

REGIONAL AIRLINE NETWORK (RAN) IN SEE

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Following the initiative of the European Commission and the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe to create a seamless air space in SEE under an extension of the EU Single Sky program, the BAC for SEE suggests the introduction of an initiative for a regional airline network (RAN), in order to cope with the specific conditions prevailing in the region.

THE SCOPE OF THE INITIATIVE ON A REGIONAL AIRLINE NETWORK (RAN)

The purpose of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) for Stability Pact (SP) and South East European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) is to enhance regional stability through the development of economic and environmental co-operation throughout the region, in particular by involving the private sector in these activities. One key element for building business confidence is a framework for resolving any obstacle and improvement of commercial environment.

The European Commission and the Stability Pact for SEE have launched a **major initiative to create a seamless air space region in South-east EUROPE**. The initiative is strongly supported by Eurocontrol and would be implemented **under an extension of the European Union Single Sky (SES) program**.

Within the framework of this initiative, **BAC suggests to implement an initiative** on a view of fostering independent, neutral, and efficient solution **for a Regional Airline Network as well**, in order to cope with the specific conditions prevailing in the region.

THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED

The initiative should involve all SP & SECI Participating and Supporting States. Some of them have already ratified the **European Open Sky Policy (EOSP)** and updated bilateral aviation agreements in light with EU recommendation. They also have adopted a wide range of legal instruments at the national, international and institutional level. This means a major step towards harmonisation of the existing procedures in the region, of which major problem today are the existing bilateral agreements and non compliance of certain countries with EOSP.

SP & SECI INITIATIVE ON A REGIONAL AIRLINE NETWORK

The BAC suggests and recommends the establishment of a SP & SECI Regional Airline Network Experts Group (henceforth “RAN Experts”) linked to and directed by the SP & SECI Co-ordinator's Office.

The task of the RAN Experts will be to enhance and promote the adoption of modified EOSP in the region, i.e. a **SEE Regional Open Sky Policy (SEE ROSP)**, by providing information, assistance through networking, documentation and logistical support. One very useful aim shall be the intervention and promotion of the information found in country reports related to business development obstacles, such as those in reference to facilitation of air movement of people & goods.

REGIONAL AIRLINE NETWORK

Participating states should be encouraged to adopt RAN in view of ROSP, as a **tool which guarantees a swift and efficient solution of movement of people and goods**, therefore contributing to the improvement of European free trade initiative business climate in the Participating and Supporting States.

LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE REGION

It is important to provide for recommended lists of qualified commercial aviation experts from both services and industries. Furthermore, the element of networking local experts, users and operators is of utmost importance. This will be accompanied by internships and exchanges of information and experience, in order to identify and implement best practices.

EXISTING REGIONAL AIRLINE NETWORK NORMS AND PROCEDURES

The countries operating within bilateral agreements should be free to choose and use assistance and recommendation from RAN Experts. Upon the choice of SEE countries will clearly see the benefits of open sky if not; solutions of bilateral versus ROSP may be settled through mediation headed by ROSP Experts Group. The ROSP initiative should be implemented fully relying on existing EOSP resolution norms and institutions, which have been established at the national and/or international level, such as EU Commission's policy, European organizations specialized for air traffic: ECAC, Eurocontrol, JAA, participants from the airline industry and other interested parties.

Political barriers versus economic interests on costs and fees of a RAN: As far as the **costs and fees** are concerned, it is recommended to work towards a unification and implementation of ROSP for RAN.

Improving the Regional Airline Network Environment: The Expert Group should develop recommendations and recommended guidelines related to ROSP solution for use in the SEE region.

Recognition and Enforcement: The importance of recognition and enforcement in the framework of a reliable and business friendly commercial RAN system is fully recognised. The expert group should elaborate proposals for further developing the recognition and enforcement legislation and procedures in the Participating and Supporting States.

EXPERT GROUP & TASK TEAMS

Task Teams dealing with the following issues should be established within the Expert Group:

- establishment of the Commercial RAN Interest Group;
- promotion of EOSP & ROSP in the Region;
- recognition and Enforcement Issues;
- identification of and Recommendations for Best Practices;
- operational and implementation matters