

Big Summer Slots

***A story book for pilots
and dispatchers***





Welcome to Europe. It's summer.

In summer, people like to fly to far away beaches instead of the ones near their house.

Last year, nobody could go anywhere. So this year, everyone wants to go everywhere.

But the airports fired all the security staff, so the airports don't work.

And there aren't enough air traffic controllers, so ATC isn't working all that great either.



Because nothing works, we get slots to stop us from flying.

This is annoying. We don't like slots.

Some people think that if you get a slot, you just have to sit there and wait. This is wrong.

Some people (probably the same ones) also think that when you do get to fly, you should ask every controller along the way to give you a direct routing.

This is also wrong.



This summer is going to be worse than any other summer in Europe. Eurocontrol says so. It isn't that bad yet, even though the papers say it is.

Thankfully, some very smart people work in a big room in Brussels. This is called the NMOC. They know when ATC is full. They know everything.

They know that if you are flying through the Karlsruhe, Athens, Reims, or Praha FIR, you will be late. These are the worst places.

We should listen to NMOC. They have some tips for pilots and dispatchers.

*"Piloting an
aircraft all day
I must have
comfortable
underwear"*

Says CAPT. PETER FLETCHER
of BRITISH EUROPEAN AIRWAYS



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FROM GOOD MEN'S SHOPS EVERYWHERE



Here are the tips for **pilots**.

The first tip is to play **Fly the Flight Plan**. It's a fun game where everyone does what they said they would. Then there are no more delays.

Some pilots like to ask ATC for **direct**. But those are bad pilots. Good pilots just stick to the filed route in summer. Then the controllers don't get overloaded.

Some pilots like to **telephone** NMOC from their cockpit. These are also bad pilots. Good pilots let dispatch sort it out.

The best pilots make sure to keep their **EOBT** updated with a DLY message. Otherwise they get suspended.



These dispatchers are receiving a big slot for their flight. It's going to make the pilot very unhappy. They are going to try to fix things.

First, they send a message to the slot people to ask for a better slot. That's called an **RFI**.

If it's a really important flight, they can also add a **critical** tag to that request. But they can only do this for a few flights.

Today, this didn't work. The pilot then asked ATC to send a **ready message**. Only ATC can send this special message, but the pilots have to be really ready.

That still didn't change anything, so they need to think of some other ideas.



If one pilot has a bad slot, you can give the slot to another pilot that you don't like. This is called a **slot swap**.

If you make a flight plan that goes low and then high and then low, this is bad. NM will call you a **yo-yo**. Pick one altitude.

If your flight route has **sharp angles**, this is also bad. Find nice smooth straight routes.

There is a telephone in the NMOC room but it's old and smells weird. They have a new computer called **E-Helpdesk** and you should talk to them on that when you need help.



These pilots have been waiting all day for their slot.

The dispatcher filed a perfect flight plan for them with no big turns or yo-yo altitudes, and filed on time so they would not be penalized as **late filers**.

The dispatcher tried a slot swap, and an improvement request with a critical flag.

Soon the pilots will have to go home, because they can only work for four hours a day. So the dispatcher rang the old smelly telephone in NMOC, because you can do that if it's really important.

It worked. Now the pilots can leave, and everyone can get to the far away beach.

The End