Together we are strong

DFS needs to work together with its customers and partners to fulfil its demanding mission.
Dear reader,

This edition of the DFS company magazine focuses on the different aspects of our working together, be it with our customers or partners.

Our customers’ needs are one of our top priorities. After all, DFS is a modern service provider organised as a private sector company and satisfying such needs is a challenge that DFS employees rise to as a matter of course. Our employees are highly motivated and enjoy a fine reputation around the globe. Using our cutting-edge technology, they ensure the safe and punctual flow of air traffic. Traffic that is handled in a cost-efficient and environmentally friendly manner. This is all accomplished in the country with the highest traffic volume in Europe. A formidable task that DFS cannot manage single-handedly. We manage this task in close and constant contact with our customers and partners. We factor in their requirements and needs when making corporate decisions while simultaneously seeking the best solutions for the air transport industry, the environment and the company.

Having said this, providing air navigation services is not merely an essential service, it is in essence a State function, a sovereign task. This aspect should not be overlooked when DFS is the focus of discussion. DFS is wholly owned by the Federal Republic of Germany and thus enjoys a special status in the aviation industry. We are not simply the provider of services; our number one priority is to fulfil our statutory obligations. Nearly every organisational unit of our company has some type of contact with customers and partners.

Working closely together with our partners and customers has become even more critical due to the present subdued economic situation facing the German aviation industry. Bringing about a societal and political climate that is more responsive to the needs of the aviation industry is one of the goals we are pursuing together. For just this type of purpose, DFS has been actively involved in the German Aviation Association (BDL). Only when we act as one can we bring about positive change. The statistics for traffic development and safety clearly show just how tightly interwoven our work with our customers and partners is and how strong the attendant repercussions are. To illustrate this, we are including our annual Mobility Report 2013 in this special English edition of transmission.

We wish you an enjoyable read.

Prof Klaus-Dieter Scheurle,
Chief Executive Officer of DFS
Collaboration

4 Finger on the pulse of our customers
The DFS Customer Relations department is the interface between the airlines and the operational units of the company.

7 Together we are strong
DFS is in close dialogue with customers and partners. This exchange impacts many of the decisions the company takes.

8 An approach that saves fuel
How can airlines reduce their costs? The working group Optimised Flying set up by DFS has developed numerous measures.

10 Cooperation between ground and cockpit
How well does the collaboration actually work? transmission interviewed a DFS air traffic controller and a Lufthansa pilot.

12 “The same rules for everyone”
Klaus-Peter Siegloch, president of the German Aviation Association, about his aims for the German air transport industry.

Mobility Report 2013

15 Safe and on time
Aircraft in German airspace enjoy the highest levels of safety and punctuality. In 2013, DFS handled 2.95 million flights.

Inside DFS

31 DFS news
Finger on the pulse of our customers

The DFS Customer Relations department is the interface between the airlines and the operational units of the company. It is their job to continually improve the mutual understanding between DFS and its customers.
seen from the outside, a customer relations department of an air navigation service provider such as DFS might seem to have a thankless job. After all, they represent an organisation that hardly gets any notice from the general public. The public face of aviation belongs to others: the pilots in the cockpit, the flight attendants in the cabin and the staff at the check-in counter at the airport. The air navigation services only ever enter public consciousness if they do something like restrict air traffic when volcanic ash from an Icelandic volcano covers Europe. Or when new flight routes are introduced at new or expanded airports. At times like those, many different parties are apt to voice their lack of understanding, aggravation and critical views to DFS.

This is when the experts for customer relations are needed with their extensive knowledge, their contacts both within and outside DFS and their skills at mediating disputes. “We take customer needs seriously,” says Ralf Diedrich, head of Customer Relations at DFS. “We can’t always follow up on every bit of minutiae, but if it is important to our customer, we look at the issue with them and try to optimise things.” From his words, it is obvious the former commercial aircraft pilot for ambulance, business and cargo flights does not think his job is in the least bit thankless. His department is the official point of contact for airline complaints and comprises a three-member team whose job it is to weigh the various interests and find a balance between customer needs and safety requirements. Thanks to inside knowledge of the industry, he enjoys a high level of acceptance with customers. “Our aviation experience is highly appreciated by our customers,” stresses Diedrich.

Another member of the team, Dirk Pulver, also has relevant experience as a pilot. He earned his pilot’s licence with Lufthansa flight training and manned the cockpit in both Boeing and Airbus aircraft for almost two decades. His role in the team is as the interface between DFS and the airlines for flight operational issues. Tobias Kapitzke is the third member of the team. He is a trained computer specialist and has a business degree with a specialism in marketing communication. “His professional profile and analytical skills make him perfect for the job as our specialist for evaluating data and customer feedback,” explains Diedrich.

Each complaint will be answered within a period of four weeks.

