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AIC A 009/2021
Effective Date: 26-AUG-2021
Publication Date: 26-AUG-2021

Procedures for the conduct of flights in airspace contaminated with volcanic ash

1. General

The purpose of this AIC is to provide operators, owners and maintenance organisations with new guidance on aircraft operations where volcanic ash contamination may be a hazard for flight operations.

This promulgation explains, in particular, the procedures for aircraft operators that are subject to the scope of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 in conjunction with Regulation (EU) 965/2012. The procedures are in line with the recommendations of the ICAO, ICAO Doc 9974 and of the EASA, EASA Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) 2010-17R7, which means that they are in line with the procedures of the Member States of the European Union, and with the EUR Doc 019 / NAT Doc 006, Part II VOLCANIC ASH CONTINGENCY PLAN- EUROPEAN AND NORTH ATLANTIC REGIONS.

2. Principles for flight operations in airspace contaminated with volcanic ash

- The aircraft operator is responsible for the safety of its operations under the oversight of the competent aeronautical authority. The guiding principle for flight operations in airspace contaminated with volcanic ash is the conduct of a safety risk assessment in line with the procedure described in ICAO Doc 9974 and in the EASA Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) 2010-17R7.
- Flights through visible or discernible volcanic ash should be avoided, in particular, if the visibility of the ash is impeded (e.g. in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), at night).
- As part of their safety management system (SMS), operators should provide for adequate safety risk assessments to investigate and decide if flight operations can be conducted into airspace forecast to be or aerodromes known to be contaminated with volcanic ash. Such safety risk assessments should have been accepted through the competent aeronautical authority.
- The safety and control measures set out in ICAO Doc 9974 and the EASA Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) 2010-17R7 are considered sufficient to facilitate acceptance, without further investigation, by a State whose airspace is forecast to be contaminated with volcanic ash. On the basis of the implementation of these internationally accepted safety management principles, the State can be confident in the ability of operators from other States to undertake operations safely in its airspace.

3. Definitions

The following definitions of contamination are applicable in the Republic of Croatia regarding operation of aircraft in airspace contaminated with volcanic ash:

- i. Areas of low contamination:
An airspace of defined dimensions where volcanic ash may be encountered at concentrations greater than $0.2 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g/m}^3$, but less than or equal to $2 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g/m}^3$.
- ii. Areas of medium contamination:
An airspace of defined dimensions where volcanic ash may be encountered at concentrations greater than $2 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g/m}^3$, but less than $4 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g/m}^3$.
- iii. Areas of high contamination:
An airspace of defined dimensions where volcanic ash may be encountered at concentrations equal to or greater than $4 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g/m}^3$.

These definitions are consistent with ICAO EUR/NAT Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan (VACP) (ICAO EUR Doc 019 / NAT Doc 006, Part II) and the EASA Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) 2010-17R7.

4. SRA (Safety Risk Assessment) application in the Republic of Croatia

4.1 Areas of ash contamination

In the Republic of Croatia aircraft operators will be allowed to make decisions based on their SRA in the forecast areas of low, medium and high ash contamination. Therefore, the Republic of Croatia will allow operators to make decisions based on their SRA, as accepted by their respective State regulatory authority, in forecast areas of low, medium and high ash contamination.

4.2 Common SRA recognition

As part of its overall decision making process regarding the operation of aircraft in airspace forecast to be, or aerodromes known to be, contaminated with volcanic ash, the Republic of Croatia will allow aircraft operators registered in other States to base their decisions on their SRA, as accepted by their State regulatory authority, in accordance with the above mentioned approach (see 4.1) to decision making in the Republic of Croatia.

5. This general regulation shall not be applied for the following flights

- Flights for which the pilot has declared an emergency, or which are apparently in an emergency situation,
- Security flight of air defence,
- Flights by the armed forces and the police,
- Flights transporting sick or injured person requiring immediate assistance, including flights urgently required for life-saving medical care of sick or injured persons,
- Flights performed by piston-engined aircraft,
- Flights performed by non-power driven aircraft.