

The MOSAIC Initiative

Photos: MOSAIC



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During the last year, a new name became part of many side discussions related to Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) in the core area of continental Europe: MOSAIC.

Here is the story and the latest developments of a project that refused to be an acronym because of real human centred ambition.

Starting Point:

This project, in the beginning regarded by some as a utopia in

the context of the Single European Sky and the privatisation of the German Air Navigation Provider, took everyone by surprise. When all the aspects behind the initial idea were explained it became apparent that the energy needed to defragment the network in some of the most complex airspace, had materialised. It was a clear spark initiated by some social partners already in 2005.

The project basics were then promoted extensively across Europe by the core member's team lead by Nicolas Hinchliffe and Frederic Deleau, both Air Traffic Controllers. Their belief and motivation to act in the interest of all involved, including the users, in order to develop a safe, sustainable, social, efficient and stable system has brought together 17 major Unions and Professional Associations of ATCOs and ATSEPs.

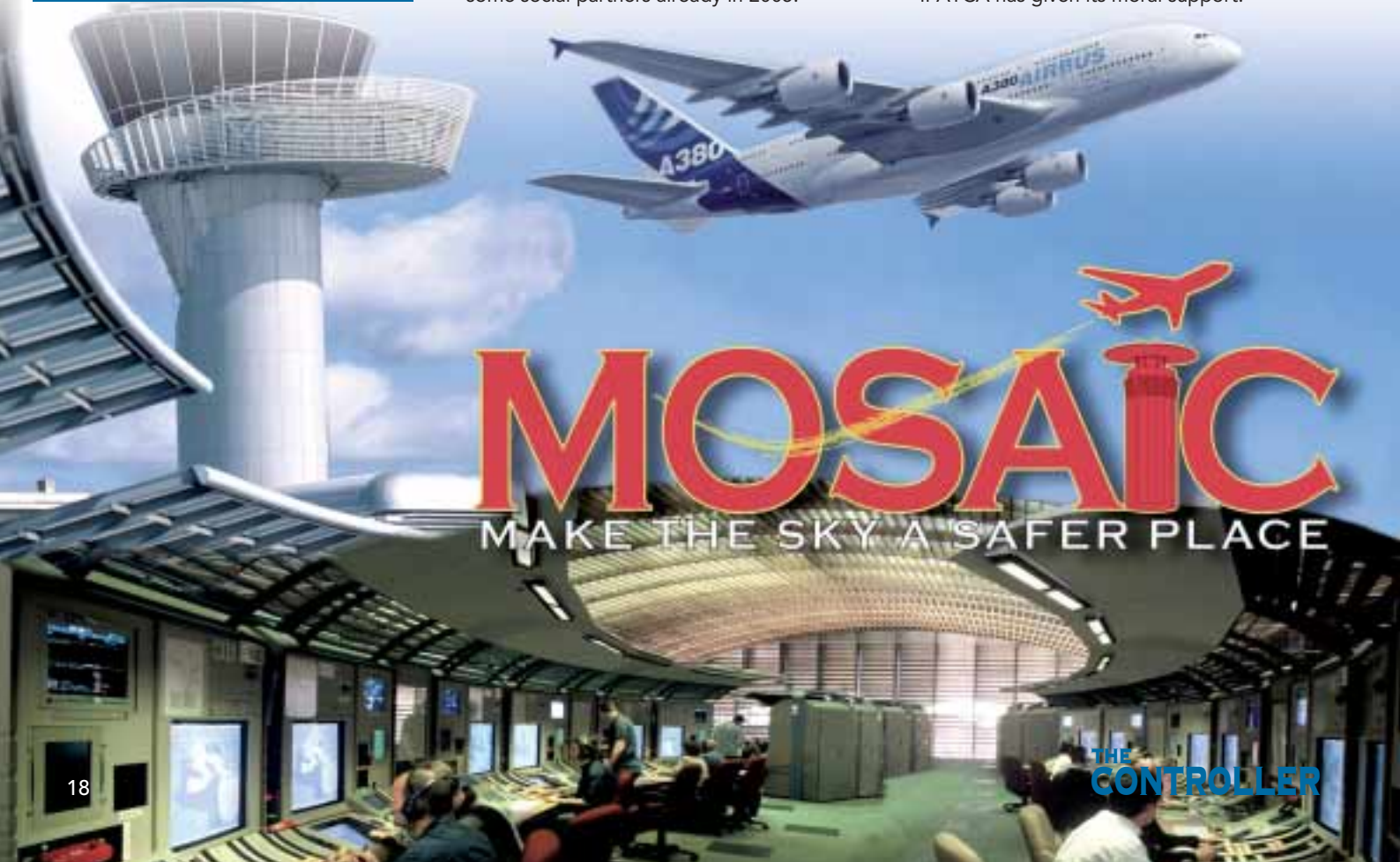
The MOSAIC group representing the major Unions and Professional Associations from seven countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, The Netherlands) and the EUROCONTROL Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre was joined at the end of June by the Austrian Air Traffic Controllers Association. AATCA has officially joined them as privileged observer in order to fully participate in the future developments of the project.

