



Safety Directive

SD No.: 2021-02

Issued: 02 June 2021

Note: This safety directive (SD) is issued by EASA, acting in accordance with Art. 76 (6) (b) of Regulation (EU) No 2018/1139, reacting to an urgent safety problem.

Subject: Operations in FIR Minsk (UMMV)

Effective Date: 02 June 2021

Supersedure: None

Applicability:

EASA Member States' national competent authorities (NCAs) responsible for the certification and oversight of aircraft operators involved in air operations in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012.

EASA Member States' NCAs responsible for the certification and oversight of Air Navigation Service Providers in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/373.

Reason:

On 23 May 2021, Ryanair flight FR4978, while overflying Belarus en-route to its final destination, Vilnius, was made to divert by Belarusian authorities and land in Minsk. The aeroplane ultimately departed and arrived in Vilnius with considerable delay after several passengers were forcibly disembarked in Minsk.

The circumstances surrounding this action cast serious doubts on the respect shown by Belarus for international civil aviation rules and is indicative of an abuse of air navigation procedures by the Belarusian authorities. As such, it is a breach of the principles underlying the mutual trust that are at the cornerstone of international civil aviation.

Until an international investigation clarifies the circumstances, EASA has reservations whether the Belarusian airspace can still be considered as safe for civilian flights by the international community, as there is no full confidence in the ability of the current Belarusian authorities to manage the Belarusian airspace in accordance with international agreements.

On 25 May 2021, EASA issued Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) 2021-10 advising aircraft operators, having their principal place of business in one of the EASA Member States, to avoid operations in FIR Minsk (UMMV), unless the use of that airspace is deemed necessary to ensure safe operation in case of unforeseen circumstances.

On 27 May 2021, the ICAO Council decided to undertake a fact-finding investigation of this event, and in this connection requested the ICAO Secretariat to prepare an interim report to the Council



for a subsequent meeting of the current session, presenting the available facts and relevant legal instruments.

Information from air traffic management indicates that there are still operators having their principal place of business in EASA Member States that continue to operate in the FIR Minsk (UMMV). Accordingly, and after consulting with the EASA Member States and the European Commission, EASA decided to issue this SD determining safety objectives to be achieved and recommending corrective measures to be taken by the EASA Member States' NCAs to ensure safety of aircraft operations.

Furthermore, in order to support the swift and uniform implementation of the appropriate measures within the EU and supporting the centralised flight planning system, EASA Member States are recommended to promulgate NOTAMs informing the operators about the measures taken pursuant to this SD.

EASA will monitor the developments in relation with this case and will adjust the recommendations accordingly. Such reviews will be done whenever the circumstances will require it and in any case at intervals not exceeding one month.

Safety Objective(s) to be achieved:

Reduce the potential risk to passengers and crews by avoiding operations in FIR Minsk (UMMV).

Recommended Corrective Action(s) to be taken:

Pending the finalisation of an international investigation into the incident that occurred on 23 May 2021 initiated by the ICAO Council on 27 May 2021, or until further notice:

- (1) EASA Member States' NCAs should ensure that aircraft operators having their principal place of business in their territory will not conduct operations in FIR Minsk (UMMV), unless the use of that airspace is deemed necessary to ensure safe operation in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- (2) In accordance with Paragraph (1) of this SD, EASA Member States' NCAs should take all necessary measures to ensure prompt implementation of those restrictions, including measures related to the flight planning system and the issuance of a NOTAM to notify the restriction(s) to avoid operations in FIR Minsk (UMMV).

Information on the actions taken:

- (3) NCAs shall take measures to achieve the determined safety objective within 2 days from the effective date of this SD and inform EASA of those measures. This can be accomplished by reporting to ADs@easa.europa.eu.

Ref. Publications:

EASA SIB 2021-10 dated 25 May 2021.



Remarks:

Enquiries regarding this SD and the information on the actions taken to implement it should be referred to the EASA Safety Information Section, E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu.

