



## FAB CE Newsletter: Summer 2015

*Welcome to this new issue of the FAB Central Europe newsletter*



*The Functional Airspace Block - Central Europe (FAB CE) is one of nine Functional Airspace Blocks designed to simplify air traffic control for the sake of efficiency, cost-saving, safety, and harmonization.*

*We hope you find this newsletter useful and relevant. You may distribute it to anyone you think is interested. Please feel free to comment and offer your own contributions. You can also follow FAB CE at <http://www.fab-ce.eu/>*

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### Achievements of the last 12 months:



*Kornél Szepessy,  
CEO of  
Hungaro-  
Control*

Kornél Szepessy has overseen the start of several key initiatives for the region during his tenure as chair of the FAB CE CEO Committee. We have established a separate company called FAB CE Common Entity (FCE) that is responsible for the implementation of the FAB CE programme. "We have appointed a director, and we are about to make our first procurement with the selection of the Programme Support Office." The company may also target new activities such as smart procurement of infrastructure. Performance improvements supporting the delivery of air

traffic management services in a larger operating area can result in considerable savings.

Szepessy also commends the activities of the Social Dialogue, a forum which brings together different parties who play an active role in FAB CE operations. "The Social Dialogue helps to build bridges between the various parties. It is an important tool." There have been significant developments in this field as well in the past 12 months; the parties finalised the Social Dialogue Charter, the document that serves as a basis for the dialogue between the unions and ANSPs.

FAB CE has also been active to enhance InterFAB cooperation. Last year an agreement was signed between the members of Central-European FAB and BLUE MED FAB, with the goal of supporting the aviation developments of the SES II programme and implementation of even safer, more cost-effective, more performance-oriented and sustainable ATC.



## FAB CE establishes an independent common legal entity

The FAB CE formally set up a legal entity in October 2014, when the members established the joint venture company FAB CE Aviation Services. The FAB CE legal entity (FCE) is a limited company registered in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and is responsible for the support of the implementation of the FAB CE programme. It is only the second company in Europe after NUAC (Nordic Unified Air Traffic Control) to lead a functional airspace block, and includes by far the highest number of ANSPs. Kornél Szepessy, CEO Committee chair and HungaroControl CEO said: "Establishing the FCE is a major achievement and represents a lot of work by the ANSPs to get to this point. FCE may become a significant contributor in core areas of expertise in the SES programme."

The FCE comprises a general meeting, a supervisory board, a director, and a programme support office. Based on the proposal of the supervisory board, the general meeting appointed Matej Eljon as Director of FCE in May 2015 with responsibility for running the day to day business of the company. Eljon, who was previously head of CNS and ATM systems at Slovenia Control, was also appointed Programme Manager for FAB CE, tasked with programme planning and project management, a corner stone in the efficient realisation of FAB CE projects. One activity, the programme support office, is outsourced under an international tender that closed in May 2015. The winning bid is due to be announced in August 2015.

## FAB CE directors general of civil aviation approve the Performance Plan

FAB CE achieved a further milestone in May 2015 when the directors general of civil aviation from the six FAB CE states signed the official Performance Plan for the second SES Reference Period (RP2) 2015-2019. The plan sets national and common objectives for safety, environment, capacity, and cost efficiency. The operation of ANS services aligned to these performance plans contribute to reduced delays as well as to a decrease in fuel consumption and emissions. Zsolt Becsey, Hungary's Deputy Secretary of State for

Transport and FAB CE Council Chair commented: After two years' complex work, the FAB CE has produced a performance plan which is acceptable to the Commission and the Performance Review Board, and is in line with the charging and performance regulation. It demonstrates the willingness of FAB CE nations to cooperate. RP2 builds on the performance success during RP1 (2012 – 2014) when NSAs in each member state found targets were met in all three areas of environment, capacity, and cost efficiency.

