



or a credible alternative to privatisation and competition?

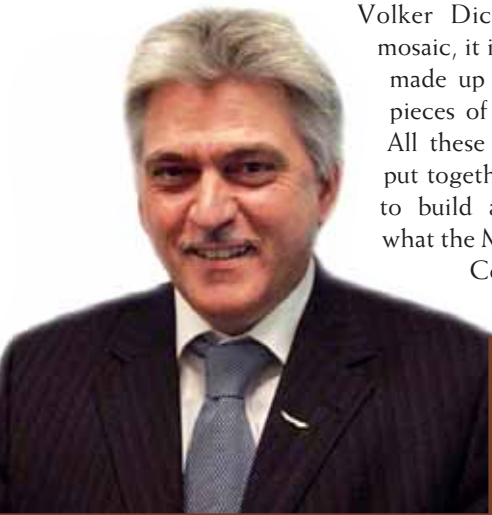
In every corner of Europe, people are starting to talk about one project: MOSAIC.

Meetings are being held at regular intervals, common statements and advertisements have been published, a website is operational, etc.

But what is MOSAIC? Does it affect you?

INSIGHT decided to meet two of the MOSAIC Project Managers: Volker Dick, President of the Trade Union Eurocontrol Maastricht (TUEM) and Frederic Deleau, an ATCO at MUAC and board member of the TUEM, in order to find out more about the ideas behind MOSAIC.

The first question that comes to mind is: "Where does the name MOSAIC come from and what does it mean?"



Volker Dick: When one pictures a mosaic, it is quite obvious. Mosaics are made up of different parts, bits and pieces of different colours and sizes. All these bits and pieces have to be put together in a certain way in order to build a complete picture. That's what the MOSAIC Project is all about:

Combining different ATM cultures, systems and social conditions into a single harmonised system.

But to make sure that it does achieve the goals we all expect, it is being

built up on a partnership basis. Every piece is important and has to be respected! That's how we are going to efficiently defragment the ATM system and keep our priorities on track!

"What is the history of MOSAIC?"

Frederic Deleau: The MOSAIC Project was initiated by the TUEM and the SNCTA (French union) during a meeting in autumn 2005. The two organisations quickly contacted other unions and professional associations and received a

positive response immediately from all of them. Everybody knew something had to be done to improve the ATM system but also to defend our profession and social conditions from the dangers of privatisation. Alone, no one knew where to start.

When the basic framework for MOSAIC was laid down, it created energy and new hope.

"YES", there was a credible alternative to competition. "Yes", we could achieve something sustainable, and "Yes", the staff organisations of 7 countries wanted to be part of it and join forces.

Trade unions and professional associations from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Maastricht UAC are today working together to achieve the same objective: to propose a practical, efficient and viable alternative to the privatisation of ATM systems.

"What is the vision of MOSAIC?"

Volker Dick: There are two possible reactions to the extension of the policy advocated by the European Commission and wrongly adopted as a "green light" for privatisation by certain service providers: either to back down or to build a viable alternative.

Since the adoption of the Single Sky in 2004, the competition-based model in Europe has continued to gain ground. In the end, the outcome is always the same: staff (and the users) will suffer the consequences.

MOSAIC is a true "bottom-up" approach. Staff representatives closely and continuously involved at operational level are working together to develop what the viable alternative should be.

Frederic Deleau: We are not professional lobbyists! We firmly believe in a human-centred system and our aim is to defend logical approaches to concrete problems. Whereas some people would like to consider passengers as goods and ATM has the means to make ever more profits for a select few, MOSAIC representatives will forever defend the idea that safety is not for sale. We cannot accept that some

people say that privatisation of ATM is as natural as privatisation of the telecom companies. Let me be quite clear: Making a mistake in the telecom business might mean giving away a few free minutes. Making a mistake in ATC might put lives at risk! I hope this should put paid to the comparison in certain people's minds! Humans lives are priceless and should be given the utmost care and attention.

"What is your practical starting point?"

