



NEWSLETTER BLUE MED

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Summary

1. A brief... foreword

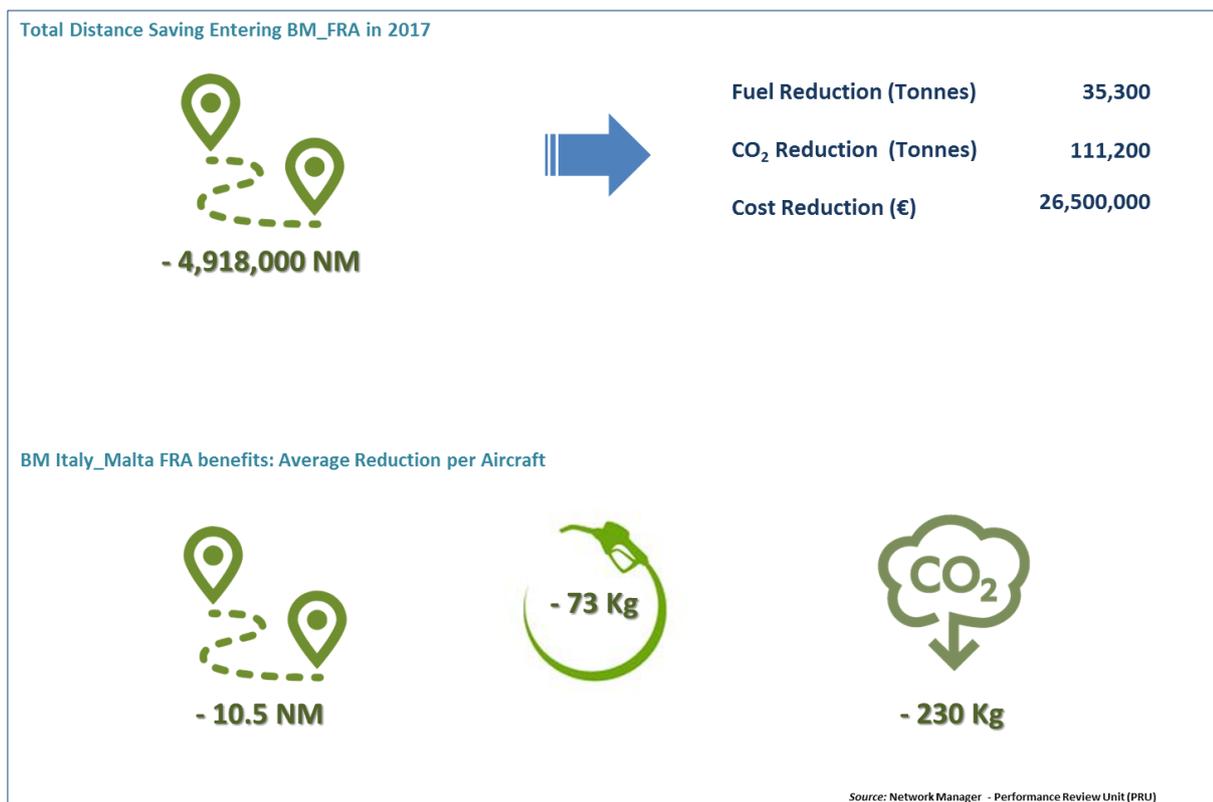
Dear friends, hi! It's been some time since our last communication so we would like to come back to you with our latest news on the BLUE MED FAB activities and progresses made so far, which we hope will be of interest to you! Enjoy...

2. Free Route implementation

The implementation of Free Route Airspace (FRA), in which aircraft can freely plan their optimum flight paths both horizontally and vertically, started in Dec. 2016, continues on!

Within the Italian and Maltese FRA, aircraft are allowed to fly their preferred trajectories between a defined entry and exit point across their respective FIRs, or to enter/leave the FRA by multiple Intermediate Navigation Points; FRA is available H24 for overflights, arriving and departing traffic.

The ex post analysis to evaluate the results in the Italian and Maltese FRA, for the entire 2017, fully met the expectations both in terms of fuel savings and lower CO₂ emissions.



The data above are really impressive: more than 4,900,000 NM reduction for the Planned Route of the AUs, corresponding to more than 35,000 tonnes of fuel saved and, for the environment's benefit, more than 110,000 tonnes less of CO₂ emissions in the atmosphere. From an economical point of view, more than €26 million were saved.

Such results encouraged the FRA project to lower the minimum flight level of the FRA: the coordinated lowering of Free Route Airspace from the actual 33,500 ft to FL 305 in the Italian and Maltese airspaces has been realized on MAY 24, 2018!

