

# Performance Review Body Annual Report 2022

December 2022

## REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

In 2022, the aviation industry continued to recover from the huge impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The recovery has been impacted by Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine and the collateral economic uncertainties affecting all SES Member States.

The PRB in 2022 focused on advising the Commission on the revised performance plans, which were submitted in autumn 2021 to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis. The PRB recommended to adopt most of the plans, but at the same time found a number of Member States not consistent with targets, which required revising their plans. This additional assessment of plans and the continuing dialogue with NSAs and stakeholders was run under time constraints, as it was necessary for the Commission to publish a decision on the consistency prior to the unit rates being set by the Enlarged Committee for Route Charges in November 2022, to enable ANSPs to begin recovering the shortfall in revenue from 2020-2021 (5.6 billion euros).

The monitoring of performance undertaken by the PRB was another priority. Together with the Annual Monitoring Report 2021, the PRB presented the environmental performance across Member States in a new way, using a traffic light system. It assesses the environmental performance across Member States and their ANSPs based on the existing performance indicators. This is the first time the PRB has combined all of the performance indicators and key performance indicators in the environment key performance area to show aggregated environmental performance for each Member State. We hope that this new approach makes performance data more accessible to non-experts and will foster discussions on how to improve environmental performance in the Single European Sky, ensuring that air traffic management contributes to reaching the goals of Fit for 55.

During the difficult years of 2020 and 2021, the dialogue with NSAs, ANSPs and stakeholders was intense, regardless of the travel restrictions. 2022 allowed a return to in-person meetings with a wider audience, facilitating a cross-industry dialogue.

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 PRB Support Team and Eurocontrol (who now have the possibility of shared working space in the Eurocontrol offices), as well as our colleagues from DG MOVE and EASA for their excellent cooperation in 2022. I would also like to thank Member States and National Supervisory Authorities for the cooperation, which was, at times, intense.

The PRB looks forward to supporting the Commission in 2023 as the industry takes further steps in the recovery from the impact of COVID-19.



Regula Dettling-Ott  
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<sup>1</sup>
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- 3 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.
- 4 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 Member States. Eurocontrol and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) validate and pre-analyse this data, where required.
- 5 implementation of the SES performance and charging scheme.
- 6 The Commission Decision establishing the PRB requires the PRB to adopt an annual report on the work performed.
- 7 In 2022 the aviation sector continued its recovery from COVID-19 and saw a rapid increase in traffic levels. In October 2022 traffic was, on average, at 87% of 2019 levels but with a marked variation in recovery rates across Member States. Particularly during the summer, the European aviation sector faced disruptions and delays caused by a lack of personnel in the value chain. In addition, Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine had an impact on the European network, increasing the flight length in some parts of Europe and disrupting traffic flows.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

- 7 Both COVID-19 and Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war in Ukraine impacted the planning of ANSPs. The revision of performance plans required their continued assessment, notably those plans which the Commission did not find to be consistent or those which Member States wanted to revise.
- 8 Monitoring of performance and the ad hoc studies continued to be an important activity of the PRB in 2022.
- 9 The PRB also supported the Commission on a detailed examination of Belgium-Luxembourg as their performance plan was deemed to still be inconsistent with the Union-wide targets.
- 10 The activities of the PRB in 2022 are described below as **standing** activities and as **ad hoc** activities.

### 2.2 Standing activities

- 11 The standing activities represent work items in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation (EC) 549/2004.<sup>2</sup> These are specified in Article 3 of the performance and charging Regulation<sup>3</sup>: (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

- 12 The PRB conducted its annual monitoring, reviewing the performance of air navigation services of the SES states. The PRB Monitoring Report 2021 was published in October 2022. 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 (KPA). EASA provided the data for the safety KPA and the PRB coordinated the safety-related analysis and recommendations with EASA.
- 13 The PRB Monitoring Report 2021 included recommendations to the European Commission

and NSAs on improving operational performance where it was still required.

- 14 The European air traffic management 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.
- 15 The monitoring activities introduced a "traffic light system" (TLS).<sup>4</sup> This is a new methodology to categorise by colour (green, amber, red) the environmental performance of the Member States based on the indicators monitored within the Single European Sky performance and charging scheme. The TLS also considers the relative performance between 2016 and 2021. The PRB hopes that the TLS will be a tool to better understand the environmental performance of air traffic management and to stimulate discussion about possible improvements.

