

Performance Review Body Annual Report 2023

December 2023

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REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

2023 was an important year for aviation in Europe and for the Performance Review Body (PRB). It was a year that saw traffic increasing back towards pre-COVID-19 levels in many parts of Europe while for others traffic remained considerably below 2019 levels, and at a time where the geopolitical context remained challenging.

The preparation for reference period four (RP4) began with the PRB providing advice to the European Commission regarding ranges for the Union-wide targets for RP4. With this, the PRB carefully considered the evolution of performance and the wider societal concerns around climate change. The PRB has, hence, placed a greater emphasis on retaining ambitious targets for performance to minimise the impact of air traffic management on the environment.

Monitoring the performance of air traffic management remained a high priority for the PRB. In 2023, the PRB took the first step towards digitalising the results of the annual monitoring report with the publishing of the digital dashboard. This dashboard will be expanded over the coming years to include more elements from the PRB's monitoring activities.

2023 was also a time of change for the PRB. Sadly, in early 2023, the PRB was shocked and saddened by the sudden death of PRB colleague Hans Ollongren. Hans was appointed as a member of the PRB in 2019 and actively contributed to the PRB's work over the following three and a half years. He is missed greatly by the PRB members and the support team. Our thoughts remain with Hans' family following their loss.

In May 2023, two PRB members and the Chair reached the maximum term of their mandates and left the PRB. I would like to thank Magdalena Jaworska and Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus for their contribution and the outgoing Chair, Regula Dettling-Ott, for guiding the new PRB since its inception in 2017. I also welcome four new PRB members appointed by the Commission: Jan Malawko, Juan Montero, Eric Nantier and Jesper Skou.

The work of the PRB would not have been possible without the help of many: I would like to thank my colleagues from the PRB, the Support Team and, along with our colleagues from DG MOVE, Eurocontrol, EASA, the SESAR Joint Undertaking and the SESAR Deployment Manager for their excellent cooperation in 2023. I would also like to thank Member States and National Supervisory Authorities for their cooperation.

The PRB looks forward to supporting the Commission in 2024 in the final year of preparation for RP4.



Cathy Mannion
PRB Chair

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Commission has designated an independent group of experts as the Performance Review Body (PRB) to provide assistance regarding the implementation of the Single European Sky (SES) performance and charging scheme.¹
- 2 The PRB develops impartial, evidence-based recommendations on the performance of air navigation services at Union-wide and local levels as well as of network functions, on the basis of data submitted by NSAs and Member States, ANSPs, airport operators, airport coordinators, airspace users and the Network Manager. Eurocontrol and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) validate and pre-analyse this data, where required.
- 3 This document is the PRB's annual report for 2023, which is adopted by the PRB after approval by the Commission in accordance with the Commission Decision establishing the PRB.
- 4 The PRB consists of nine members, including a Chairperson, appointed by the Commission. The PRB is supported by a team of technical experts and support staff.
- 5 In 2023, two members of the PRB, Magdalena Jaworska and Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus and the Chair, Regula Dettling-Ott, reached the maximum duration of their mandates in May and left the PRB.
- 6 Cathy Mannion, an existing PRB member, was appointed as the Chair in June 2023 and at the same time the PRB welcomed the following four new members:
 - Jan Malawko is an assistant professor at the at University of Warsaw, Interdisciplinary Centre of Mathematical and Computational Modelling (ICM). Previously he worked on various experts', managerial and advisory positions in the aviation industry, including aircraft manufacture, airline, airport and civil aviation authority.
 - Juan Montero is the Director of the Florence School of Regulation, transport chapter, and Full Professor at UNED University (Madrid). He specialises in the regulation of network industries, particularly aviation, railways and telecoms.
- 7 In 2023 the aviation sector continued its recovery from COVID-19 and saw strong traffic growth. In October 2023, the traffic had reached 95% of the traffic in October 2019, and 91% of the year-to-date value in 2019; although there were marked differences at Member State level.
 - Eric Nantier has 20 years of experience in flight operations. Since 2001 he has held various management positions, mainly in the Operations Control Centre. He created and headed a research department where he and his team developed new operational systems. Since his early retirement from the airline in 2021, he has been working as a consultant.
 - Jesper Skou has 15 years of experience as an Air Traffic Controller and holds an MBA. Since 2009, he has served as a CEO and COO in different ANSPs in Europe and the Middle East. In 2020, he transitioned from the ANSP industry and established a software company.
- 8 The European aviation network continued to face disruption caused by Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, which increased the flight length in some parts of Europe and disrupted traffic flows.

¹ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/2296 of 16 December 2016 setting up the independent group of experts designated as Performance Review Body of the single European sky.

