

RP 2

Effective from 5th December 2016

Airport capacity reductions

1. PURPOSE

This document is aiming at providing guidance to slot coordinators about how to manage those events that reduce capacity such that there is a significant impact on the airport ability to accommodate demand.

2. REFERENCES

EU Slot Regulation 95/93 (amended)

- Art. 2(m) – definition of “coordination parameters”
- Art. 5(1) – tasks of the coordination committee
- Art. 6 – determination of coordination parameters
- Art. 8(5) – rules and guidelines for slot allocation
- Art. 10(4) – reasons for the non-utilisation of slots

IATA Worldwide Slot Guidelines

- Section 6.8 – seasonal review of airport capacity
- Section 6.9 – reduction in airport capacity

National procedures

Local rules and agreed procedures

3. PREAMBLE

Events can be of different nature (i.e. planned/unplanned, short-term/long-term, short notice/long notice, critical/non critical) and as such should be treated differently.

Ideally, any planned event having significant impact on airport capacity should be identified and communicated in a timely manner and well in advance of the start of the slot coordination processes for the airport and the season concerned (i.e. SHL submission or capacity declaration, whatever comes first).

Late notice of planned events should be strongly discouraged whenever possible. Notwithstanding, if there are no means to postpone the planned event to a later season, the process described hereafter should be respected and followed as much as possible.

Unplanned events are inevitable and by their nature cannot be anticipated. When they do occur the process hereafter should be followed where possible, but adapted to the circumstances and time constraints.

Regular pro-active communications to all stakeholders is essential at every stage of the process, and the slot coordinators will ensure their website is regularly updated with the latest information.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The airport capacity provider, or the designated competent authority where different, should provide details about the event (airport, season, dates and hours involved, type of event, type of traffic affected, etc.).

This information must include an evaluation, based on a thorough capacity analysis, of the level of reduction on the declared capacity parameters (% of reduction), as well as the careful and proper justification of the selected dates/times and the need and inevitability of the event when planned. This information should be distributed to the Member State, the slot coordinator and other relevant stakeholders in the Slot Coordination Committee of the airport concerned for consultation and discussion in the Slot Coordination Committee.

Whenever the timeline does not allow a formal consultation with the Slot Coordination Committee, a dedicated meeting with stakeholders affected by the capacity reduction (e.g. Member State, airport, ATC, most operating carriers, airline associations and slot coordinator) should be convened.

Based on the information provided, the slot coordinator will prepare an impact assessment and recommended actions for discussion and agreement within the Slot Coordination Committee (or any other equivalent body with recognized representation, as indicated before).

This assessment and recommended actions from the slot coordinator should include, at the minimum, the following information:

- Evaluation of the impact of the capacity reduction
- Action plan to meet the reduced capacity and other mitigation measures as follows (when necessary and according to local circumstances):

- Evaluation of the need to restrict access to the airport for new flights.
- Proposal to minimize impact by applying a certain degree of flexibility in some capacity restrictions (e.g. night restrictions, terminal restrictions, noise, etc.), the way they are applied (e.g. fix/rolling hour, relevant coordination time intervals, etc.) or the different use of the resources available (including the possibility of using alternative airports).
- Level of flight cancellations (voluntary and/or mandatory) and proposal to share it amongst carriers according to fair criteria
- Level of rescheduling to be requested to operators, detailing its distribution per date and hour
- Proposal (if found necessary) of adjusting/sizing resources on slot coordination (e.g. staff, working hours, shifts, etc.) and/or established special procedures (e.g. out-of-office hours, systems, etc.)
- Criteria for the monitoring of slot compliance of daily operations during the event
- Criteria for the determination of historic slots for the next equivalent season and conditions for granting force majeure

When proposed actions to meet the reduced capacity include the need to cancel and/or reschedule flights, their distribution amongst carriers should be according to fair and transparent criteria which also should consider factors like:

- The allocation priorities recognised in the worldwide industry slot guidelines and known as 'primary criteria' (e.g. historic slots, changes to historic slots, new entrants, year round operations, etc.)
 - The fair distribution by type of service, market and/or route (i.e. 'additional criteria')
 - The more efficient way to minimize impact on schedules (in terms of number of movements and/or the magnitude/scale of the reschedule)
- Other possible implications (i.e. impact on public service obligation routes, other end of route issues, etc.)

Once the consultations about the event and the action plan proposed by the slot coordinator have taken place within the Slot Coordination Committee or equivalent, the slot coordinator will execute the plan and update that Slot Coordination Committee or equivalent at future ordinary meetings and whenever necessary.

In the event that the execution of the action plan means unavoidably the withdrawal and/or reschedule of any historic slot at the airport concerned, then the slot coordinator should be empowered for doing so by the relevant national authority (i.e. legal mandate).

Unplanned events leading to on the day significant capacity reductions should be managed by the airport operations centre. Depending of the nature of the disruption, a NOTAM may be issued advising all operators about the event. The Air Traffic Flow rate may be reduced if required.

The slot coordinator should be informed about the event and the impact on the capacity and will adapt the coordination parameters accordingly. This information will be also considered for slot monitoring purposes. Unless exceptional and justified circumstances occur, the slot coordinator will give dispensation in line with the EU slot regulation to flights that have not operated during the event.

Having a local rule and/or agreed procedures for unplanned events can make it easier to quickly request the required actions on the schedule once the impact is understood and give reassurance that the actions requested are fair and transparent to all operators. These local rule or agreed procedures should anyway exist to cover unusual situations or crisis involving a major loss of capacity and/or a major imbalance between capacity and demand (i.e. critical event).

Regular pro-active communications to all stakeholders is essential at every stage of the process, and the slot coordinators will ensure their website is regularly updated with the latest information.

The exchange of information with other slot coordinators throughout the whole process may be of relevance to support any decision about exemption of the 80/20 rule, or any other dispensation of existing regulations and rules, at the other end of the route.

A final report or event summary with the outcome of the process should be produced after the event, distributed to all Slot Coordination Committee members and shared with all relevant stakeholders and the coordinator community within EUACA and WWACG.