A key task in customer relations is complaint management. A complaint management process was developed by the Customer Relations department some years ago and now is used across the company. Each complaint addressed to DFS by the airlines or general aviation is recorded and entered into a database. The DFS unit responsible for the relevant area is informed. Each unit has a designated person who has access to this complaint database.

Before a response to the complaint is sent, it has to be signed off on by all the relevant units as regards both content and the channel of communication used. “Each complaint should be answered within a period of four weeks,” says Diedrich. Complex complaints that involve changes to airspace procedures are an exception. Handling such cases is just not possible within four weeks.

Military units have been able to use the complaint management system for four years. This access by the flying units of the German Bundeswehr is regulated by a special agreement between DFS and the Bundeswehr Air Traffic Services Office (AFSBw). This is regulated by a special agreement between DFS and the Bundeswehr Air Traffic Services Office. The agreement allows military airspace users to turn directly to DFS with any complaints they may have, bypassing the official military procedure for filing a complaint. The military competence centre at DFS examines each complaint with regard to its safety relevance before it passes it on to Customer Relations who process the case together with the military experts. Ralf Diedrich thinks the directness of this procedure is its greatest advantage: “The person filing the complaint can express the problem directly to us and gets a response directly from DFS,” explains Diedrich. This method is advantageous for both parties. “Complaint management is more or less free consulting for DFS.”

In addition to handling complaints, the Customer Relations department organises events with and for customers and conducts regular customer surveys. Events at which airlines can express their views include the Heads of Operations Meeting, the Chief Pilots Round Table and the Safety Meeting. These have proven to be effective forums for the exchange of ideas and are well-liked by DFS customers.

The Heads of Operations Meeting takes place twice a year; once in spring and once in autumn. At the moment, it only encompasses the heads of operations from the major German, Austrian and Swiss airlines. DFS presents its current programmes and projects and informs the heads
Collaboration of operations about any new systems being introduced. "Larger projects require an intense exchange of ideas," explains Diedrich. As an example, he mentioned the case of the new tower at Frankfurt Airport which went into operation in June 2011 and is located to the north of the original parallel runways. "In a case like that, we inform our customers about when and where there may be capacity restrictions or delays caused by the transition."

All chief pilots of the major airlines that fly to Frankfurt Airport, about 50, are invited to the Chief Pilots Round Table that takes place once a year. This event first took place at the invitation of Stefan Frenz, a tower supervisor. Today, it is a joint undertaking by Frankfurt Tower and the Customer Relations department. This international meeting covers not only topics such as night-time flying restrictions at the airport or changes in the glide path angle but it is also a good opportunity for any misunderstandings to be cleared up because of the direct contact between the pilots and DFS staff.

The operational Safety Meeting also takes place once a year. It is a meeting that brings together the safety pilots of the chief German airlines with safety specialists from the DFS business units Control Centre and Tower. In the foreground are safety topics such as safety standards in flight operations, the reporting system and how to avoid radiotelephony miscommunication.

The latest event to have been added to the Customer Relations department’s repertoire is Pilots’ Day, a function for private pilots. It was held for the first time in 2011 and has also proven to be very popular, fully booked with 600 participants each year. “Private pilots are not paying customers but they also use airspace which controlled traffic uses,” explains Diedrich. The goal of the event is to quell any fears that private pilots may have in regard to air traffic control and to familiarise them with the services DFS provides. “Many of them don’t know how the flight information service (FIS) actually works. Or what support services DFS offers to private pilots,” says Dirk Pulver.

The overriding goal of all these initiatives is to develop mutual understanding. The various customer surveys that measure customer satisfaction with DFS air navigation services also have this goal in mind. The shrinking number of complaints is evidence that the department’s work has been fruitful. According to Ralf Diedrich, the relations between DFS and its customers have been continually improving. “There are fewer disputes and a more professional tone in our dealings with each other.”

Holger Matthies

Ralf Diedrich, Head of Customer Relations (on the right) with his team member Tobias Kapitzke at Pilots’ Day 2012. Photo: H. Matthies
Together we are strong

As an air navigation service provider, DFS is in close dialogue with customers and partners. This exchange impacts many of the decisions the company takes.

DFS controls around three million flights each year. Every hour, about 100 aircraft take off or land at the large German hubs. Such a high capacity level can only be achieved if all the partners involved act as one. There are many examples that demonstrate the effective working relationship between airports, airlines and air navigation services. Take, for example, airport collaborative decision-making (Airport CDM), which ensures that all the processes between landing and the next take-off are optimised so that there is hardly any backlog or waiting time on the ground. Air navigation services, airlines and airports are also working intensively together in the area of noise abatement. DFS, for example, cannot simply decide for itself which routes are to be flown. Such decisions require an intensive exchange between all those involved and affected. Such an intensive exchange requires a forum. The Forum Flughafen und Region Frankfurt is one example. It was set up for Frankfurt Airport and the surrounding region and provides a place for dialogue not just for representatives of air navigation services, airlines and airports but also for politicians, trade unionists and representatives from religious organisations and other associations.