2 PRB ACTIVITIES

2.1 Overview

- 9 In 2023, the PRB concluded the assessment of the revised performance plans for RP3. This involved the PRB concluding the advice to the Commission on a detailed examination of the cost efficiency performance targets of Belgium and Luxembourg as well as the subsequently submitted corrective measures.
- 10 Monitoring of performance and the ad hoc studies continued to be an important activity of the PRB in 2023, with the PRB creating a first iteration of a digital dashboard to make the outputs of the monitoring activity more accessible to readers.
- 11 The activities of the PRB in 2023 are described below as **standing** activities and as **ad hoc** activities.

2.2 Standing activities

- 12 The standing activities represent work items in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation (EC) 549/2004.² These are specified in Article 3 of the performance and charging Regulation³ and include: (i) the annual PRB monitoring activities, (ii) the Union-wide target setting, and (iii) the assessment of national and FAB performance plans.

Annual monitoring activities

- 13 The PRB conducted its annual monitoring, reviewing the performance of air navigation services of the SES States and network functions. The PRB Monitoring Report 2022 was published in October 2023. The PRB assessed performance based on the pre-analysis provided by the Performance Review Unit of Eurocontrol for the capacity, cost-efficiency, and environment key performance areas (KPAs). EASA provided the data for the safety KPA and the PRB coordinated the safety-related analysis and recommendations with EASA.
- 14 The PRB Monitoring Report 2022 included recommendations to the European Commission, NSAs and ANSPs on improving operational

performance, a number of which highlight that previous recommendations have not been acted on.

- 15 The European air traffic management network suffered from severe structural inefficiencies in 2018 and 2019, as highlighted in the monitoring reports for those years. These issues are returning as traffic recovers following the downturn in 2020.
- 16 The monitoring activities also included a 2022 edition of the “traffic light system” (TLS).⁴ This categorises the environmental performance of Member States by colour (green, amber, and red) based on the indicators monitored within the SES performance and charging scheme. The TLS also considers the relative performance between 2016 and 2022. The PRB has refined the methodology to resolve some of the limitations that were highlighted in the 2021 edition of the TLS.
- 17 The PRB hopes that the TLS will continue to be used as a tool to better understand the environmental performance of air traffic management and to stimulate discussion about possible improvements.
- 18 The results of monitoring of performance in 2022 are also now presented on the PRB’s new digital dashboard.⁵ This includes the high-level results for each KPA under the performance and charging scheme. This digital dashboard will be further developed in 2024 to include more elements of the PRB’s monitoring activities.

Union-wide target setting and assessment of performance plans

- 19 In June 2023, the PRB published the assessment of Estonia’s request to revise their performance plan for RP3 following the significant drop in traffic resulting from Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.
- 20 The PRB published its “Advice on the Union-wide target ranges for RP4” report on 29th September 2023 and held a stakeholder consultation meeting on 8th November 2023. In parallel, the PRB issued a survey on the target ranges report that ran from

² Regulation (EC) No 549/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2004 laying down the framework for the creation of the single European sky.

³ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/317 of 11 February 2019 laying down a performance and charging scheme in the single European sky and repealing Implementing Regulations (EU) 390/2013 and (EU) 391/2013.

⁴ Traffic Light System for Environmental Performance (https://transport.ec.europa.eu/2022-traffic-light-system-environmental-performance_en).

⁵ <https://www.sesperformance.eu/>

4th October to 1st December 2023. The results of the consultation and the survey will be included in the PRB advice to the Commission on the targets for RP4.

- 21 In 2023, the PRB also assessed two draft final performance plans, those of Belgium and Luxembourg. These were submitted in September 2023 following the conclusion of the Commission's detailed examination.

Other activities

- 22 In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 598/2014, the PRB may support competent authorities at their request in assessing the noise situation at airports for which they are responsible.⁶ There were no such requests in 2023.

2.3 Ad hoc activities

- 23 The PRB provides the Commission with an independent assessment on aspects of the implementation of the performance and charging scheme. Such ad hoc activities can include:

- Gathering specific information from NSAs in relation to the performance plans to improve the monitoring of the performance of the European air traffic management network.
- Contributing to stakeholder meetings and workshops.
- Participating and presenting specific topics at the Single Sky Committee.

Bilateral meetings with Member States and stakeholders

- 24 During 2023, the PRB Chair and Support Team continued to meet regularly with stakeholders with a return to in-person meetings.

Single Sky Committee

- 25 The PRB Chair attended the following Single Sky Committee (SSC) meetings during 2023:
- 84th meeting of the SSC on 22nd March, where the PRB Chair presented the PRB's findings of the detailed examination of the performance targets within the Belgium and Luxembourg performance plans.
 - 85th meeting of the SSC on 21st June, where the PRB Chair presented the preliminary findings of the 2022 monitoring activities, the

outcome of the traffic light system and the outcome of the PRB study into the interdependency between the environment and capacity key performance areas.

