



8-9 October 2007 | Paris, France | *FABs: what added value?*

# Joint Statement

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON  
FUNCTIONAL AIRSPACE BLOCKS

The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), as the recognised social partners respectively representing Air Traffic Management employers and employees within the European Social Dialogue, jointly organised a conference on Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) in Paris on 8 and 9 October 2007, with the support of the European Commission.

This was the second conference on FABs organised by CANSO and ETF. The first conference was held in Palermo, Sicily in 2004 following the publication of the Single European Sky Regulations. Following that conference, through a number of sub-groups and the support of the European Commission, the social partners delivered a "Report by the Social Dialogue ATM Work Group on the implications of FABs" in January 2007.

These conferences are integrated in a continuous process of the work of the ATM Social Dialogue working groups.

## 1. The objectives of the Paris conference

At the Paris conference the social partners:

- Further evaluated what was meant by the bottom-up approach as the path to the establishment of FABs, including benefits and risks
- Identified the challenges facing the ATM industry and considered, through the active participation of the conference delegates, the complexity of establishing FABs
- Exchanged views on FAB operational and technical issues.

## 2. Social partners are committed to SES and FABs.

The Social Partners through the ATM Social Dialogue Working Group (CANSO/ETF) will promptly identify and discuss the social consequences associated with these issues.

The social partners reaffirm their commitment to the Single European Sky and to the implementation of FABs through the bottom-up approach.

CANSO and ETF also reaffirm the primacy of safety in Air Traffic Management.

The social partners are satisfied that enhancement of ATM services can best be achieved through the bottom-up approach and through ongoing dialogue with all aviation stakeholders. Such an approach will add operational value and make ATM more efficient and cost-effective and sustainable for environment.

A successful bottom-up approach will only be achieved where stakeholders in all the different phases of FAB development play their full appropriate roles.

## 3. Full involvement of staff is a key to success.

It is recognised and accepted that the involvement of the staff representatives through Social Dialogue is necessary to the success of FABs

ANSPs know best how to work with their staff to achieve change to cope with predicted traffic growth. ATM personnel are key experts whose opinion is an integral element of FAB development.

Social Partners recognise that the establishment of a long-term reliable and stable relationship will enable consultation to take place in an atmosphere of trust.

Human Resources issues have to be included by social partners for analysis at an early stage in any FAB project at company/ national level and /or at FAB level.

## **4. The primary aim of a FAB is to increase overall ATM performance.**

Good performance is the result of good governance.

Performance is a balance between various objectives such as capacity, cost-effectiveness, flight-efficiency and environment.

Performance of the ATM system also requires a total network approach since airspace users, ANSPs and airports play an important role in a gate-to-gate perspective.

We need to acknowledge and promote the quick wins that ANSPs and their staff deliver on a day by day basis and agree that FABs can bring additional improvements over time. Quick wins should not detract from long-term goals.

## **5. Social partners will address fragmentation successfully**

The best way to reduce fragmentation is to improve cooperation and strengthen convergence.

Problems are complex, interrelated, have long lead times and involve all areas of the organizations, including public authorities. If changes are applied in a pragmatic cost effective way, benefits will come progressively, taking into account the life cycle of investment.

Measures to be taken in order to reduce fragmentation have to be based on a comprehensive cost benefit analysis, including social cost, showing clear added value.

Successful de-fragmentation will only be possible with the consensus of social partners.

## **6. The EC and States should facilitate the removal of obstacles to FAB developments**

Employers and employees cannot deliver if States and EC do not address the hurdles.

FAB implementation needs pro-active cooperation between States and ANSPs at a regional level. It is important that they share common objectives and develop a common vision agreed at a sufficiently high political level.

We call on EC to organize a conference involving States and social partners at the earliest opportunity to discuss FABs.

While the "Social Dialogue Work Groups Report" and the "High Level Group Report" identified institutional and legal hurdles to the creation of a FAB, there is no common understanding or definition of a FAB. This creates different understandings and expectations across States and ANSPs.

The European Commission must address these issues by developing appropriate guidance material by reference to the Social Partners' Report.

ETF and CANSO also call for States to ensure that departments of Defense are more involved in FAB developments.

## The Way Forward for a successful implementation of FABs

CANSO and ETF will continue to work together to ensure the successful implementation of Functional Airspace Blocks through the bottom-up approach. As social partners, we agree to:

Commit ourselves to the development of FABs for the delivery of a safer, more efficient, cost effective and environmentally aware service to all airspace users.

Put into place the appropriate tools to improve the atmosphere of trust between the ANSPs in order to make co-operation increasingly productive.

Involve staff and their representatives as social and technical experts in FABs including consultation at every stage.

Involve Trade Unions and/or staff representatives at national and multinational levels as an essential investment for the future.

The establishment of a long term reliable and stable relationship will enable consultation to take place in an atmosphere of trust. To this end the parties will therefore make every effort to implement best practice arrangements to ensure continuity and to maintain their representative status.

It is recognized that all issues regarding the formation of a FAB could be open for discussion in the appropriate forum. However both parties recognize that many issues are subject to consultation/negotiation within other ANSP fora e.g. terms and conditions of employment. It is also recognized that in some circumstances other European laws will apply.

Each year, at the last ATM social dialogue working group meeting, the social partners will assess the progress made by their members in order to achieve the above goals.

Moreover CANSO and ETF agree to:

- Consider airport capacity problems in any FAB project, carefully taking into consideration environmental objectives.
- Encourage States to ensure that National Supervisory Authorities are sufficiently developed to undertake their task and that they are properly funded and resourced.
- Urge States to clearly commit towards the implementation of FABs by removing identified institutional and legal hurdles.
- Support adequate EC actions that facilitate the removal of hurdles to FAB developments.
- Request EC to fully associate social partners in the consultation of the 2nd SES package.
- Work on a common input for the 2nd package.
- Strengthen the cross-border cooperation to address de-fragmentation.
- Engage with customers to better explain what is involved in the development of a FAB.
- Invite the EC to organise a conference with States and Social Partners to discuss the FAB implementation issues.

**CANSO - the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation** – is the global voice of the companies that provide air traffic control. Founded in 1998, it represents the interests of the Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) worldwide. The Mission of CANSO is to provide a global platform for customer and stakeholder driven civil Air Navigation Services (ANS), with paramount emphasis on the provision of safe, efficient and cost effective service. Currently, CANSO members control 60% of world airspace and over 80% of world air traffic.



**ETF - European Transport Workers' Association** – is a new pan-European trade union organisation which embraces transport trade unions from the European Union, the European Economic Area and Central and Eastern European countries. It was created at a founding congress in Brussels on 14-15 June 1999. The ETF has affiliated unions which organise workers in railways, road transport, maritime transport, ports and docks, inland navigation, civil aviation, fisheries and tourism services. The ETF represents more than 2.5 million workers from 40 European countries.