Key Performance Area	RP2 target for FAB CE	FAB CE planned performance
<b>Safety</b>		
Efficiency of safety management	Safety culture – Level C All other areas – Level D	Level D for all areas
Use of RAT methodology	100%	100%
Just Culture	Must apply Just Culture	100% compliance
<b>Environment</b>		
Flight efficiency	2.6% of KEA value	1.99% of KEA value in 2015 1.81% of KEA value by 2019
<b>Capacity</b>		
Flight delay	0.3 minutes in 2015 0.29 minutes in 2019	0.29 minutes in 2015 0.27 minutes in 2019
<b>Cost efficiency</b>		
Aggregate DUC decrease	-3.3%	-3.22%
DUC in 2015	EU wide: EUR56.64	EUR46.95
DUC in 2019	EU wide: EUR49.10	EUR41.78

FAB CE now meets or exceeds RP2 targets except for marginal under performance in en route cost efficiency



## New FAB CE Chair, Dr. Franc Željko Županič, sets the agenda

*Dr. Franc Željko Županič, CEO Slovenia Control, was elected FAB CE chair at the 21st FAB CEO meeting in May 2015 for a period of 12 months.*

The state of play of FAB CE is promising in mid-2015, with some important milestones accomplished. The RPII Performance Plan with adequate targets submitted to the European Commission, FAB CE legal entity functioning, reorganisation of projects ongoing, trustful relations among partners... Regardless of those facts I, as the new CEO Committee Chairman, am aware, there is still a lot to be done.

The continuation and further development of safe and efficient provision of ATM services in the FAB CE region is of paramount importance, and, with ongoing disturbances in traffic flows in Europe, proper steps in this regard are even more necessary. On the service provision side we will strive to bring the needed capacity while meeting the targets promised in the performance plan. On the project and planning side, the focus will be on the OPS (operations) and TEC (technology) domains, where the FAB CE Free Route Airspace initiative with the needed CONOPS and ATM system requirements will be our main concern in the coming twelve months.



*Dr Franc Željko  
Županič CEOC  
Chair*

Areas of future cooperation are widening now the FAB CE legal entity is in existence, and I intend to promote further exploration of the potential provided by the new entity – FAB CE Aviation Services Ltd – in order to use this tool to the maximum extent possible. Continuation of the provision of the support to our governments in the infringement procedures (EU Pilot) in order to prove the compliance will remain our priority, as well as the Social Dialogue Forums, where the established processes need to continue in order to strengthen the bond with the social partners.

## The European Commission is monitoring FAB CE progress very closely

The European Commission issued letters of formal notice to all 28 European Union members about the length of time it is taking to create more efficient functional airspace blocks at the end of 2014. Under the leadership of new Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc, infringement proceedings have not been issued to FAB CE states; the Commission preferring to engage in more stringent monitoring of activities in order to encourage compliance with the obligations set out in the Single European Sky legislation. Each FAB CE EU member state sent a commonly

agreed official reply to Commissioner Bulc reflecting FAB CE results and steps taken towards FAB CE efficiency. The establishment of the FAB CE Common Entity has contributed to the Commission's more positive view of FAB CE development. This is aided by improved cooperation and dialogue between member states, indicating that the Commission's aims can be achieved within a reasonable time frame. The Commission remains committed to FABs, and member states can expect close scrutiny in the months ahead. Most attention will focus on implementation achievements.



## Director of the FAB CE Common Entity, Matej Eljon, explains the strategy ahead

*The FAB CE general meeting composed of FAB CE CEOs appointed Matej Eljon Director of the FAB Central Europe Common Entity and Programme Manager of the FAB CE Programme in May 2015. Matej Eljon's responsibilities include implementation of the FAB CE strategy, and oversight of the common FAB CE project management. Matej Eljon was formerly Head of CNS and ATM systems at Slovenia Control, where his work included planning and construction of the new ATC control centre at Ljubljana airport in 2013.*

### **What is the first priority of the FAB CE Common Entity (FCE)?**

If I have to summarise in a sentence the most important task facing the new company, it is to set up an appropriate and effective structure that will support the execution of the FAB CE Strategy. We have a strategy that is now accepted. We will have a high level plan very shortly, while the implementation plan will be finished in the Autumn.

