

More tune in to Eurocontrol plan

8.33kHz channel-spacing programme to be extended to further 19 countries this month, with three joining in 2003

Europe's 8.33kHz channel-spacing programme will be implemented in a further 19 states above flight level 245 (24,500ft/7,300m) at the end of this month. The horizontal expansion of the programme, which will create additional radio frequencies for air traffic control and operational communications, precedes a decision in December on whether to extend the channel-spacing vertically to FL195.

The first stage of Europe's 8.33kHz channel-spacing implementation was in October 1999 when the mandatory carriage of compatible radios was implemented above FL245 throughout

the International Civil Aviation Organisation European region. At that time seven states – Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland – enforced 8.33kHz carriage, while the remaining states published exemptions. The states that will remove exemptions and implement 8.33kHz next week are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK and Yugoslavia. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will remove their exemp-

tions in October next year. The move from 25kHz to 8.33kHz channels will be introduced through to the end of 2003, says Peter Alty, Eurocontrol's 8.33kHz programme manager.

The first phase has created 40 new 8.33kHz channels, while a "significant amount" of 25kHz channels have been made available for other services, says Alty. In addition, 8.33kHz has allowed new route sectorisation and the introduction of reduced vertical separation minima.

Despite initial equipage problems which resulted in implementation being delayed, the first phase

of the programme resulted in around 11,000 aircraft equipped with 8.33kHz-compatible radios. Alty says up to a further 1,000 aircraft had to be equipped for the second phase.

In December, Eurocontrol anticipates a positive decision by ICAO's European Air Navigation Planning Group on the extension of 8.33kHz to below FL245. If approved, implementation down to FL195 would be in 2006-08, says Alty. Eurocontrol conducted a stakeholder consultation process so that operators most affected – the military and regional airlines – are aware of the possible expansion, he adds.

REGULATIONS

Kenya seeks Category 1 status to fulfil US tie-up

Kenya Airways is optimistic that a reorganisation of the country's civil aviation authority will be satisfactory for the USA to approve full relations between the two countries.

The airline, which is minority owned by KLM, is prevented from codesharing with the Dutch airline's US partner Northwest Airlines because of Kenya's non-Category 1 status under the US Federal Aviation Administration's International Aviation Safety Assessment programme.

According to Kenya Airways chief executive Brian Presbury, plans are under way to hive off Kenya's DCA civil aviation authority from the government into a separate authority, so that it has

greater autonomy. "This process will be completed within six to 12 months," he says.

Kenya Airways already codeshares with KLM to the Dutch carrier's hub in Amsterdam, and has an agreement with Northwest to codeshare on the US carrier's transatlantic services, says Presbury: "When we get Category 1 we will be able to implement it."

Presbury does not see the airline returning to the USA in its own right in the near term. "We need to choose carefully where we fly to and have daily frequencies – two or three flights a week are no good."

Meanwhile, the airline remains convinced that consolidation is needed for East African airlines to

prosper in the long term. The carrier withdrew its bid earlier this year to purchase a stake in the flag carrier of neighbouring Tanzania after its proposal to merge the two airlines was rejected by the Tanzanian government. South African Airways (SAA) has since been nominated as Air Tanzania's privatisation partner.

"We wait to see how that turns

out – SAA has a poor track record," says Presbury, who points to the failures of other SAA ventures such as now defunct SA Alliance. He sees the long-term solution for the region as a return to the East African Airways-type operation that ceased in 1977. His vision is a regional joint venture, led by Kenya Airways and serving Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and possibly Burundi and Rwanda.

EXPANSION MICHAEL WAKABI / KAMPALA

Bilateral deal opens up Lagos to Ugandan carrier Africa One

New Ugandan carrier Africa One expects to start flights to Lagos by the end of November, following the signing of a new bilateral air services agreement between Uganda and Nigeria on 9 October.

Africa One launched long-haul services on 29 April using a McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30 from Entebbe, and had planned to link Lagos to Dubai via its Ugandan hub. However, it was stopped from flying the trans-African sector because the Nigerian government wanted amendments to the earlier bilateral which was signed in the mid-1990s when the country was under its military regime.

According to Africa One chairman Joe Roy, the absence of route rights between Entebbe and Lagos had cost the carrier \$4 million in losses arising from having to operate empty ferry flights for two months with the DC-10 between Freetown in Sierra Leone and Entebbe.

The airline's fortunes improved in July when it launched short-haul services in East Africa following the delivery of its first McDonnell Douglas DC-9. A second DC-9 was delivered earlier this month, which will allow further expansion, and Roy has recently visited Kinshasa to negotiate the launch of services to the Democratic Republic of Congo.



PAUL DODDSON

Africa One launched long-haul services with a DC-10 in April