

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR Y 104/2018

UNITED KINGDOM



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Date Of Publication

13 Dec 2018

Subject

Operational

Cancellation

AIC Y 068/2016



RE-DESIGNATION OF AIRWAYS BELOW FL 245 TO CONTROL AREAS (CTAS)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Since 2010 the UK ATS Route network inside Controlled Airspace (CAS) has been promulgated as RNAV-5, with all aircraft requiring RNAV-5 capability, unless specifically exempted. The UK AIP enables promulgation of airspace structures such as CTAs, with defined lateral and vertical dimensions, in ENR 2.1. ENR 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 are all designated for the promulgation of Routes, with ENR 3.3 specifically designated for RNAV Routes and ENR 5 reserved for Danger and Restricted Areas.
- 1.2 ICAO Annex 15 requires all RNAV routes to be promulgated in the State's AIP under ENR 3.3, with non-RNAV being listed in ENR 3.1 and 3.2. Since 2010 UK ATS Routes have been promulgated as RNAV-5 and published in ENR 3.1 and 3.2. Consequently the UK has been in contravention of Annex 15 requirements, but has not yet filed a Difference with ICAO in this respect.
- 1.3 UK Airspace change sponsors have continued to submit and publish change proposals to the CAA in a non-ICAO compliant format, and once approved, the CAA has not, to date, corrected this methodology. ICAO, through the Eurocontrol Route Network Development Sub-Group, has brought this to the attention of the UK CAA and requested that the issue be addressed or a Difference filed. The CAA feels that compliance is within the UK's capability, and would therefore like to progress to a position whereby the RNAV ATS Route network is promulgated in the UK AIP in accordance with ICAO Annex 15.

2 Justification for Change

- 2.1 ICAO Annex 15 details the format required, including the columns to be completed in ENR 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. However, ENR 3.1 and 3.2, because they are not intended for RNAV Routes, have a column for promulgating the width of an ATS Route as the CAS dimensions in which a route is contained – in most cases this is the 'Airway'. An Airway is defined by ICAO as '*a Control Area or portion thereof established in the form of a corridor*' (ICAO Annex 11) and a CTA as '*an area of Controlled Airspace extending upwards from a specified limit above the earth*'.
- 2.2 Publishing the RNAV ATS Routes in ENR 3.1 and 3.2 does allow the State to promulgate the width of the associated airspace, whether it be the standard 10nm wide 'Airway' or a non-standard 8nm, 12nm or 14nm width 'Control Area....in the form of corridor'; however, this is not ICAO compliant and therefore necessitates change.
- 2.3 Additionally, in accordance with CAP1054 (CAA's implementation of the ADQIR in UK) all existing aeronautical information with an inherent ICAO integrity value should meet EU data quality standards by January 2019. Promulgation of CTAs in place of pre-existing ATS Route structures would provide an opportunity to meet ADQIR (EU) 73/2010 data quality requirements.

3 Customer Requirements

- 3.1 Airspace stakeholders, including air traffic controllers, chart/map providers, AIS, flight plan data providers and general aviation need access to accurate and coherent information in order to be able to accurately ascertain and plot CAS boundaries. As airspace has evolved, many Airways have had portions appended and annotated in the 'Route Remarks' in ENR 3.1 and 3.2. Consequently the number of sources from which to derive the pertinent information has become spread over ENR 2.1, ENR 3.1 and 3.2, and even ENR 5 (which details various bespoke areas), creating a time consuming process and causing potential confusion, inconsistency and scope for errors.
- 3.2 The structure of ENR 3.3 does not accommodate the promulgation of UK RNAV airspace in its current construct, as there is no scope for detailing the actual airspace, therefore a large amount of extraneous information would have to be included in the Route Remarks – again leaving scope for confusion and error, not least during the transcription of the information. In order to provide the information in a consistent, compliant format, and to reduce the burden on stakeholders needing to interpret the data in the interests of flight safety, an alternative construct.

4 Re-designation of Airways as Control Areas

- 4.1 Re-designation of a number of Airways and groups of Airways to CTAs enables promulgation of the defined airspace dimensions in ENR 2.1. In order to effect this change all CAS where RNAV ATS Routes are published below FL 245 will be converted into CTAs, fully reflecting the dimensions and classification of the extant CAS. Consequent to this, a phased transfer of the information of remaining RNAV ATS routes, which are not part of a larger airspace construct, can be implemented into ENR 3.3 to ensure ICAO compliance, without requiring extraneous Route Remark information.
- 4.2 Simultaneously, for further simplification, it is proposed to remove the 'U' designator prefix associated with Upper RNAV ATS Routes (where a route still has one) in order that the RNAV ATS Route can be promulgated from CAS base level to FL 460 as appropriate. Where the Upper and Lower portions of an RNAV ATS Route do not align corrective action will be undertaken.
- 4.3 Definition and promulgation of the UK airspace structure in this way will create one consistent source for CAS dimensions (ENR 2) and one for Danger and Restricted Areas (ENR 5). These can be used to promulgate and, when agreed, amend airspace dimensions within the UK, without necessarily having to change RNAV ATS Route alignments and vice versa.
- 4.4 Finally, this construct give an 'identity' to areas of Class C airspace between FL 195 and FL 245 that are currently outwith any areas reserved for military use. Detailed conditions regarding which ATS Unit would be responsible for the provision of ATS within this newly defined airspace, including protocols regarding access arrangements to these portions of airspace would be agreed and laid out in Letters of Agreement between the ATS Units concerned.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Describing the CAS below FL 245/FL 195 in the UK FIRs by establishing more CTAs and extending existing CTAs enables the UK to promulgate its remaining ATS Route network in an ICAO-compliant format as well as significantly reducing the size of the UK AIP, minimising the need for duplication and the associated potential for errors.
- 5.2 Given there is no change to the lateral or vertical dimensions or classification of CAS, and no change to the tracks of aircraft using the routes, the CAA can make these changes through regularisation with no need to invoke the Airspace Change Process. This work is being implemented on a phased basis in agreement with the air traffic Area Control Centres and other affected ATS Units until the end of 2020.