### **How will you deliver the Strategy?**

I am a single person company, and I cannot do this alone. We are about to appoint a Programme Support Office, an independent company selected from several international bids to carry out the role of supporting the common entity. Comprised of qualified staff, the PSO will enable the FCE to focus on areas of common interest, and provide the structure to deliver them. The aim is to focus on areas where everyone benefits.

The FAB CE Strategy identifies 15 objectives which are grouped into six target areas aligned with SESAR concepts. Work has started on drawing up a concrete plan of what we want to deliver, when it needs to be delivered, and by whom. This was initiated by my predecessor Ivan Hubert.

The high level plan, which details the main projects and timeline, is almost complete and I expect CEO Committee to endorse this over the Summer. Then there is a more detailed



*Matej Eljon  
Director of the  
FAB CE  
Common  
Entity*

implementation plan, which is the main driver for the projects. This work is carried out by subcommittee planning groups in each of the target areas. There is tight cooperation between the sub committees, and with management, who have to fit the plan into their own strategy. In this way, FABCE sub committees prepare the strategy which will be executed in the projects. It is like a factory that produces what the sub committees have prepared. The implementation plan should be ready to endorse by the Steering Committee and CEO Committee in the Autumn.





## What challenges do you face?

What members have to realise is they need to lend resources to the FAB CE environment in order to deliver the goals. The projects we are doing in the FAB have to be implemented anyway. The ANSPs have to be more efficient, have to be safe, have to provide the right capacity, and fulfil the environmental targets anyway. Seven states together will achieve these goals more easily.

For example, if you plan a technical system, there could be a common smart procurement rather than incurring costs by every member. If the ANSPs buy the same system to meet a European regulation such as data link services, one tender is cheaper than seven.

There are many examples where we can see the common legal entity as important. It is a great opportunity to have this part established. This is a tool for us and we should not miss this opportunity.

## What is your first action?

Over the coming weeks and months, I intend to visit all the ANSPs to sit down and discuss their expectations. Then I will make a harmonised plan to take us forward and provide the project organisation to support it. I intend to adapt the project structure to better suit FAB CE Strategy and areas of common interest. Our focus will be on the areas where everyone can benefit.

