

Austrian Response to the questions from the letter of the Tweede Kamer, 8. April 2016

The letter from the Tweede Kamer from 8. April 2016 and the questionnaire play down or even ignore the progress that has been made over the years with SES. With the initiation of SES, more than 100 SES-related legislative acts were introduced during the years. Hence ANS has become one of the most intensely regulated domains within the aviation sector. This pace is a challenge not only for the States but also for the providers where investments and changes have to be made in order to comply with the significant number of new requirements. However, the States and the industry are increasingly keeping up with that regulatory demand which is materialised with the gains in the performance domains of safety, environment, capacity and cost-efficiency. When the SES initiative was launched in 1999/2000, the ATC delays amounted to as much as some 5 minutes per flight. This has been reduced to 0,73 min per flight on a European level which relates to 0,2min or some 12 seconds per flight on an Austrian level, which poses an almost delay free operational environment.

Together with the FAB CE partners, Austria has reached a relatively good operational performance. The performance scheme that was introduced in 2012 helped contain cost greatly in the first regulatory period as has been stated with the SES-RP1 report, and the ambitious targets for the second regulatory period have just been agreed. The repetitive claim of EUR 5bn cost of fragmentation is quoted without substantial evidence behind it, already contradicted by other studies.

SESAR is just now in the implementation phase, including all major aviation stakeholders, most notably including the airlines. An INEA funded infrastructure renewal program across Europe is rolled out. The claim that the European ANS infrastructure is technologically outdated is incorrect and ignoring the fact, that Member States are continuously cooperate with the said stakeholders, in line with the legislative SES acts as agreed throughout Europe.

Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) have, without doubt, intensified the cooperation amongst States and air navigation service providers across Europe, and at least some of them, including FAB CE, have made remarkable progress.

Systems can always be improved; however, the already gained improvements mustn't be ignored. The gains of SESII are clearly visible.