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When replying please quote

Reference : EUR/NAT 20-0187.TEC (NAE/SUL)

26 March 2020

Subject : **Temporary accommodation measures due to COVID-19 for non-NAT DLM compliant aircraft in the NAT airspace**

Dear Madam/Sir,

1. The deepening COVID-19 crisis is an extraordinary situation that requires consideration of all options that would benefit NAT operators, while maintaining the safety of operations. To that end, discussions are taking place in the framework of the NAT SPG amongst NAT provider States and ANSPs in relation to proactive measures that could be taken to support NAT operators in this difficult times.

2. This discussion has resulted in a NAT SPG agreement to allow a short term accommodation of non-DLM compliant aircraft in the area of NAT DLM applicability. The objective of this proposal is to offer more flexibility to aircraft operators when planning their NAT operations in the evolving COVID-19 crisis. Whilst acknowledging that the level of FANS 1/A data link equipage in the NAT is very high (around 95%), due to the current significant reduction in traffic levels, most of the aircraft fleets are currently grounded, it is also recognised that there may be situations where, due to this crisis situation, aircraft operators may need to dispatch non-DLM compliant aircraft to operate in the NAT.

3. This temporary accommodation for non-DLM compliant aircraft is agreed on the basis that the NAT service provider States and organisations will ensure that the associated safety management work has been completed prior to implementation and there would no consequential safety and/or operational limitations within the NAT and its interface areas with other Regions.

4. The accommodation will be in effect from 1 April 2020, initially for 3 months, and its implementation shall be promulgated through respective States' aeronautical publications. Any additional extension will need to be further considered by the NAT IMG before obtaining a NAT SPG agreement. During the accommodation period, the NAT SPG, through the respective monitoring groups, will regularly receive updates concerning the implemented measures and their effects.

5. **In addition to this temporary accommodation measure for the NAT Region Data Link Mandate, NAT airspace users are advised that due to the decrease in traffic caused by the COVID-19 crisis, there is a significantly higher chance of flights being cleared as requested. Therefore, dispatchers and pilots should be encouraged to file and request their optimal profiles at all stages of the flight, including for example, optimal route, flight plan step climbs, pilot requested cruise climbs and 'ECON' speeds, which has been enabled by the recent NAT implementation of operations without assigned fixed speed.**

6. The ICAO NAT structure continues to monitor the rapidly evolving situation with the aim to proactively identify and implement additional measures to help the global aviation community to safely and efficiently pass through NAT airspace in these times of crisis.


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