## FAB CE strategy and high level roadmap

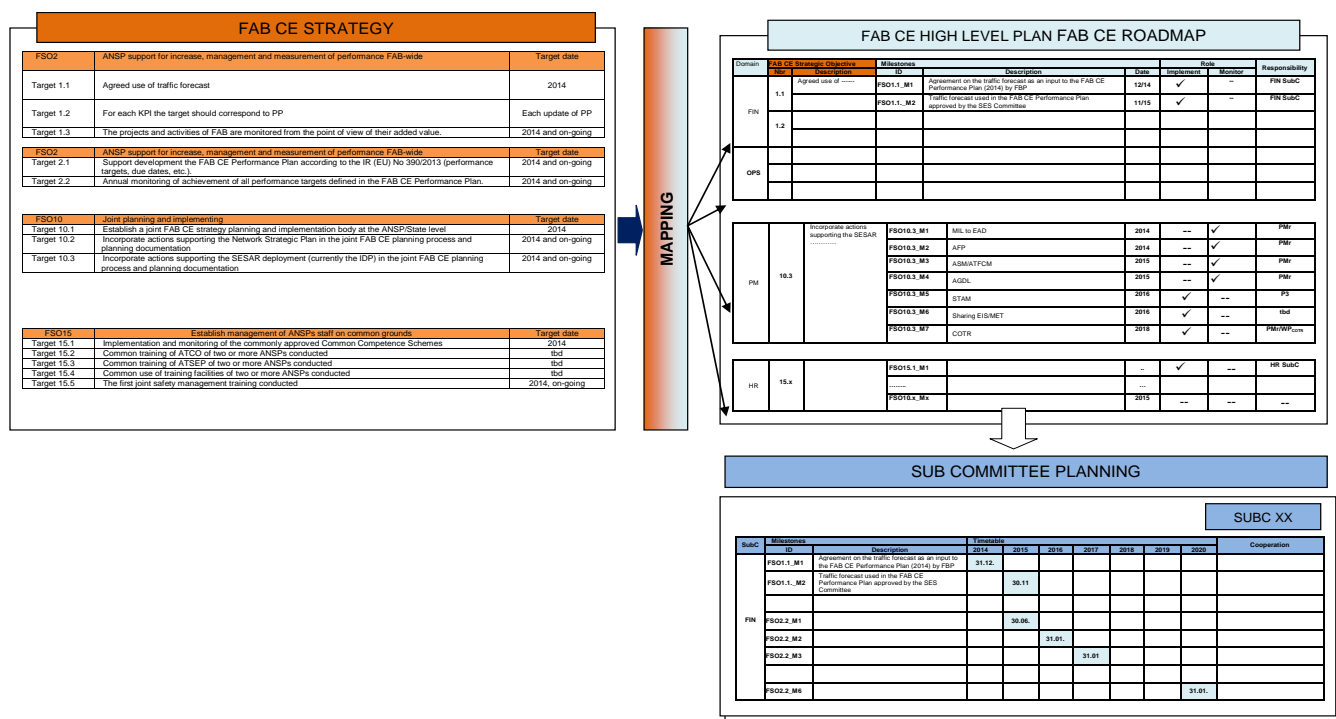


Figure 3-1 From the FAB CE Strategy to the High Level Plan



## FAB CE Programme developments during 2014-2015

Former FAB CE Program Manager, Ivan Hubert, reports several developments which signal harmonised operations between member states. Among these, the Flight Message Transfer Protocol (FMTP), a communication protocol which uses standard network technologies (TCP/IP), is now deployed at the majority of area control centres in compliance with EU regulations for flight data exchange. FMTP is in operation at Vienna, Budapest, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, providing enhanced data exchange between neighbouring ANSPs. This is a first step towards wider implementation of the Pan-European communication network (PENS), which is being rolled out jointly by EUROCONTROL and European ANSPs to meet existing and future ground communication requirements.

FAB CE member states have also established a dedicated backbone communication network, as a result of the collective Regional Communications Infrastructure project.

Hubert also commends the widespread deployment of the common approach to Aircraft Identification (ACID) by member states. This complies with the European Commission Regulation to progressively phase out classical and monopulse secondary surveillance returns resulting in more efficient



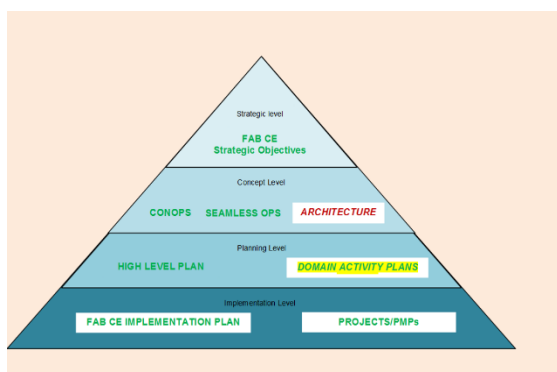
*Former FAB CE Program Manager, Ivan Hubert*

identification data in terms of transponder occupancy and RF spectrum. These projects reflect a willingness on the part of the team members to support the program objectives.

“No ANSP is considered today as a stand-alone organization. We are all involved in bi or multilateral activities. ANSPs should seek for synergies through cooperation. I see a potential for the successful implementation of challenging and beneficial projects, one being Free Route Airspace implementation, which should be a priority for the coming years.”

**“No ANSP is considered today as a stand-alone organization”**

Hubert says the general FAB is now established, and the basic framework and the necessary tools to continue its implementation as well as its further development are in place in order to prepare for the next reference period. “We have developed the set of planning documents at State level, we produced general planning documents for the sub committees, and we have available the draft of the implementation plan.”





