

Northern European Air Navigation Service Providers take a historic step towards formal alliance

Friday 25th March 2011 - The Air Navigation Service Providers of Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Denmark, Ireland and UK have agreed to start the process of defining a formal ANSP alliance.

Over the next year, a new executive management team will prepare a framework of legal and financial agreements for specific joint ventures aimed at greater operational and cost efficiency across the whole airspace. The aim will be not only to improve flight efficiency and reduce environmental impact, but to reduce the cost of services and operational/technical infrastructure across the whole area.

An initial alliance structure, with the temporary name of Borealis, will be established by June 2011 with the appointment of an executive management team. They will develop candidate joint ventures and associated formal agreements to accelerate the benefits of closer harmonisation. Building on the progressive improvements in the region to date, these arrangements will be tailored to local needs whilst allowing faster deployment of changes where necessary.

This approach is reflected in the recent announcements where Norway, Finland, Estonia and Latvia, working closely with Iceland, have agreed to concentrate on gaining formal FAB status under the name NEFAB; whilst Denmark, Sweden, UK and Ireland have signed a MoU to explore specific efficiencies in their area, including possible integration of their existing FABs. A further MoU is under preparation to link these two FAB developments, harnessing the optimum benefits across the region whilst meeting the priorities of each with the possibility of full FAB integration in mind.

In a joint statement, the CEOs of the nine organisations said: "We have a great opportunity to carry forward our lessons from running the only two FABs currently recognised under SES and the experience gained by Sweden and Denmark in forming a joint company to manage their operations. We have identified exciting opportunities and practical ways to drive efficiency across our airspace, whilst drawing our three FABs closer to possible eventual integration.

"We are delighted to be able to enter into this progressive agreement. All of our members have achievements and capabilities to draw on as we drive to meet SES performance targets and the priorities of our different owners. It will take new levels of understanding and cooperation to avoid the pitfalls of diverse cultures, styles and business pressures.

"Although it seems that there are massive differences between the complexity and traffic density of central and northern Europe, the areas for cooperation and efficiency can easily cross ANSP and FAB boundaries. We will examine all opportunities to improve the air traffic management infrastructure across our whole area, including the strategically important interface between Europe and North Atlantic air traffic flows."