

## **MUAC implements additional sectors in Netherlands airspace to meet increasing traffic demand**

It was announced at the end of April that EUROCONTROL's Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre (MUAC) had implemented a third vertical sector layer in the western part of its airspace, in The Netherlands.

The purpose of this airspace redesign is to increase capacity in the Delta sector by creating new sector configurations based on three layers instead of the previous two.

The three layers consist of a low sector (from flight level 245 to 335 [that is 24,500 ft to 33,500ft]), a middle sector (from flight level 335 to 365 [33,500 to 36,500ft]) and a high sector (extending from flight level 365 to 660 [36,500ft to 66,000ft]). This new vertical division allows for a better distribution of workload in the Delta sector and thus ensures a safer and more sustainable service, it is reported by EUROCONTROL.

In the past two years, traffic in the airspace controlled by MUAC increased by 8.9 %, far in excess of STATFOR traffic predictions. In 2016 and 2017 alone, some 150,000 additional flights were handled by MUAC air traffic controllers. In spite of the increasing productivity of air traffic controller to 2.06 composite flight-hours per controller-hour (+ 5% in two years), total delays (due to all causes such as capacity, weather, military activity, staffing) went up to 0.67 minutes per flight in 2017. Delays over 15 minutes amounted to about 1.5% of the total traffic.

The third sector layer in Netherlands airspace will provide more flexibility in managing the traffic and will contribute to a further capacity increase in the summer – the busiest period of the year with traffic peaks of up to 5,800 flights per day in MUAC airspace. In 2018, a further 3% increase in traffic is expected in MUAC's area of responsibility.

Picture captions

MUAC 1

*The Delta sector in the western part of MUAC airspace.*

MUAC 2

*Three-layer sectorisation in the Delta sector.*