Last but not least, also Cyprus (DCAC) and Greece (HANSP) are steadily progressing towards the 'FRA goal' by implementing a new set of DCTs in close coordination with each other, as well as extending existing DCTs availability. It is very likely that the BLUE MED FAB as a whole will meet the implementation deadline set by the EC for full FRA (2022).

3. Flight Efficiency in 2017

Well, it really seems like the BLUE MED FAB is becoming more and more efficient! As a matter of fact, throughout all of 2017 the BLUE MED FAB has been continuously working on Flight Efficiency in order to maximize the improvements achieved mainly in the areas of en-route airspace design and Network availability.

The entire improvement made to the network, both for EnRoute and Terminal air traffic (for Arrivals/Departures to/from the Airports located within the BLUE MED area) was calculated to be over 1,400,000 NM of potential Route Length savings, corresponding to over 10,000 tons of fuel saved and a reduction of over 30,000 tons of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere.

The calculated total average saving is about 13,400 NM, corresponding to an average daily saving of about 75 kg of fuel and to about 235 Kg of CO₂ emissions reduction per aircraft in 2017.



4. Environment in 2017

In 2017, Cypriots, Greeks, Italians and Maltese Air Traffic Controllers guided 2,503,428 flights (+5.58 % compared to 2016) safely and punctually through the BLUE MED FAB airspace!

The growth is much higher if we examine what was totaled in 2012 compared to 2017, reaching 11.82%.



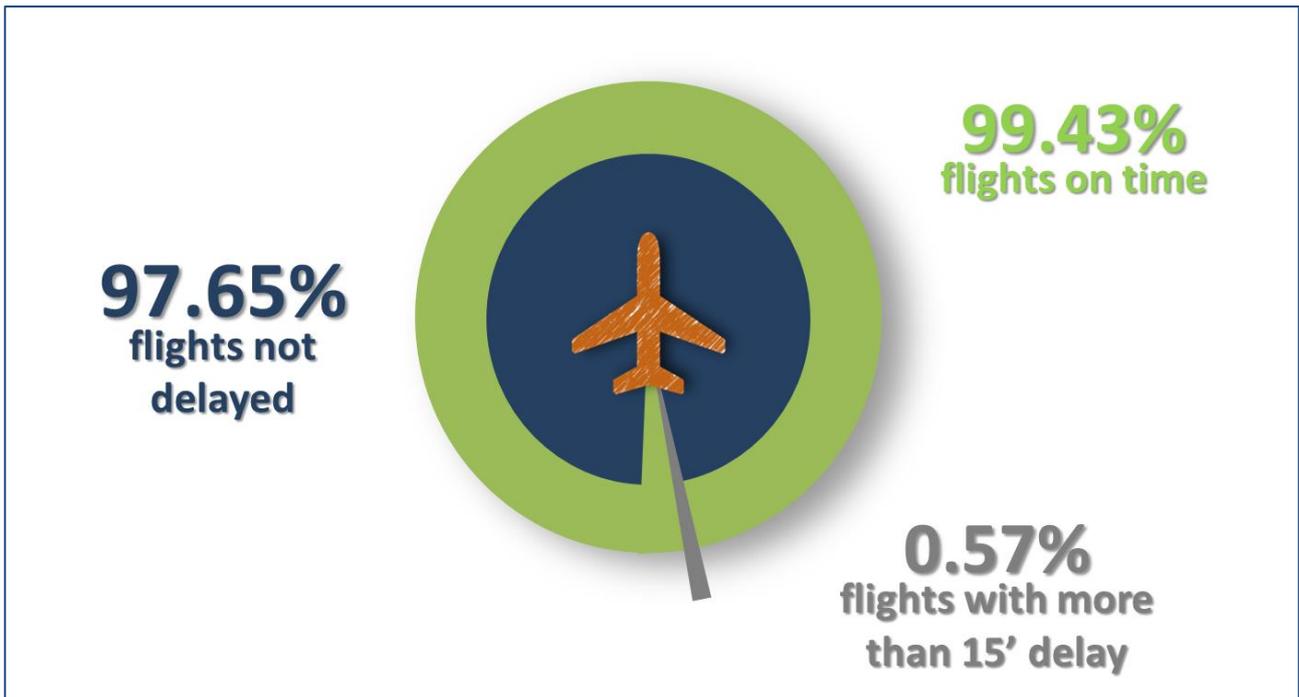
The bandwidth of air traffic growth for the BLUE MED FAB airspace varied between the 2.79% (Italy) and the 11.58% (Cyprus).

5. Punctuality in 2017

First of all, we can start by saying that, in 2017, 97.65% of the flights involved (overflying or landing/taking-off) the airports located within the BLUE MED FAB airspace have not been affected by ATFCM Regulations (and, therefore, did not suffer any resulting delays).

