



# A network approach

As air traffic in Europe continues to grow, the industry is moving to adopt a pan-European strategy.

**The Wise Persons Group established by the European Commission's DG MOVE has published its recommendations for European ATM to deliver an improved performance and service while considering the continuous growth of air traffic.**

The report on the *Future of the Single European Sky* puts forward ten recommendations (see panel) which it believes "would enable additional ATM capacity in Europe to be provided in a flexible and scalable manner at a reasonable cost, delivering a more resilient ATM system, while most importantly continuing to ensure safety and security and meet environmental concerns".

## Top priority

The recommendations need to be seen in the context of the deliberations by the Wise Persons Group. Safety and security were understandably given top priority.

The Group noted the increasing importance of data and that ensuring cybersecurity and cyber resilience as the modernisation of the ATM system progresses is vital. Cyber functions should be addressed through a security-by-design approach,

with cybersecurity embedded in new technological solutions.

Environmental sustainability continues to be a major issue. Enabling airspace users to operate their preferred trajectories will directly contribute towards the environmental performance of the system. The Group believes "it is of the utmost importance that environmental considerations are given a high priority in considering the future SES framework".

One of the more complex discussion points was the scalability of the European ATM system. Capacity must meet demand, but the current system is inflexible, which limits the ability to change capacity at short notice.

Controllers need to be trained on specific sectors, for example, but the training can take too long. Airlines, meanwhile, can switch plans at short notice, giving the system an inherent unpredictability.

"If the capacity provided is too low, this results in delays. If capacity is too high, this results in higher costs," notes the report. Greater flexibility in capacity management is therefore essential. But greater predictability in demand would be a significant enabler in this respect and the report calls for a "strong

and clear commitment from the airlines to provide ANSPs better and more accurate information about the flights and routes they will operate".

New technologies will also help scalability. In its discussions, the Group supported the recommendations of the Airspace Architecture Study (AAS) carried out by the SESAR Joint Undertaking to accelerate the uptake of new technologies.

## Market approach

Simplification was another over-arching principle of the Group's deliberations. In regulatory terms, this means economic regulations should only be put in place where market incentives are insufficient to drive performance to acceptable service levels. The report notes that there have been promising results in such areas as digital towers, where services have been opened to competition.

Coupled with this, it is envisaged that the industry's digital transformation will inevitably lead to a more service-oriented and standardised approach.

In terms of institutions, the Group is advocating a clear distinction between the

delivery arm and the regulatory arm of the Single European Sky. Whatever institutional arrangements are set up, the report makes it clear that these should be permanent rather than temporary to ensure that sufficient resources and expertise are available.

Finally, a network-centric approach is crucial to meeting future demand. Only a fully integrated European network can improve the operational and environmental performance of European ATM for the benefit of all stakeholders, in particular the travelling public.

### Common vision

For its part, CANSO welcomes the themes identified in the report of the Wise Persons Group and agrees there are issues to be tackled in each theme to drive progress in modernising Europe's ATM system.

Nevertheless, on a number of the proposals, before CANSO can provide its view, further information and discussion is required to better understand the potential consequences. In particular, concerns exist on the need to preserve the role of the industry for the successful delivery of the Single European Sky.

CANSO is in full alignment with the network-centric idea. The CEOs of CANSO's 35 ANSP Members in Europe have unanimously

### SESAR Update

SESAR Deployment Manager (SESAR DM) will save 552,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030, the equivalent of planting one million trees.

SESAR DM's first 112 completed ATM projects across Europe will also save 12 million flight minutes by 2030, equating to €484 million in savings, and generating over €10 billion in performance benefits by 2030.

How SESAR DM develops is now being deliberated by the European Commission in light of the recommendations set out in the report of the Wise Person's Group.

agreed a common vision for ATM in Europe – *CANSO Europe 2035*.

CANSO Director Europe Affairs, Tanja Grobrotek, said: "The approach of ANSPs is evolving to become more customer-focused, operating successfully in a market-based environment, changing from a charging to a pricing regime, and to focus on the network rather than as individual network players. But we also need enabling policies from European policy makers to fully unleash the potential of an open system architecture, which is vital for the future of ATM."

A pan-European network must take precedence over the requirements or preferences of individual ANSPs or airspace users. The regulatory framework therefore needs to reflect the need to encourage a network-centric approach.

Speaking at the European Commission's first roundtable meeting on the future of the Single European Sky, Jan Klas, Chair of CANSO Europe said: "ANSPs need to be supported by a regulatory framework that provides the necessary autonomy and flexibility for ANSPs to take full advantage of this competitive environment and successfully deliver value to their customers."

"This new environment may also support technical and operational consolidation, where a positive business case exists. Equally, this needs to happen without preventing States from maintaining sovereignty over their own airspace." ➔

Read *CANSO Europe 2035 Vision: A forward-looking vision to improve airspace management* at [canso.org](https://canso.org)

## THE 10 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WISE PERSONS GROUP

- 1 Confirm and strengthen EUROCONTROL's Network Manager role by providing it with the necessary executive powers to manage the ATM network.
- 2 Fully integrate airports into the network on the basis of linking the Network Operations Plan and Airport Operation Plans, using extensive Collaborative Decision Making.
- 3 Implement a Digital European Sky based on an agreed roadmap building on the recommendations described in the Airspace Architecture Study, managed by the Infrastructure Manager, ensuring resilience of the system.
- 4 Create a new market for ATM data service providers as recommended by the Airspace Architecture Study.
- 5 Use the performance and charging scheme to support the digitisation of air traffic services, and public funding to support deployment only where necessary from a network perspective.
- 6 Facilitate the transition towards the Digital European Sky by reviewing current licensing and training requirements for ATCOs, with full involvement of staff representatives.
- 7 Simplify and strengthen economic regulation, while relying on a market-driven approach wherever possible.
- 8 Establish a strong, independent and technically competent economic regulator at European level.
- 9 Establish a Seamless European (Upper) Airspace System including a common route charge.
- 10 Encourage airports to procure tower services through competitive tender or contract, where operationally feasible and positively impacting users.