Volker Dick: The cost of fragmentation. As you most probably know from the PRC report, fragmentation involves the proliferation of systems much more than the proliferation of control centres. Today EUROCONTROL estimates the cost of fragmentation at EUR 1.5 billion. Standardisation of the systems would cover up to 40% of the cost of air traffic control. A reduction in costs borne by systems rather than by staff. Keeping this idea in mind, only an international platform can achieve the necessary improvements. Building it with the motivation of the staff involved in the safety chain will lead to its success.

Frederic Deleau: The disparate cultures, with differing rights and regulations from one country to the next, have always divided the various organisations. MUAC has thus far been an isolated example of international operational cooperation. Again, with reference to the PRC report, it is easy to recognise the operational and productivity gains derived from such an international set-up. We must of course bear in mind that this has been possible due to various factors, with social conditions and technology being the cornerstones for years of excellent service to the community. Motivation and dedication to ATM come not only from decent salaries and good social conditions, but also from security. Security delivered by advanced technology, of course, enabling the handling of ever increasing traffic loads, but also job security. Staff involved in the safety chain have to be able to concentrate on their prime targets: SAFETY- STABILITY – EFFICIENCY. Privatisation and a system based (solely) on return on investment might create confusion in priorities!

"Who are the key people driving the project?"

Volker Dick: there are about 20 people involved at various national levels. As far as TUEM is concerned, Frederic is in charge of managing the project and reports to me, and to the board. He is also the focal point for MOSAIC and is in charge of the website (www.project-mosaic.eu) It goes without saying that doing this in addition to his duties in the MUAC ops room does not leave him much time to sleep... (laugh)

Frederic Deleau: Thank you! I am just trying to keep up with my President. He is as involved as I am, yet is still able to handle his other tasks. The TUEM is dedicated to bringing its energy and experience to finding the best possible solutions for all. We devote a lot of time to this. Others do too, because we are convinced that we have this one opportunity to make this happen for the benefit of everybody: Staff, of course, but also airlines and European citizens. We have a certain vision and we are ready to go a long way to defend it.

"What are your basic requirements?"

Volker Dick: First, the management of MOSAIC will be under the supervision of the Member States, the Ministers of Transport. This is crucial to ensuring that private service providers, whoever they are, do not infiltrate the institutional structure and open up the way for competition.

Second, exclusive financing by public funds is an essential requirement for ensuring that safety remains the primary objective, taking precedence over all other considerations (capacity, cost, etc.). It is a way of perpetuating the principle of recovery of costs, which allows the service to be financed from an independent budget, with any over-recoveries being repaid to the users, making profits impossible. It is a service to the users, to the public.

Frederic Deleau: Rest assured that we do not see this as a "carte blanche" to throw money out of the window. We are committed to driving MOSAIC as a very efficient and productive system but also as a social system. A "human-centred system" means investing in quality training, exceptional quality technology, quality working conditions, etc in order to maximise the benefits of international cooperation and therefore avoid the opposition of "imperialistic blocks" leading to less harmonisation and cut-throat competition. "Quality is not necessarily more expensive". Ever heard that before?

Volker Dick: Lastly, working from the ground to "unlimited" (i.e. not only upper airspace) enables the same service to be provided from Palermo to Hamburg, via Geneva or Brest. This safety chain is still the best asset for providing all users with the same quality service. It is also a bastion against an economic vision which envisages separation between what is "profitable" (above FL 285) and what is "costly" (lower levels). "Safe, reliable and efficient gate-to gate", that's our policy.

"What process will achieve the end result, the ultimate goal of MOSAIC? Do you expect a "big-bang" or a step-by-step approach?"

Volker Dick: Believing that we can create a regional European control system in one fell swoop is as unrealistic as thinking that we can build a European air traffic control service in 25 countries overnight. A progressive approach is therefore essential. This will make it possible to build up the structure in which officials will ultimately work, and ensure that the project also meets the expectations of staff. Therefore there can be no question of throwing away what we already have before we know for sure where we are going.

The first stage, level 1, is the introduction of technical and operational cooperation. An improved version of what we have already at MUAC level.



