

1 March 2022

Policy Statement

POLICY FOR ATS NETWORK INTERFACE WITH NEIGHBOURING STATES

1. Scope

1.1. Changes to the UK Air Traffic Service (ATS) network, which includes the network of routes and Free Route Airspace (FRA), should be undertaken in accordance with the provisions detailed in CAP1616 (Airspace Change Guidance), where the CAA undertakes a regulatory assessment of proposals for airspace change, including consideration of the factors set out in Section 70 of the Transport Act 2000. The purpose of this Policy Statement is to detail the policy that specifically relates to those aspects of UK airspace where they interface with neighbouring states.

2. Policy

2.1. ATS Network Interface Policy

2.1.1. ICAO Annex 11¹ recommends that “The delineation of airspace, wherein air traffic services are to be provided, should be related to the nature of the route structure and the need for efficient service rather than to national boundaries”. In meeting the intent of this recommendation, and as a member of the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL), the UK participates in the development of an effective design for European airspace through the European Route Network Improvement Plan (ERNIP).

2.1.2. Development of the ATS network in the UK will be informed by the ERNIP and undertaken in accordance with the policies and principles outlined in this Policy Statement and as detailed in the References where applicable.

2.2. Development of the ATS Network with Neighbouring States

2.2.1. The development of the ATS network should:

- a. Enhance, or at least maintain, safety.
- b. Be based on network-wide operational performance indicators and targets, including capacity and environment.
- c. Consider the European airspace as a continuum.

¹ ICAO Annex 11 to the Convention on International Aviation (Section 2.11.1).

- d. Be based on efficient airspace configurations that, to the maximum possible extent, consider Flexible Use of Airspace (FUA), provide flexible routing options, and match the demands of airspace users.
 - e. Be undertaken in accordance with a long-term vision that maintains consistency across the network.
 - f. Ensure a close relationship between airspace design, Airspace Management (ASM), and Air Traffic Flow and Capacity Management (ATFCM).
 - g. Be undertaken through a cooperative process with all operational stakeholders.
- 2.2.2. The provision of en-route ATS for the UK ATS network rests with NATS En-Route Ltd (NERL). Where the interfaces with adjacent states require adaptation, it is necessary for the change sponsor to develop arrangements in conjunction with the relevant Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) of the adjacent states. To assist in the strategic planning of such changes, Eurocontrol has established the Route Network Development Sub-Group (RNDSG) to support the Eurocontrol Network Operations (NetOps) Team.
- 2.2.3. Eurocontrol's mission as the Network Manager (NM) is to ensure an efficient, flexible and dynamic airspace structure. Maximising the capacity of the airspace requires coordination with participating states and operational stakeholders (civil and military airspace users, civil and military ANSPs, airport operators etc.). This coordination is in part achieved via the RNDSG.

2.3. International Responsibilities, Regulations and Harmonisation

- 2.3.1. The UK has multiple airspace interfaces with other states, with the majority occurring over the High Seas; as such it may be necessary to consider, as part of any proposed changes, the potential implications on the UK's or neighbouring state's responsibilities with regard to the ICAO Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) and any filed differences that may apply in sovereign airspace².
- 2.3.2. The UK remains closely harmonised with neighbouring states through the continued application of EU retained law in the field of aviation. Amendments to domestic aviation law will be considered as part of the [rule-making process](#). In part, this will be achieved by identifying areas where changes adopted in other regulatory frameworks (such as the US or the EU), would be of benefit to industry and safety.
- 2.3.3. From an operational perspective, one of the main methods for achieving an effective design for European airspace is through the ERNIP, which is a rolling development plan established by the NM in coordination with participating states and operational stakeholders.

² The rules applicable over the High Seas under the Chicago Convention are to be complied with by civil aircraft of Contracting States without possible deviations.

2.3.4. ERNIP is part of the Eurocontrol Network Operations Plan (NOP) and is made up of the following parts:

- a. ERNIP Framework Document.
- b. Part 1 – The European Airspace Design Methodology Guidelines – General Principles and Technical Specification for Airspace Design.
- c. Part 2 – ATS Route Network – Catalogue of Airspace Projects.
- d. Part 3 – ASM Guidance Material – ASM Handbook.
- e. Part 4 – Route Availability Document User Manual

2.3.5. Arrangements are in place between ICAO and NM for the update of the ICAO EUR Air Navigation Plan (ANP), based on the coordination undertaken within RNDSDG. For airspace changes located fully in the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) area, the data will be directly migrated to the ICAO EUR ANP. Where elements of airspace change are located outside the ECAC area, the data will be migrated to the ICAO EUR ANP after the completion of the required coordination process.

2.3.6. In addition, there are air traffic management (ATM) functionalities in the Pilot Common Project of the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) project, which may be relevant to UK airspace changes where the airspace interfaces with that of neighbouring European states. Certain stakeholders, such as ANSPs and airport operators, are required to deploy these ATM functionalities and implement the associated operational procedures by specified timeframes. Military stakeholders are required to deploy the ATM functionalities only to the extent necessary for effective airspace and air traffic flow management, and the safe and efficient use of airspace by all users, taking into account national security considerations.

2.4. Letters of Agreement (LOAs) and Delegated Provision of ATS

2.4.1. Any proposed development of the ATS network where it interfaces with adjacent states would likely result in the requirement to amend or create an LOA between the respective ANSPs. The LOA should follow the extant Eurocontrol Common LOA format (see reference G).

2.4.2. The establishment or modification of arrangements for the delegated provision of ATS requires CAA approval. ANSPs proposing such changes should be cognisant that adequate time will need to be allocated for such arrangements to be reviewed prior to any proposed implementation of changes.

3. Review of Policy

3.1. The CAA shall review this Policy Statement on a discretionary basis but not less than triennially from its publication date.

4. Enquiries

4.1. Enquiries concerning this Policy Statement should be addressed to the CAA at:

Airspace Regulation
Airspace, ATM & Aerodromes
Aviation House
Beehive Ring Road
Crawley
West Sussex RH6 0YR
E-mail: airspace@caa.co.uk

References

- A. [CAA CAP 493 – Manual of Air Traffic Services Part 1.](#)
- B. [CAA CAP 740 – UK Airspace Management Policy.](#)
- C. [CAA CAP 1054 – Aeronautical Information Management.](#)
- D. [CAA CAP 1616 – Airspace Change.](#)
- E. [CAA CAP 1711 – Airspace Modernisation Strategy.](#)
- F. [European Route Network Improvement Plan.](#)
- G. [Eurocontrol Common Format Letter of Agreement Between Air Traffic Services Units.](#)