

Budapest, 2 December, 2015

Short Text Messages in Air Traffic Control

A new communication channel, CPDLC (Controller Pilot Data Link Communication) ensures a digital connection between air traffic controllers and pilots in the Hungarian airspace.

As one of its major technology development projects, HungaroControl upgraded MATIAS (Magyar Automated and Integrated Air Traffic Control System), its state-of-the-art air navigation system. As part of this upgrade, the CPDLC feature went live at the end of November 2015, following nearly six months of testing, approximately three years ahead of the deadline set by the European Union.

Beside voice communication currently used between pilots and air traffic controllers, CPDLC enables data interchange in the form of text messages.

"The objective of this development is to further improve flight safety and increase the capacity of Hungarian airspace by optimising the use of radio frequencies, which are becoming more and more congested due to the increase of air traffic." – Mr Barnabás Kiss, HungaroControl's Chief Technology Officer stated of the new service feature.

By using CPDLC, routine tasks will be faster, and the load on radio frequencies may be relieved, reducing congestion on voice communication channels. With the help of datalink communication, misunderstandings due to radio interference and fatigue-related mistakes can be ruled out, thus flight safety will be further improved.

Thanks to the introduction of CPDLC, information exchange may become faster than during normal voice communication, and air traffic controllers will be able to communicate with several pilots at the same time, which may significantly increase the capacity of the Hungarian airspace.

The go-live date was scheduled for November on purpose: the coming months are meant to leave air traffic controllers sufficient time to hone their CPDLC skills before the busy summer season in 2016.

HungaroControl's development was realised as part of the MATIAS Build 10.1 project with the co-financing of the EU's Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

Experience of Hungarian air traffic controllers may contribute to the safe introduction of CPDLC across Europe, and may further strengthen HungaroControl's favourable reputation the company has built thanks to its introduction of services and tools well before mandatory EU deadlines.

About HungaroControl

Due to its state-of-the-art technology and developments and services, HungaroControl Magyar Légiforgalmi Szolgálat Zrt is one of the renowned service providers in international aviation, and an active regional initiator and co-operating partner of the European Union's integration efforts under the Single European Sky.

According to EUROCONTROL's statistical data and forecasts, the number of flights in Europe is 10 million per annum, and in the next 20 years this figure may even double. During the past few years HungaroControl has launched several significant projects to improve its air navigation services, guarantee the safe management of the increasing air traffic, and promote the imminent success of the integration undertaken by the European Union.

Due to its continuous innovation and the application of the results of its research and development, HungaroControl has an outstanding role in Europe in flight safety improvements, capacity increases, reduction of airline costs and increased environmental protection. As a result of combined efforts and on commission from NATO, since 3 April 2014, HungaroControl has been managing civilian air traffic overflights in the upper airspace over Kosovo. In February 2015 HungaroControl was the first to adopt Free Route Airspace use without any limitations in Hungary's entire airspace, well before the deadline (1 January 2022) set by the European Commission.

In addition to improving its traditional air navigation services and technical and technological background, one of HungaroControl's strategic objectives is the establishment of a regional, Central European air navigation knowledge centre in joint effort with its partners.

The purpose of HungaroControl's capital investment projects is to enable the Central European Functional Airspace Block (FAB CE), a regional co-operation of seven Central European countries, to provide competitive services and operate at the highest technical and technological standard.

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