The second stage, level 2, only a transitional phase, is the pooling of income from route charges. Until now, operational projects have always been limited by financial considerations, since a flow of traffic means the generation of route charges and therefore cash for the service provider. Once the question of money and individual interests has been eliminated, common airspace management can then be set up...with a view to integration.

The third stage, level 3, will involve introducing MOSAIC internal structures as the sole service provider for the 7 countries.

Staff from the original service providers will be seconded to the new structure as European officials. With a single status and uniform high-quality training, the risk of social dumping in our profession will be eliminated and the genuine prospect of growth and efficiency will open up.

This project concerns all service provider staff and not just air traffic controllers. This is another reason why various national trade unions are supporting us on this project. The entire safety chain is involved.

Frederic Deleau: We have decided to restrict things to 7 countries plus the MUAC for the moment in order to make things easier. Other countries have already asked to join but we have to build up a solid base first, and then we will see. Some might be interested in joining and remaining at level 1, the first stage, for longer than others. This is also possible.

"What has been achieved so far?"

Frederic Deleau: We are holding meetings at regular intervals, once every six weeks on average. The last meeting held in Paris saw the start of the second phase of the project: Work on the practical structures and social conditions. All participants now have to study the reference model and hand in their comments and suggestions. Eurocontrol is certainly an exceptional reference model.

Volker Dick: We have been working round the clock, making every effort to present and defend MOSAIC. I even went with Frederic to the other side of the world to present it to the last World Conference of IFATCA in Taiwan. Letters have been sent to various ministries and airlines. We have had several high-level meetings across Europe against DFS privatisation, of course, but also to promote MOSAIC. More and more people are demonstrating an interest in and support for MOSAIC. It is quite simply the best way of showing that we are not dreamers. We cannot afford to dream in our profession! Certainly not when so many people are involved.

Frederic Deleau: As I said before, we are not professional lobbyists. We learn fast and we work hard to convince people of the logic and the benefits of our action. We are not alone fortunately and many people are doing the same thing in their respective countries. Acting as a "focal point", the TUEM is making sure that information is flowing freely. Cooperation, collaboration and the willingness to succeed are there. MOSAIC is becoming a reality.

"Are you getting support from politicians?"

Volker Dick: Of course! And from the opposition as well! You can imagine that not everyone is taking the same line, especially in Germany...(laugh) We propose to build the first regional European public service from ground to unlimited: The building of Europe has come to a grinding halt. Politicians and European stakeholders are all looking for a solution to demonstrate that Europe can be more than just an economic tool.

In this context, controllers and air navigation staff are strong. Collectively, we have the strength to actually make this idea, which politicians are discussing at length and which citizens are demanding, materialise. This is another reason why we have to act.

"What happens next?"

Frederic Deleau: We have met representatives of transport ministers, the European Parliament and airline management. We will continue to organise meetings with various parties and increase our public presence. Gaining support by explaining directly what we propose and why, is a long-term and very challenging task. In parallel, the core group of MOSAIC will develop the practical aspects based on information obtained and models studied (operational, structural and social).

"What is your final message for Insight readers?"

Volker Dick: Keep control of our future! Privatisation has always resulted in competition and vice-versa. Air traffic control would not be an exception to this rule.

The privatisation of NATS (the UK service provider) and the move to privatise the German service provider serve as good examples. You do not have to be an economist to realise that privatisation leads to cost-cutting with the aim of making savings for the shareholders. The quality and fundamentals of our service are at risk. We already have examples of ATC situations leading to dangerous developments because of financial incentives!

As professionals, we must act to defend an activity whose prime objective is to ensure the safety of all air traffic. Therefore, we have a duty to reject the competition model. Today, MOSAIC is the only credible and realistic alternative to the competition model which is emerging in air traffic control throughout continental Europe.

We must build up this model, based on cooperative alliances, as a matter of the utmost urgency. By defending the MOSAIC Project, we are making the skies a safer place. We have a duty to the travelling public and to those living below flight paths to stick to our ATM principles.

Making a mistake in the telecom business might mean giving away a few free minutes. Making a mistake in ATC might put lives at risk!

Frederic Deleau for Insight