

EUROPE'S AIRSPACE FAILURE - 5 BILLION EURO DAMAGE



The entire European airspace was supposed to be divided into nine large airspace blocks by the FABs, an essential step related to the located Single European Sky II (SES II). The member countries had eight years for this arrangement - however nothing happened except for mere statements of intent.

Since the beginning of December, there were supposed to be nine large Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) - however only two were actually realized. With a common protest note, the Association of European Airlines (AEA), the European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA), the European Regions Airline Association (ERA) and the International Air Carrier Association (IACA) as a result, sentenced the failure of the 27 EU member countries to carry out the agreed upon transposition of the Functional Airspace Blocks for December 4th, 2012.

The fragmentation of the European air traffic control costs the international aviation 5 billion Euros per year due to the inefficiency given thereby according to this protest note. In Europe, it is assumed that currently every flight is around 49km on average longer than necessary. Also, about 13 million tons of CO₂ are caused thereby which could be avoided with an efficient air traffic control. This figure corresponds to ca. 10 percent of the CO₂ emissions in the airspace of the EU.

"The present situation is scandalous" states the protest note. It's not enough to only establish Functional Airspace Blocks by name and not seize any concrete measures which yield more efficiency, a significant cost reduction and a noticeable relief for the environment. EU transportation commissioner Siim Kallas is being encouraged to put his threats, which were made at the EU summit in the middle of October in Cyprus, into action and to initiate infringement proceedings against defaulting member countries.

At the beginning of May 2011, Austria together with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have signed a treaty for the implementation of the Functional Airspace Blocks Central Europe (FAB Central Europe). It was praised as "a central milestone for the implementation of the Single European Sky". It wasn't implemented, in the sense of a common flight control, yet.

So far, only Denmark and Sweden (DK-SE FAB) as well as Great Britain and Ireland (UK-IE FAB) have organized their air surveillance anew. In default are - in addition to Austria with the FAB CE - also Bulgaria and Romania (Danube FAB), Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, France, Holland and Luxembourg (FAB Europe Central), Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta (Blue MED), Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania and Norway (NEFAB) as well as Portugal and Spain (South West FAB).

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