## Social partners exchange ideas at Social Dialogue Forum

Regular meetings between FAB CE partners take place within the framework of the common Social Dialogue Charter, a platform set up to inform and consult FAB CE ANSPs employees in compliance with European Law. The latest FAB CE Social Dialogue Forum, held at HungaroControl in Budapest in May 2015, brought together operational experts, union representatives, and ANSP senior executives to discuss strategic developments.

Co-chair of the Forum, Kornél Szepessy, CEO of HungaroControl, called the social dialogue an important tool: “The Social Dialogue allows us to build bridges and allows the transparent flow of information.” Sharing the role of chairman, Zeljko Oreski, head of the Croatian Air Traffic Controllers’ Association, said the meeting generated feedback in a number of areas including safety measurement, promotion of Just Culture, and the latest European Commission requirements relating to air traffic controllers’ licences.

More than 40 participants included representatives from the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers (IFATCA) and various air traffic controllers’ unions alliances (DATCU, Adria Alliance). An exchange of views on the draft position paper on ATCO mobility concluded that once a unified Union position had been reached, this would then be ratified by the CEO Committee, with approval a possibility in the Summer.

Attendees welcomed conclusion of the performance plan for the second reference period (2014-2019). FAB CE capacity targets now meet those referenced by the Network Manager, and take account of diversions due to airspace closure in Ukraine and some states in the Middle East.



*Left to right: Zoran Jaksic, HR subcommittee; Matej Eljon, FCE Director; and co-chairs Zeljko Oreski and Kornél Szepessy*

István Temesi, Deputy Head of Hungary’s National Supervisory Body, said FAB CE is in a good position to deliver on capacity. “After two years’ work, FAB CE produced a performance plan in line with Performance Review Board requirements. We should be proud of this achievement which shows the willingness of FAB CE nations to cooperate.”

A great deal of discussion centred around safety, with the Danube ATCU calling for a common FAB CE approach for Just Culture guidelines. Union representatives also recommended the harmonisation of the quantitative Safety Indicators. Safety targets are included in RP2 at national level for the first time and include effective safety management, just culture, and risk assessment tools methodology.

The meeting concluded with a presentation from the Human Resources subcommittee on new controller licences and training requirements due to come into force by the end of 2015, or by the end of 2016 under special derogation. The subsequent open discussion supported the sharing of best practice by FAB CE member states.



## Free Route Airspace introduced by FAB CE member states

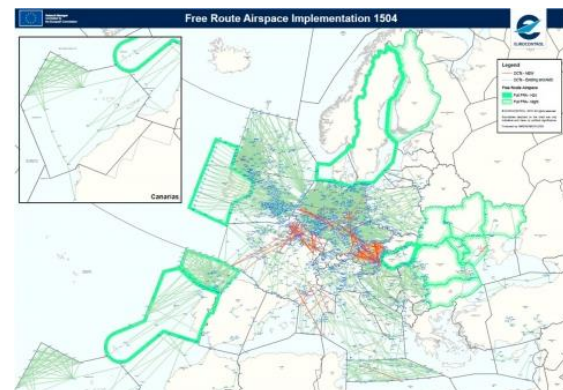
FAB CE member states have started to introduce Free Route airspace in accordance with the EC Regulation 716/2014 which requires its implementation in upper airspace by 2022. Free Routes enable airspace users to plan a route between defined entry and exit points without reference to the ATS route network.

In April 2015, three flight information regions (FIRs) of Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Belgrade implemented the South-East Axis Free Route Airspace above flight level 325 at night. The four states of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro worked with the Network Manager over the previous 12 months to develop the airspace design procedures and to validate the concept. It is expected that 24 hour operations will begin after the summer season 2016.

The project is particularly significant in that it provides cross-border Free Route Airspace, enabling airspace users to plan efficient flight paths irrespective of national boundaries. While nearly half of Europe's area control centres have fully or partially implemented Free Route Airspace to date, its cross-border

implementation remains limited. The South-East Axis follows examples such as Sweden-Denmark cross-border Free Route Airspace, UK-Ireland, Spain-Portugal, and the member states of FAB Europe Central.