- 86th meeting of the SSC on 14th November where the PRB Chair presented the final monitoring results for 2022, the traffic light system, the results of the PRB studies into civil-military, meteorological (MET) and search and rescue (SAR) cost allocation, and the proposed approach for setting the targets for RP4.

Other ad hoc activities

- 26 The PRB undertook activities defined in the Work Programme for 2023.
- 27 In June 2023, the PRB published a report on interdependencies between the environmental and capacity KPAs within the performance and charging scheme. This included a review of previous work that has been carried out on such interdependencies and quantified the negative impacts of delay on horizontal flight efficiency.
- 28 On 1st October 2023, the PRB published the study on civil military cost allocation. The report reviewed the allocation of dual-use resources between military and civil providers, taking stock of the current allocation and describing the existing arrangements within the SES Member States and providing findings and recommendations.
- 29 The PRB participated in the EASA RP4 Safety Indicator Working Group studying potential methodologies which could be used, including methods to model the influence on safety from developments in the other three performance areas.
- 30 Since September 2023, the PRB has been contributing to the work of EASA through the EASA RP4 S(KPI) Drafting Group to develop guidance material and a new questionnaire.
- 31 In the last quarter of 2023, the PRB began to engage with Steer on their work for the Commission to identify candidate performance indicators for RP4 and beyond.
- 32 The PRB also commenced work to better understand and quantify, where possible, the interdependency between the capacity and cost-

⁶ Regulation (EU) 598/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on the establishment of rules and procedures with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Union airports within a Balanced Approach and repealing Directive 2002/30/EC.

efficiency in air traffic management, and to assess key factors that define the interdependency. This is expected to be completed in early 2024.

- 33 In December 2023, the PRB published two reports analysing the costs of MET and SAR services eligible for inclusion within the cost base of air navigation services.

2.4 PRB meetings

- 34 The PRB held six meetings in 2022, to discuss and approve the standing and ad hoc items:

- PRB Meeting 38: 31st January – 1st February 2023;
- PRB Meeting 39: 14th – 15th March 2023;
- PRB Meeting 40: 23rd – 24th May 2023;
- PRB Meeting 41: 18th – 19th July 2023;
- PRB Meeting 42: 18th – 19th September 2023;
- PRB Meeting 43: 21st – 22nd November 2023.

2.5 Sub-group meetings

- 35 In line with Article 6 (3) of Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2296/2016,⁷ meeting of the two PRB sub-groups are held when required according to the PRB's activities.

Sub-group 1

- 36 Sub-group 1 is responsible for supporting and advising the PRB on the cost-efficiency and capacity aspects of the performance and charging Regulation. In June 2023, the scope of sub-group 1 changed to focus on cost-efficiency and investments in air traffic management, including those relating to the SESAR programme.

- 37 Sub-group meetings were held virtually on the following dates in 2023:

- 8th February 2023;
- 1st March 2023;
- 12th April 2023;
- 10th May 2023;
- 15th June 2023;
- 13th July 2023;
- 6th September 2023;
- 24th October 2023;
- 5th December 2023.

- 38 Sub-group 1 areas of work included:

- Developing relevant parts of the Annual Monitoring Report 2022.
- Proposing the target ranges for the cost-efficiency key performance area.
- Completing the ad hoc civil military cost allocation study.
- Contributing to the report on the costs of MET and SAR services.
- Contributing to the ad-hoc study on the interdependencies between the cost-efficiency and capacity KPAs.

Sub-group 2

- 39 Sub-group 2 is responsible for supporting and advising the PRB on the environment and safety aspects of the performance and charging Regulation and their assessment. In June 2023, the scope of sub-group 2 changed, now also including aspects related to capacity.

- 40 Sub-group meetings were held virtually on the following dates in 2023:

- 2nd March 2023;
- 24th April 2023;
- 14th June 2023;
- 11th July 2023;
- 31st August 2023;
- 6th September 2023;
- 17th October 2023;
- 15th November 2023;
- 12th December 2023.

- 41 Sub-group 2 areas of work included:

- Developing the parts of the Annual Monitoring Report 2022, including the refinement of the traffic light system to assess environmental performance.
- Proposing the target ranges for the safety, capacity and environment key performance areas.
- Cooperation with EASA on potential KPIs and PIs for RP4 related to the Safety KPA through the participation in an EASA RP4 Safety Indicator Working Group and later in an EASA RP4 S(K)PI Drafting Group.

⁷ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/2296 of 16 December 2016 setting up the independent group of experts designated as Performance Review Body of the single European sky.

- Completing the ad hoc study on the interdependencies between the environment and capacity KPAs.
- 42 A joint meeting of Sub-group 1 and Sub-group 2 was also held, in person, on 22nd May 2023, the day before the 40th meeting of the PRB. The meeting discussed the initial draft target ranges relating to the environment and capacity key performance areas, taking account of the interdependencies between these areas.