MOSAIC has grown to its intended critical mass to deliver the best possible international platform ever envisaged in ATM.

For the first time ever, these organisations defend together common principles as the best option for their members, the States, the users and the travelling public.

Last but not least, the project is also highly supported by the Air Traffic Controllers European Union Coordination (ATCEUC) and IFATCA has given its moral support.

Develop and promote a credible alternative to the privatisation of the Air Traffic Services.



without MOSAIC**with MOSAIC**

MOSAIC Vision:

In an industry confronted on a daily basis with many challenges and expecting major changes in the short to medium term, the MOSAIC group has demonstrated that ATCOs, Engineers and all players involved in the safety chain could develop and promote a credible alternative to the privatisation of the Air Traffic Services and all related negative consequences (e.g. blind consolidation or further fragmentation of the network due to private interests). These organisations could propose pro-active and viable solutions in the context of future trans-national model approach. Cross-border developments raise several issues that clearly call for new ways of dealing with social aspects, operational optimisation, technical integration, liability and sovereignty problems for instance. The key words are ambition and international vision.

More Ambitions for functional Evolutions:

Over the last years, despite a considerable and overall improvement of the European Air Traffic Management system and tangible progresses in the areas of safety, capacity, efficiency and the environment, undue financial considerations have become central. This lack of understanding of structural problems may lead to real capacity shortage in the coming years. One can not afford "Financial Airspace Blocks" if we want to give a chance to achieve as a matter of priority a performant continuum for ATM. Solid basic institutional rules need to be established between States, acting as involved and responsible stakeholders. Therefore the logical evolution proposed by MOSAIC is a step-by-step approach starting with enhanced collaboration and leading to the integration into one international public entity sharing common standards and conditions of employment based on an exist-

ing and successful model. With clear financial constraints continuously in mind, overall performance is achievable faster, including staff requirements, for the benefits of all.

The Way ahead:

Perceived at the start as a dubious role for Unions and Professional Associations to make such proposals, it has recently been recognised as a truly interesting initiative. Following high level discussions between MOSAIC representatives and the European Commission, the project basics were accepted and will be considered in an official study on FAB developments. This first important step constitutes the recognition of the value of the alternative in today's complex environment and will surely gain more support at the highest European levels in the context of the Single European Sky.

While the explanation campaign continues and intensifies in order to gain further professional and political support, the MOSAIC group has set specific working groups dealing with the key areas of a FAB development. First results and publication of common positions are expected during the last quarter of 2007.

What to do next?

MOSAIC is clearly a regional initiative. However some of its principles will surely be shared on a global basis by professionals defending a network approach keeping human needs at the centre of priorities

Passengers and citizens have a right not only to the service but mainly the security of an efficient, continuous and independent public ATM system. States have a duty to organise these services taking into consideration the security, safety, efficiency, sustainability and the continuity of said system based on global functional aspects rather than private financial short gains.

MOSAIC step approach is encompassing most of the requirements set in the FAB Europe Central feasibility study. However, in order to achieve the full benefits of enhanced collaboration, to meet the challenges of tomorrow, to sustain and deliver the needed capacity, to apply solutions based on safety and operational requirements, to defend the access to airspace to all users, to avoid social unrest, etc, collocation of different models defending opposite goals is ill-fated. The FAB initiative has to go further. The international public model as already implemented for 30 years in certain areas has clearly demonstrated the positive results on capacity and flight efficiency. An integrated international public service system will ensure the long term stability and efficiency needed by the airlines industry to develop their business while meeting the ATS staff requirements for the support, security and highest standards they need to perform their ever more demanding duties.

A serious and ambitious evolution but no revolution! ☺

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