

The international dimension of the Single European Sky (SES)



The liberalisation of traffic currently being undertaken between the European Union (EU) and third countries agreements is leading to significant traffic growth to and from the EU. The European Commission (EC) is implementing an overarching policy by which all aspects of air transport (safety, security, air traffic management, environment) have to be included in the agreements with third countries in order to ensure the highest safety levels, equal opportunities and a high degree of legislative convergence.

Another essential dimension by which EU neighbouring areas shall be associated to SES is to ensure interoperability between the future EU air traffic management (ATM) systems, equipment and procedures and those of the EU neighbouring countries.

Particular to ATM, this approach is reinforced by the idea that it is highly desirable that neighbouring countries to the EU implement to the extent possible the same set of rules in order to ensure an expedient, reliable and smooth transfer of air traffic between the EU and these neighbouring regions.

How to build-up the SES external dimension?

The EU is using both multilateral and bilateral agreements for such purpose.

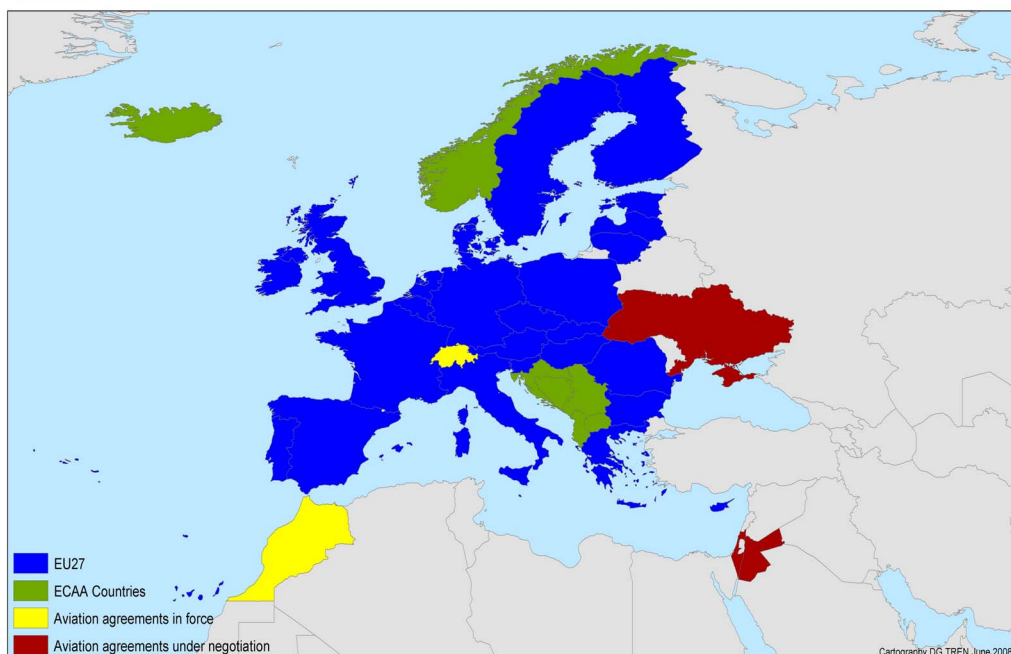
1- The **European Common Aviation Area (ECAA)** is a multilateral agreement signed in December 2005 by the Community and 9 partners (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, United Nations Mission in Kosovo) expressly designed as an open framework accessible for European countries that wish to fully integrate into the European aviation family and to fit into the Neighbourhood Policy of the EC. The ECAA commits all the ECAA partners to continue harmonising with EU legislation, which should result in equal high standards in term of safety, security and ATM rules as well as fair competition across Europe.

2- **Bilateral agreements** have been signed with Switzerland (1999) and Morocco (2006).

All in all **there are currently 38 States belonging to SES** (the 27 EU Member States, plus 9 ECAA partners, plus Switzerland and Morocco).



Single European Sky Pan-European Dimension



Ongoing activities

The EC continues to negotiate comprehensive aviation agreements with neighbouring countries. One of the areas of concern is the Mediterranean where negotiations are ongoing with Jordan and Lebanon and likely to be initiated soon with Egypt. With the purpose of consolidating regulatory convergence on both sides of the Mediterranean, the EC has launched the **EuroMed** Aviation project that will allow by 2010 to design specific twinning projects to accelerate such a regulatory convergence.



Another of the neighbouring regions where the EC is acting is the South-East Europe, where the **ISIS** (Implementation of Single European Sky in South East Europe) initiative has been launched by all the States and organisations involved in this geographical area with the intention to help the interconnection between national air navigation network infrastructures and services and to align rules and standards with SES Regulations.

Finally, the EC is present as an observer in different **ICAO** (International Civil Aviation Organization) forums. It participates as an observer in the European Air Navigation Planning Group and coordinates several joint actions with ICAO European Regional Office, and supports and participates actively on ATM initiatives organised in the framework of the ICAO Assembly. Given the progressive extension of the SES rules towards a Pan-European regulatory area, we may expect further cooperation in the near future with the relevant bodies and forums of ICAO.