Razvan Bucuroiu, Eurocontrol Head of Network Strategy and Development said: "Europe is the first region in the world where Free Route operations' implementation has begun. The Network Manager – in partnership with all the European air navigation service providers and the airspace users - has made strides in refining this solution for an efficient European network and, in doing so, comes closer to achieving the challenging RP2 performance targets."



## HungaroControl abolishes fixed flight route network

Hungary became the first European state to replace its entire fixed route network with Free Route Airspace at the start of 2015. The Hungarian Free Route Airspace (HUFRA) concept is estimated to save airspace users 1.5 million km annually, reducing fuel use and emissions. The introduction of HUFRA was preceded by a series of tests over several weeks in HungaroControl's Centre of Research, Development and Simulation CRDS, and approved by airlines using Hungarian airspace. The significance of the concept is that it will feature no time or space limits. HUFRA not only offers benefits to airspace users but it also

optimises airspace capacity and reduces the load on air traffic controllers. This way it indirectly contributes to a further increase in flight safety. Kornél Szepessy, CEO of HungaroControl said: "The solution is regarded by Eurocontrol experts and our FAB CE partners as an example to follow. We are already conducting negotiations with the management of the Austrian, Croatian and Slovenian air navigation services on how to establish the technical and cooperative conditions for cross-border Free Route operations." HungaroControl also plans to cooperate with ANSPs in adjacent FABs.



## Developing a common approach to unplanned traffic growth

*The FAB CE Operations Sub Committee examines the impact of regional crises*

A review by the FAB CE OPS Sub Committee into sudden heavy increases of traffic identified a range of different results across FAB CE member states. The closure of some parts of the airspace over Ukraine in 2014, in addition to prolonged fighting in Syria and Iraq, caused European flights to/from the Middle East and Asia Pacific to divert from the standard or shortest routes. The most frequented diversion routes overfly a number of FAB CE states, Iran, and northern Turkey.

Jozsef Bakos, HungaroControl Head of ATM, told delegates attending the Social Dialogue Forum in May 2015: "The traffic variation differs within the FAB CE. For example, Zagreb experienced 5.8% traffic increase, Bratislava 10%, and Hungary 12%." He said while staffing and sectorisation can help address a sudden increase, it is important to think at network level. "This must be common for everyone within the ANSPs."

The closure of Crimean airspace (Simferopol) in April 2014, followed by closure of the eastern border of Ukraine (Dnepropetrovsk) following the MH17 accident in July 2014 resulted in airspace users eventually choosing to bi-pass the whole Ukrainian airspace. As a consequence, adjacent states Bulgaria and Romania saw overflights rise by 24.8% and 16.9% respectively, and while Hungary and Slovakia experienced double digit growth. In addition to east-west route diversions, flights to/from Russia to holiday destinations such as Turkey and Egypt were also re-routed through Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary.

Eurocontrol expects the new routing patterns to remain in place during the medium term with only minor adjustments, for example, slower growth in Russian traffic due to this nation's economic slowdown.

### **Additional overflights handled by Eurocontrol states as result of crises in Ukraine and Middle East**

Area centre	Overflights 2014	Change over 2013	Total en route delay (mins)	% total ECAC
Zagreb, Croatia	494,627	5.8%	162,768	2.8%
Budapest, Hungary	640,176	12.0%	1,179	0.0%
Ljubljana, Slovenia	271,241	5.7%	777	0.0%
Prague, Czech	674,917	2.5%	7,693	0.1%
Vienna, Austria	750,708	7.3%	19,509	0.3%
Bratislava, Slovakia	423,740	10.0%	60,660	1.0%
Sofia, Bulgaria	664,890	24.8%	0	0.0%
Bucharest, Romania	590,050	16.9%	0	0.0%
Beograd, Serbia	544 122	7.0%	2,196	0.0%

