Baltic FAB start-up

- A joint initiative of the Lithuanian (vi "Oro Navigacija") and Polish (PANSA) providers of air navigation services.

On 19 November 2012, the President of PANSA Mr Krzysztof Banaszek and Director General of VI "Oro Navigacija" Mr Algimantas Raščius, signed the Cooperation Agreement of the Baltic FAB Air Navigation Service Providers.

Signing the agreement defining the terms of cooperation between Lithuanian and Polish air navigation services providers within the Baltic FAB, was possible on the basis of the State Agreement signed on 17 July 2012 in Vilnius between Poland and Lithuania. The State Agreement is currently in the process of ratification by the parliaments of both countries.

Baltic FAB initiative enables to achieve higher airspace capacity, improves air traffic management network performance and contributes to the shortening air routes leading to the reduction in aviation fuel use and emissions.

These objectives will be achieved while maintaining a high level of safety and by improving the cost-efficiency of both air navigation services providers.

The key to success of Baltic FAB is also foreseen in the cooperation with the neighbouring functional airspace blocks, as well as with the third countries.

Baltic FAB is also open to cooperate with countries that wish to join the initiative in the future.

**Functional Airspace Blocks are the way to increase the efficiency of air traffic operations in the European sky, divided by the national borders.**

Currently, the European Union’s airspace is constricted by the national borders which precludes the flights to take the direct route. European sky is now divided by the 27 national air traffic control systems and the services are provided by approximately 60 air traffic centres.

EU Member States are obliged to create FABs by 4 December 2012.

Mr Algimantas Raščius, Director General of VI "Oro Navigacija" stated, "The Agreements such as the signed Cooperation Agreement of the Baltic FAB Air Navigation Service Providers is a step towards the Single European Airspace."

"Only after the first period of Baltic FAB operation it will be possible to assess the real benefits of the initiative", said Mr Krzysztof Banaszek President of PANSA, who also expects an increase in the air traffic safety and airspace capacity as well as reduction of the air traffic management costs and emissions.


According to the new SES II legislative package Functional airspace block (FAB) is defined as follows: "A FAB means an airspace block based on operational requirements and established regardless of State boundaries, where the provision of air navigation services and related functions are performance-driven and optimized with a view to introducing, in each functional airspace block, enhanced cooperation among air navigation service providers or, where appropriate, an integrated provider."
The Polish-Lithuanian Baltic FAB initiative is based on the many years of close cooperation between the two countries. The program has been started in the year 2003, when the general Agreement on the Cooperation between the Polish Air Navigation Services Agency and the Oro Navigacija was signed. At first the strategic cooperation program was carried out by BANC (Baltic Air Navigation Services Commission).

Complying with the Member States obligation laid under the new SES II legislative package, Baltic FAB project is conducted in cooperation with the Polish and Lithuanian Ministries of Transport, the respective Civil Aviation Regulators as well as the Military Authorities of both countries. The Baltic FAB organisational structure was the subject to approval by the presidents of both ANSPs and performs all tasks in accordance with the schedule approved by the Polish - Lithuanian Strategic Committee.

The EU Member States are obliged to complete the FABs establishment process by 4 December 2012. As a result of long-term cooperation in the framework of the agreement signed in 2010, the following documents have been agreed:

- The first agreement, signed 17 July 2012, was the “Agreement on the Establishment of the Baltic Functional Airspace Block between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Lithuania”.
- The next step was signing of the “Cooperation agreement between the Polish Civil Aviation Office and the Civil Aviation Administration of Lithuania” (06 September 2012).

In order to enhance the current operational cooperation, on 19 November 2012 in Vilnius PANSA and ON signed the “Cooperation Agreement of the Baltic FAB Air Navigation Service Providers”.

The latest agreement, between the ANSPs, is aimed at fulfilling the obligations arising from a FAB initiative in order to achieve benefits for the airspace users as well as the passengers.

The signing of the Polish - Lithuanian “Agreement on the Establishment of the Baltic Functional Airspace Block between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Lithuania” was the start of a new phase in the implementation of the Baltic FAB. The Baltic FAB Council and the Board of the Baltic FAB, mentioned in the Agreement, are foreseen to work on the strategic development ad activities of the Baltic FAB. The Agreement is a next step towards the implementation of changes in the FAB governance structure. The committees designated to regulate the following issues are planned to be created: strategic management, financial and operational efficiency, operational and technical, airspace management and safety of air traffic.

Total Baltic FAB controlled airspace is 410 126 km²:
- Flight Information Region (FIR) Warszawa 334 000 km²,
- Flight Information Region (FIR) Vilnius 76 126 km².

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