limited contract with EUROCONTROL.

Operational concepts for the Centralised Services were developed in a series of workshops in the course of 2013 with large stakeholder participation. As a next step interfaces, data sets, interoperability questions will be discussed, in order to present them also on a global scene to ICAO.

“It makes complete sense to offer centralised services rather than building up the infrastructure and the service in a fragmented way on a national level; the economies of scale are enormous,” said Alberto Varano, Principal Director Resources at EUROCONTROL. He added, “We anticipate savings in the range of 1.5 to 2.0 Billion € over a ten-year period after the start of operations; this figure has been validated by an external independent company. The Airspace Users have been very supportive of the programme, subject to the condition that the Centralised Services are really centralised and there is an obligation by the European Commission and the Member States to avoid duplicating the technology and service on national level and that subsequently there is a
commitment from the ANSPs to provide the data needed for the good operation of the services and to use them. Otherwise the airspace users would pay for the duplication of the technology and for the services as well. As a next step, we will be developing this market for ANS support services in Europe in full transparency with all stakeholders. A list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) on this program has been developed, that is publicly available on our website (www.eurocontrol.int).”

The Centralised Services will also support European Air Navigation Service Providers to come closer to the EU cost-efficiency targets as they will not have to spend money on a national basis for the set-up and operation of the services.

According to Alberto Varano, “Our assessment at EUROCONTROL is that the Centralised Services will not lead to a job loss on local level or at EUROCONTROL. Part of the feasibility study will be to assess the situation individually with the respective ANSPs.”

As a next step, the stakeholders are asked to declare their interest in providing these services in consortia or as special purpose entities for the whole of Europe, allowing the delivery of the services outside national boundaries.

“This will clearly demonstrate the capabilities of Europe as a whole, to be competitive on world wide basis with high-technology and most modern ATM operating procedures under market conditions,” said Alberto Varano. “At a time when Europe needs to be competitive on a global scale, the creation of this limited European market can give European companies the edge they need.”

About EUROCONTROL
EUROCONTROL, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation, has as its primary objective to develop a seamless, pan-European air traffic management (ATM) system that fully copes with the growth in air traffic, while maintaining a high level of safety, reducing costs and respecting the environment.

EUROCONTROL has 40 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.