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INDUSTRY CONSULTATION BODY

**ICB position on the European Commission Communication on Functional Airspace
Blocks (FABs)**

This paper is the ICB's position on the European Commission Communication on Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs). This paper was approved at ICB/17 on 19th July 2007.

1 Purpose

This paper provides the ICB position on the EC Communication on FABs¹ and makes recommendations for actions on FABs. The position was approved at ICB/17 on 19 July 2007.

2 ICB comments

There is common agreement on the following points:

- The ICB welcomes the Commission Communication.
- The objective of the SES to enhance the global performance of the system is supported by the ICB.
- The Communication does not reflect the current state of FAB developments.
- Current FAB developments have come to represent a complex set of projects involving co-operation, infrastructure, staff, training etc. Other developments in cross-border co-operation and joint planning/training should be included in the Communication along with FAB developments.
- The Communication gives the message that unless clear implementation plans can be demonstrated by 2008, the Commission will take a top-down approach. This appears to focus the responsibility for progress on ANSPs, whereas in practice national regulatory issues have been a cause of delay.
- There are clear legal obligations on States. There is evidence that in some cases States are not discharging these obligations. Alignment is needed for all parties: States, NSAs and ANSPs.
- There is no common understanding of FABs. There is no common interpretation of the definition of a FAB. This creates different expectations of cost effectiveness.
- States and the Commission should be more active in taking measures to support the process of FAB development.
- FAB developments should investigate integration (airspace, service provision, governance, systems development, training, organisational development and regulatory). All scenarios should be studied.
- Full active involvement of users, as paying customers, is required in the development of FABs, together with staff participation as part of the Social Dialogue process with ANSPs management at national and multinational level.

3 Recommendations

The ICB makes the following recommendations:

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and The European Parliament, Building the Single European Sky through functional airspace blocks: A mid-term status report, Brussels, 15.03.2007, COM (2007) 101 final.

- The Commission should complement the Communication report to ensure a more balanced analysis of FAB developments. The promotion of short/medium term benefits should be encouraged so that political decision-makers and customers/users see the impact of the ongoing discussions.
- The Commission should facilitate the removal of obstacles to FAB development. It is hoped that, for each FAB development, the Commission would look at obstacles to development.
- States are invited to play an active role in the FAB implementation, since FABs have to be established by agreement of States; the regional cooperation between State authorities is also an important element of the implementation.
- A FAB implementation strategy is required for the SES to speed up the process. A political impulse is required to address timescales and lack of ambition, in order to ensure a better fulfilment of SES objectives.
- The Commission should develop common understanding/guidance material on liability and sovereignty.
- An EC initiative is needed on further civil/military cooperation.