AIRLINES FOR EUROPE

BACKGROUNDER

A NEW SEAMLESS EUROPEAN SKY

The aviation industry is convinced that reforming Europe's airspace architecture requires a fresh and truly synchronised approach – including the use of automation and digitalization in the sector.

The current European airspace architecture has its origins in concepts based on technology and aircraft from the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, airlines and their suppliers worked both individually and collaboratively to satisfy the growing demands of passengers. Airlines, manufacturers, Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) and airports, in particular, have since implemented technological advances to benefit the system and ultimately the passenger. However, recent years have shown that the existing air transport system is quickly reaching its limits.

To speed up air traffic modernization within Europe, A4E is calling for the creation of a European airspace which integrates the different national airspaces under a single operational concept, using compatible technologies. We name this airspace vision the **Seamless European Sky**. The Seamless European Sky, as a concept, neither infringes on sovereignty nor precludes the number of ANSPs or their installations. It only demands efficient operations with respect to costs and the environment.

In a first step, implementing the Seamless European Sky will require an airspace re-design which is uniquely based on traffic demand and Europe-wide traffic flows. The European Commission's 2018 Airspace Architecture Study currently underway should provide tangible, initial recommendations.

Step one would address the existing delay situation by making air travel more efficient, and therefore more reliable for passengers – which furthermore benefits the environment in the form of fewer emissions.

A paradigm shift is required in the second step. The principle of how the aviation industry currently plans its operations needs to move toward a holistic, network driven approach that makes full use of the latest technologies: digitalization, virtualization and automation. This will ensure flexibility, predictability, greater efficiency, sustainability and even safer travels.

Step two ensures that the aviation industry is prepared to accommodate future growth in passenger numbers and cargo demand - thus providing the European travelling public with a safe, resilient and even more environmentally-friendly mode of transport for decades to come.

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Alongside this already evolving mindset among the wider aviation community, an evolution of the regulatory framework supporting these changes – namely the Single European Sky regulation – is required.

We are convinced that a collaborative approach can make things happen, but time is of the essence.