It is an important result, especially for the benefit of Airspace Users (AUs), as well as a real merit point for both the BLUE MED FAB ANSPs and Airport Operators: the four ANSPs have reconfigured their ACC sectorization according to the traffic flows forecasts for 2017; Airport Operators have made considerable efforts both for improving the operational management of aircraft movements on the ground and for adapting their ground structures to the needs of the AUs' planning activities.

The output was remarkable: only 0.57% of flights that affected the BLUE MED FAB airspace in 2017 (14,349 Flights in take-off, landing or overflight) were assigned an ATFCM delay exceeding 15 mins (source: EC-NM PRU Portal – DDR2).



6. Volatility

In this positive framework, however, the geopolitical situation over the BLUE MED area must be taken into account.

The specificity of the BLUE MED FAB was highlighted during our participation in the InterFAB panel “Volatility in ATM: Cases, challenges, solutions” on March 6, 2018, at the World ATM Congress in Madrid, together with experts from other six European FABs – BALTIC FAB, DANUBE FAB, FABCE, FABEC, SW FAB, as well as from the Performance Review Unit (PRU)/EUROCONTROL.

Joe Degiorgio (from MATS), speaker for the BLUE MED FAB, said:

‘Three geopolitical crises are affecting the BLUE MED airspace: the closure of Libyan airspace has led to a massive loss; the sanctions imposed by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia / Bahrain / UAE / Oman on Qatari-registered aircraft led to a huge shift of flights away from the Malta FIR; lastly, traffic circumnavigating the Ukraine has been shifted to the west.’

The case studies demonstrated the complexity and the multidimensionality of the issue of volatility in air traffic management (ATM). The underlying causes are varied: ranging from geopolitical conflicts – as in BLUE MED – but also the impact of climate change, new and diverging business models of airspace users up to tactical aspects, such as individual flight planning or unexpected and short-term changes of sector loads.

Participants agreed that volatility has evolved from an isolated phenomenon to one which is impacting the entire aviation system. The issue needs to be taken seriously and will require further analysis.

The scientific 'Volatility workshop' organised by Baltic FAB, FABEC and the German Aviation Research Society in Warsaw on May 15/16 was linked to this issue, and the BLUE MED FAB attended with representatives from Cyprus and Italy.

7. The BLUE MED FAB Annual Consultation Meetings

It was a beginning of May at full speed, for the BLUE MED FAB: on May 3 and 4, in Nicosia (Cyprus), the FAB opened its doors to the "Airspace Users meeting" and the "Social Dialogue meeting", edition 2018.

During the first session, the ANSP Committee (ANSPC) members updated the representatives of airlines operating in the functional airspace block on the new or ongoing implementations in the FAB and on the plans for the next two years.

The day after, a significant number of delegates from international trade unions organizations and professional staff associations (ATCEUC, ETF, IFATCA and IFATSEA) met with the ANSPC and the leaders of the 4 Working Groups (Operational, Technical, Safety and Human Resources): after an initial recap to resume the thread of the dialogue and after a *tour de table* dedicated to listening to social partners' questions and opinions, the four Working Groups' leaders presented the ongoing activities in their respective domains and the ones planned for 2018/2019. A few important actions were triggered and new follow-up meetings are expected to tackle them.

Undoubtedly, the BLUE MED FAB annual consultation meetings have been another step towards a more harmonious and efficient BLUE MED FAB.



A souvenir from Nicosia: the BLUE MED FAB Social Dialogue meeting's participants

8. BLUEGNSS

The BLUEGNSS project (Promoting EGNSS Operational Adoption in BLUEMED), which started on the 1st of January 2016 and was awarded EU funding in the framework of Horizon 2020 EU programme for research and innovation, is about to cross the finish line! It is (or shall we say, was?) one of the H2020-Galileo-2015-1 projects selected for co-financing by GSA (the European GNSS Agency). The consortium, led by ENAV, is composed of the BLUE MED FAB ANSP Partners - DCAC, HCAA and MATS - and IDS (Ingegneria dei Sistemi) which is the only industrial Partner.

The primary objective of the BLUEGNSS Project is to harmonize the implementation of PBN approach operations among the BLUE MED FAB States by using EGNSS (European GNSS infrastructure such as EGNOS and in future Galileo).

It is worth mentioning that this is the first time in Europe that an RNP APCH implementation project has been coordinated at FAB level. One of the advantages of such an approach is that States/ANSPs that don't have enough experience in RNP APCH operational implementation will receive benefits from this intra-FAB cross fertilization.

The project's final event will take place in Rome on the 18th of July and will be dedicated to presenting the achievements of the activities performed by the Project in the past 30 months and the experiences made by the people involved.

Don't be Blue...

We'll be back soon!