#### Union-wide target setting and assessment of performance plans

- 16 In 2022, the PRB finished assessing the draft performance plans submitted by Member States in the autumn of 2021. The PRB advised the Commission on the consistency or inconsistency of each plan with the Union-wide targets.
- 17 Eight plans, one of which was FABEC, were found to be inconsistent with the Union-wide targets. These Member States were required to revise their plans and consult with stakeholders prior to resubmitting their performance plans by 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The PRB attended each of the stakeholder consultation meetings (held virtually) and assessed the completeness of the revised draft as well as their consistency with the Union-wide targets.
- 18 The PRB published its assessment of the revised draft performance plans in October 2022.<sup>5</sup>
- 19 The impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine led to the closure of the airspace of certain countries, triggering a shift of traffic flows.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Traffic Light System for Environmental Performance ([https://transport.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/PRB-TLS\\_2021.pdf](https://transport.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/PRB-TLS_2021.pdf))

<sup>5</sup> PRB assessment of the second revision of the draft performance plans for RP3. Union-wide assessment report. October 2022

Several Member States considered whether to revise their plans because of that; ultimately, only one State requested a revision. To allow an adjustment of the unit rate 2023, the PRB accelerated the assessment of the plan.

- 20 After the Commission had rejected elements of the (newly) revised plan relating to two Member States of FABEC and opened a detailed examination of the plan (in accordance with Article 15 of the Performance and Charging Regulation), the PRB supported the Commission in conducting the detailed examination of the Belgium-Luxembourg plan. The PRB also reassessed the plans of the four other FABEC states following their decision to file individual plans to enable them to adjust their unit rates in 2023, allowing for the recovery of the revenue gap incurred in 2020/2021.

#### *Other activities*

- 21 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.<sup>6</sup> There were no such requests in 2022.

#### *2.3 Ad hoc activities*

- 22 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 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*

- 23 During 2022, the PRB Chair and Support Team continued to meet regularly with stakeholders with a gradual return to in-person meetings.

Virtual meetings have been carried out when adequate.

#### *Single Sky Committee*

- 24 The PRB Chair attended the following Single Sky Committee (SSC) meetings during 2022:
- 81<sup>st</sup> meeting of the SSC on 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March, where the PRB Chair presented the results of the performance plan assessment.
  - 82<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the SSC on 14-15<sup>th</sup> June, where the PRB Chair presented the preliminary results of Union-wide performance against targets.
  - 83<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the SSC on 16<sup>th</sup> November where the PRB chair presented the monitoring results for 2021, including the newly developed TLS.

#### *Other ad hoc activities*

- 25 The PRB undertook activities defined in the Work Programme for 2022.
- 26 The PRB contributed to the work of EASA on their European Aviation Environmental Report 2022 and participated in the EASA steering group on ATCO training and licensing.
- 27 The PRB continued work on the significance of civil military cooperation for the performance scheme and commenced a study on civil military cost allocation. The report will review the allocation of dual use of 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. It is foreseen to be completed in May 2023.
- 28 The PRB is preparing a report on interdependencies between the environmental and capacity KPAs within the performance scheme. This includes a review of previous work that has been carried out on such interdependencies. The study is expected to be completed by spring 2023.
- 29 The PRB also began work to support the Commission regarding the options for new KPIs and PIs for RP4 and participated in the EASA work

<sup>6</sup> 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.

studying potential methodologies which could be used, including methods to model influence on safety coming from developments in the other three performance areas.

#### 2.4 PRB meetings

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

- PRB Meeting 32: 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- PRB Meeting 33: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022
- PRB Meeting 34: 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- PRB Meeting 35: 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022
- PRB Meeting 36: 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022
- PRB Meeting 37: 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022

#### 2.5 Sub-group meetings

31 In line with Article 6 (3) of Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2296/2016,<sup>7</sup> the three PRB sub-groups have been merged into two. Sub-group meetings are held when required according to the PRB's activities.

##### Sub-group 1

32 Sub-group 1 is responsible for supporting and advising the PRB on the cost-efficiency and capacity aspects of the performance and charging Regulation.

33 Sub-group meetings were held virtually on the following dates in 2022:

- 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022
- 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022
- 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022
- 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022
- 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022

34 Sub-group 1 areas of work included:

- Preparing the advice to the Commission regarding the revision of performance plans

from the capacity and cost efficiency perspective and their assessment (plans submitted on the 1<sup>st</sup> October).

- Developing relevant parts of the Annual Monitoring Report 2022.
- Assessing and drafting possible improvements to the monitoring process.
- Assessing and drafting the ad hoc civil military cost allocation study.
- Contributing to the ad-hoc study on the interdependencies between the environment and capacity KPAs.

##### Sub-group 2

35 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 (plans submitted on the 1<sup>st</sup> October).

36 Sub-group meetings were held virtually on the following dates in 2022:

- 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022
- 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022
- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022
- 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022
- 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022

37 Sub-group 2 areas of work included:

- The PRB ad hoc tasks relating to the evolution of the environmental key performance area and the significance of the civil-military dimension in air traffic management.
- Developing the parts of the Annual Monitoring Report 2022, including the traffic

<sup>7</sup> 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.

light system to assess environmental performance.

- Cooperation with EASA on potential KPIs and PIs for RP4 related to the Safety KPA through the participation in an EASA working group.
- Commencing the ad hoc study on the interdependencies between the environment and capacity KPAs.