



ENAIRe automates communications between air traffic controllers and pilots at El Prat

- The new messaging system via data link (instead of the conventional radio channel) involves a significant step forward in terms of safety and efficiency in air traffic management
- Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat becomes the second airport in which ENAIRe introduces this technology, after Palma de Mallorca

Barcelona, 3 July 2019

ENAIRe has automated communications between pilots and air controllers that authorise take-offs at Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat Airport.

The new version of SACTA (Automated System for Air Traffic Control) installed in the control tower is the closest thing to a messaging system, which enables pilots and air traffic controllers to interact without having to resort to verbal communications via radio.

The data link between the tower and the aircraft (Data Link Departure Clearance) automates departure authorisations, avoiding any frequency saturation, expediting communications, increasing efficiency and further strengthening security, by minimising any possible misunderstandings resulting from oral communication.

The first traffic authorised to depart using this new technology was a Norwegian airline's flight to Reikiavik-Keflavík.

Barcelona is the second Spanish control tower to install the data link system, after Palma de Mallorca, which has been operating with the Data Link Departure Clearance since 12 June.

This information can be used, in whole or in part, without citing the source.

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ENAIRe's commitment to "Barcelona a Punt"

This new milestone is framed within ENAIRe's Technological Modernisation Plan and fulfils the commitment taken on by the company within the "Barcelona a Punt" initiative promoted by the Ministry of Public Works to improve the capacity of Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat Airport.

How does it work?

Before the flight departs, the air controller and pilot establish a voice communication in which, in addition to checking the submitted flight plan, parking and meteorological information, an initial authorisation is provided by the aerodrome control service.

Thanks to the Datalink Departure Clearance (D-DCL) service, ENAIRe has replaced oral communication between pilots and controllers with electronic messages, expediting operations and improving the frequency saturation issue currently affecting large airports or seasonal airports in high season.

As regards the dynamics, it starts by the crew sending a message that is revised by the system before showing it to the air controller. If all the data are correct, the air controller sends a response message authorising the pilot, who communicates by radio with the next controller without further interaction. In the event of any discrepancies, errors or time-parameter breaches in the information, voice communication is used.

Communications via data link use ACARS-type coded technology; therefore, the aircraft must be appropriately equipped. This new service completes the new functionalities in the airport's Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) system with Aena, EUROCONTROL, the airlines and ENAIRe.

About ENAIRe

ENAIRe is the company belonging to the Public Works Department that provides air navigation services in Spain. It renders aerodrome control services at 21 airports, including the busiest in terms of air traffic, plus en-route and approach control, from five control centres: Barcelona, Madrid, Gran Canaria, Palma and Seville. In addition, 45 air control towers receive communication, navigation and surveillance services from ENAIRe.

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In 2018 ENAIRE handled 2.1 million flights to and from four continents (Europe, America, Asia and Africa), transporting 300 million passengers.

ENAIRE is the fourth most important European air navigation service provider, and, in a clear commitment to the Single Sky initiative, belongs to international partnerships such as SESAR (Single European Sky ATM Research) Joint Undertaking, SESAR Deployment Manager, A6, ITEC, CANSO (Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation) and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization).

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