

Press Release

Luxembourg, 24 April 2018

Auditors examine modernisation programme for European air traffic management

The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit of the deployment of SESAR, the technological modernisation programme for air traffic management in the EU. The audit will examine whether the deployment is being well managed and whether it will contribute to the Single European Sky (SES) initiative.

The aim of SES is to improve the performance of European air traffic management by moving responsibility in a number of areas from intergovernmental practice to an EU framework. The initiative has gradually established a set of EU-wide rules, coupled with SESAR and backed by financial incentives.

"Air transport is a crucial component of the EU's single market. However, air traffic management in Europe has been provided in a technologically fragmented environment. This has resulted in higher costs and delays as well as negative impacts on the environment", said George Pufan, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit.

The auditors will review the need and design of EU intervention in the deployment phase of SESAR, the management of EU funding allocated to it and the extent to which performance gains are actually being delivered. They will visit EU-funded projects in Germany, Greece, France, Lithuania and Poland.

Publication of the Special Report is planned for Spring 2019.

Note to Editors

In November 2017, the European Court of Auditors published Special Report No 18/2017 ("Single European Sky: a changed culture but not a single sky") which covered a number of SES regulatory instruments as well as the definition and development phases of the SESAR project. That audit deliberately excluded the last phase – deployment – because it only formally started in 2014. It is now feasible to cover this phase, which is backed by €2.5 billion from the EU budget.

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