



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 15 June 2010

CANSO CEOs DISCUSS VOLCANIC ASH - CALL FOR STRONGER EUROPEAN SAFETY REGULATOR

CANSO, the Global Voice of ATM, has held a discussion on the fallout from the volcanic ash situation in Europe. This was the first time the CEOs of ANSPs from across the globe have been gathered together to discuss this issue.

The Session, at CANSO's Global ATM Summit in Oslo, was moderated by David Learmount of Flight International, and the panel consisted of David McMillan, the DG of Eurocontrol, Jeff Poole of IATA, Richard Deakin, the CEO of NATS, Dan Smiley of the FAA and CANSO Operations Manager, and Doug Johnson of the London Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre. In a summary of the discussions, a call for a stronger European Safety Regulator was made.

Mr Johnson presented the role of the VAAC and explained the modelling of the ash cloud distribution. He was followed by David McMillan, who made a strong defence of the decisions taken at the time to close European airspace.

Jeff Poole argued that there are 500 active volcanoes at present around the world, which aircraft safely deal with, and that there was a "staggering complacency" by some European Governments and Institutions to deal with the problem, especially over the first weekend. He concluded by suggesting that the development of a network manager in Europe might be a positive element of the whole episode, along with a greater appreciation on the part of politicians of the role of aviation.

Richard Deakin suggested that the modelling proved to be quite accurate although more sampling data would have been useful. He suggested that communications were difficult when there were 27 different definitions of safety regulations, and that a firm European regulatory approach was required. Finally, Dan Smiley gave a summary of Alaska volcanic contingency plan, which sets out a detailed response to a volcanic event, involving all actors and making responsibilities and communications lines very clear.

Several CEOs spoke from the floor, including Ásgeir Pálsson from ISAVIA, and Eamonn Brennan of the IAA, two ANSPs (Iceland and Ireland) who were particularly affected by the ash. Mr Pálsson made it clear that more understanding of the safe limit for ash density was needed, and that "random test flights achieve nothing", while Eamonn Brennan called for a stronger show of leadership from EASA, the European Safety Agency. Dieter Kaden of DFS pointed out that engine manufacturers were still not taking a lead, and that warranties and insurance for engines were still being removed by manufacturers from aircraft flying close to ash. And Paul Riemans of LVNL explained that the FAB EC nations were ready to introduce an Alaskan-style contingency plan but that this was blocked by politicians.

Several of the speakers noted that the levels of knowledge and coordination had improved considerably since the event, and that if it reoccurred then things would be done differently.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Commenting on the debate, CANSO Director General Graham Lake said;

“Today was an example of CANSO at its best, bringing together the leaders of the air navigation industry to discuss solutions and lessons learned from the volcanic ash cloud. The level of contributions from all the speakers was outstanding, and I want to thank David McMillan, Jeff Poole, Dan Smiley and Richard Deakin in particular, along with Doug Johnson and David Learmount, for leading the session. Only CANSO has brought together such a distinguished panel in the presence of so many ANSPs to discuss this vital problem of volcanic ash, and it shows once again that the Association is taking a leading role in tackling airspace issues around the world.”

For more information please contact:

Chris Goater
Director of Communications

0031 (0)23 568 5380
chris.goater@canso.org

CANSO – The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation – is the global voice of the companies that provide air traffic control, and represents the interests of Air Navigation Services Providers worldwide. CANSO members are responsible for supporting over 85% of world air traffic, and through our Workgroups, members share information and develop new policies, with the ultimate aim of improving air navigation services on the ground and in the air. CANSO also represents its members’ views in major regulatory and industry forums, including at ICAO, where we have official Observer status.