Source: FAB CE Ops Sub Committee



## Capacity increase

HungaroControl had completed a major modernisation programme just prior to the start of the crises in the Ukraine and Syria in 2014. Recent investment in the MATIAS advanced automation system at the new area control centre in Budapest had delivered enhanced safety and capacity as part of the ANSPs ongoing investment programme. HungaroControl, with the help of Eurocontrol Network manager, ran a capacity study at the start of 2014 which identified the additional capacity available. The ANSP discussed the outcome with union representatives before raising capacity by an additional 10 per cent per hour. It was this development that helped HungaroControl to safely manage double digit traffic expansion during 2014.

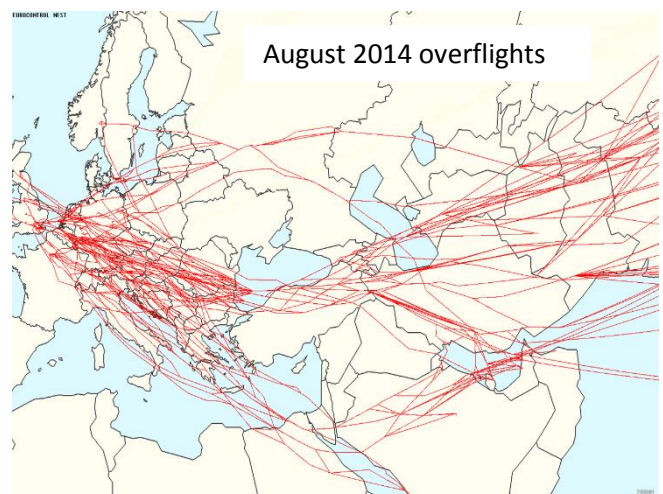
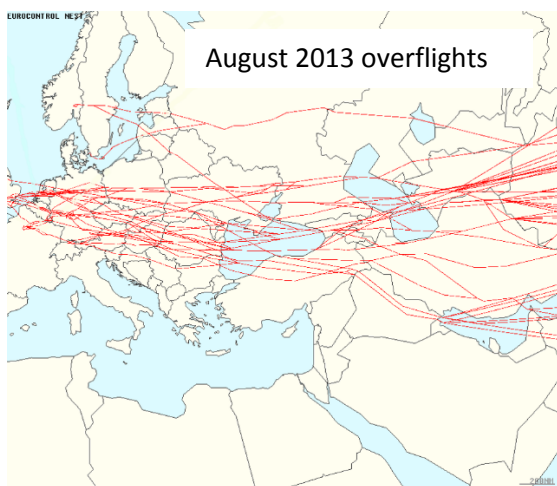
According to Jozsef Bakos, the FAB CE Ops Subcommittee identifies three different types of crisis. The first is triggered by a sudden system failure, or short term airspace closure. This prompts an immediate response from neighbouring ANSPs to accommodate the additional traffic re-routed around the closed airspace. The event is usually resolved within an hour or two and draws on national contingency plans and close cooperation between individual ANSPs.

A second type of crisis may last for a number of days and can be caused by industrial action. The FAB CE member states have agreed to manage this scenario from a network perspective, maintaining traffic flow within the FAB CE area and offering a solution based on the best route network.

The third, and most challenging, disruption is the long term event, such as the Ukraine crisis and disruption in the Middle East which can continue for months or even years. In this situation, FAB CE states recognise the need to work closely with the Network Manager in order to deliver the optimum solution to maintain normal levels of safety and capacity at network level.

This represents a shift in thinking among ANSPs. While the process starts at national level, ANSPs also need to take into account the impact any changes will have on the route structure across the FAB as a whole. It is therefore important that any measures taken by member states also take into consideration the objectives of the wider network. This requires regular communication with the Network Manager and an understanding of the issues that affect traffic flow across Europe.

## **Re-routings for overflights to/from Europe and the Middle East and Asia Pacific**



Source: Eurocontrol STATFOR 7-year forecast