

10 February 2010

Official inauguration of CANAC 2

Today, 10 February 2010 is a memorable day for Belgocontrol. It is the official inauguration of CANAC 2, the most important programme launched by Belgocontrol since its creation.

The new CANAC 2 air traffic control centre implements an innovative operational concept designed by Belgocontrol experts: it includes not only the air traffic control centre but also the control towers at the five Belgian public airports thus forming a consistent and dynamic system based on a tactical management of air traffic. This concept, supported by the latest technological innovations, offers an optimal efficiency and quality of services. The new system significantly improves capacity and punctuality as well as safety, which is and remains the priority mission of Belgocontrol.

Jean-Claude Tintin, Chief Executive Officer of Belgocontrol, says the following: «Thanks to CANAC 2, Belgocontrol ranks among the top of European air traffic control centres. It also enables our company to position itself as a major stakeholder within FABEC, the future Functional Airspace Bloc Europe Central, which is the cornerstone of the future Single European Sky. »

The implementation of the new CANAC 2 centre began in September 2007. It took a little over two years between the commissioning and the putting into service of the centre, which is an outstanding performance.

After drawing up the terms and conditions and selecting the suppliers, the order for the Eurocat-E system was placed in September 2007 with the Thales ATM company. Its adaptation to our needs and the integration of the existing systems or those being developed within Belgocontrol, mobilized our engineers, our technicians and our air traffic controllers for many months. At the same time, we had to organise the training of the operational and technical staff for its future new environment and then to test and integrate the system in careful stages through the "shadowing", which is a transitional period in which the operational room of the former CANAC was ready to take over the activities should any problem arise. The whole process was the subject of safety cases until the putting into service of CANAC 2 under the constant supervision of our Safety Management Unit and the Belgian Supervisory Authority (BSA).

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The new air traffic control centre of Belgocontrol was put into service discreetly and successfully on 28 November 2009 and from that date onwards the air traffic controllers could get used to the new system and make sure that it worked well. It now replaces the former CANAC, which dated from 1993 and that no longer fitted the present performance needs and the technological evolution necessary to create the Single European Sky. We have to point out that the transition took place without a noticeable reduction in capacity and with no major drawbacks for the customers.

Belgocontrol now has at its disposal the most modern air traffic control centre in Europe. It was designed taking into consideration a possible and hoped for integration of the military and also offers the possibility to expand the controlled zone both horizontally and vertically. Besides, the company benefits from the unique experience of its air traffic controllers in managing Europe's most complex airspace area.

BELGOCONTROL is an autonomous public company, created in October 1998, with the mission to guarantee the safety of air navigation in the airspace for which Belgium is responsible. Its zone of activities extends from ground level (at Brussels airport and the airports of Antwerp, Charleroi, Liege and Ostend) to 8,000 metres for Belgium and from 4,500 to 8,000 metres for the grand duchy of Luxembourg. The Eurocontrol centre in Maastricht is responsible for the area above 8,000 metres, and jointly manages the air traffic of the upper airspace of Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the western part of Germany. Belgocontrol manages the air traffic at five public airports: permanently at Brussels Airport, Antwerp, Charleroi, and Ostend, and only at night during the week and 24/24h during weekends in Liege (the military is responsible for the traffic control by day during the week).

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