EUROCONTROL: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2016

For a review of EUROCONTROL’s highlights for the year 2016 readers are invited to take a look at:

http://pages.exacttarget.com/eurocontrol-highlights-2016/

Picture caption
The EUROCONTROL Network Manager covers the whole of Europe – from Ireland to Armenia and from Morocco to Finland. It handles over ten million flights a year with summer peaks of over 34,000 a day. That means an aircraft is taking off or entering European airspace every three seconds. Inevitably, there are bottlenecks. These may be in particularly busy parts of airspace or at some airports at some times of day. Any disruption, such as a runway out of action, fog, a thunderstorm or technical failure, can result in difficulties.

The Network Manager receives flight plans for all the commercial flights in its area and also receives the declared capacity limits for air traffic control centres and airports across the continent. So for example if an airport has snow or fog, it may reduce the rate at which aircraft can land. This is called a regulation.

The Network Manager then looks at the whole picture and problem areas are identified – where the demand is greater than the capacity.

One solution of course is to see if the capacity can be increased. So if a controller is covering a large area and the traffic is expected to be at the limit of how many aircraft can safely be handled at a single controller position, then that area might be split into two sectors, with two controllers or teams of controllers each covering part of the traffic.