“DFS and the corporate decisions it makes have an impact on air transport in Germany that should not be underestimated. On the other hand, decisions taken by our partners influence our actions,” explains DFS CEO Klaus-Dieter Scheurle. “That’s why we could not do without the intensive dialogue with our customers and partners, a dialogue where both sides really view each other as partners.”

DFS is a member of the Bundesverband der Deutschen Luftverkehrs­wirtschaft (BDL), the German Aviation Association, where it works with its partners to ensure that the interests of the air transport industry are safeguarded. After all, this industry employs around 325,000 people in Germany alone and is a crucial component of what makes Germany so attractive as a place to do business. This industry guarantees the mobility of people and goods and ensures a standard of living that most people do not want to do without. However, the fact that DFS is wholly owned by the Federal Republic of Germany means that the company takes on a special role in this grouping of partners. Even though the company has been operating as a company under private law for 21 years since it was corporatised, it carries out a sovereign task on behalf of the Federal Government. Under the Single European Sky regulations, the European Union has introduced a clear separation between regulatory and operational functions in air navigation services. This means that a supervisory authority checks that the operational organisation meets all the requirements and demands placed on it. In Germany, this function is taken on by the Federal Supervisory Authority for Air Navigation Services, known by its short form BAF. The working relationship with this authority has become a vital component of the work of DFS.

Another vital component of the work of DFS is the relationship with its customers – the airlines. DFS offers its customers capacity, punctuality and above all safety and all this in the most environmentally friendly manner possible. The challenge here is that these goals all impact each other and sometimes even conflict with each other. A measure that is better for the environment is not always safer. A measure that creates more capacity is not always more cost-efficient. To continuously improve capacity, environmental friendliness, punctuality and safety, DFS has to work together with its customers and partners to find the right solutions. The latest example of this is the Flight Efficiency Campaign. This initiative aims at further optimising vertical flight efficiency, which can lead to fuel savings of more than 50 kilogrammes per flight.

___ Sandra Ciupka ___
An approach that saves fuel

How can airlines reduce their costs? The working group Optimised Flying set up by DFS with its customers has developed numerous measures. As a first step, approach procedures that save large amounts of fuel have been tested. This has been surprisingly successful.

How much fuel does an airplane consume? That depends on the type of aircraft, the engines, the load and the weather conditions. But it also depends on the decisions that every air traffic controller makes and that have a direct effect on flight efficiency. Direct routings in the horizontal plane help avoid unnecessarily long flight paths and save fuel. But aircraft do not only travel in the horizontal plane. The vertical dimension is also important. When an airplane can be kept at cruising level for as long as possible and then allowed to descend in a continuous manner instead of in steps, fuel consumption is considerably lower. Continuous Descent Operation (CDO) is the official designation for this procedure that saves considerable amounts of fuel and money for the airlines.

At least that is the theory. DFS and some major airlines have examined the potential for real savings. Air traffic controllers at the DFS control centres in Munich, Bremen, Langen and Karlsruhe have been requested to use the CDO procedure, that is, to let pilots determine their descent profile themselves. At least, whenever the traffic situation allows. In addition, the upper area control centre in Karlsruhe has struck an agreement with the adjacent control centres allowing flights in its sectors to remain at cruising level for longer periods of time.

Trial operations at three airports in Germany began last autumn. Hannover Airport has already switched from the trial phase to regular operations. Frankfurt Airport is still testing and Munich keeps expanding the parameters. In Munich, only the Lufthansa Airbus 320 family was initially involved in the trials. In the meantime, the trials have been expanded to include Lufthansa long-haul flights, Lufthansa City Line and the Air Berlin fleet.

Initial results show that the percentage of CDO approaches on selected routes could be increased during the trial operations at all three airports. At Munich Airport, this meant that 40 percent of all flights arriving from the west used CDO while 17 percent of all flights arriving from the east did so. At Hannover Airport, the highest percentage of CDO approaches exceeded 40 percent. At Frankfurt Airport, there was a 20 percent increase in the use of CDO by flights via the NELLI waypoint located to the south near Stuttgart. Before the trial operations had even begun, air traffic controllers were able to offer a great number of CDO approaches on two further routes due to the airspace structure.

**Flight profiles at Munich Airport:** With conventional approaches, aircraft descend in steps (right). The cluster of lines on the left are the CDO approaches. CDO means a late but continuous descent.
On average, about 43 percent of all approaches on these routes flew the optimised descent.

CDO is actually nothing new. At times of low traffic, these procedures are already widely in use and air traffic controllers offer them whenever possible. However, when traffic volume increases, limits to its use are soon reached. If approaching aircraft have to be lined up at close intervals or if air traffic controllers need to coordinate approaches and departures on crossing routes, then it is not possible to offer continuous descent approaches. The weather plays a decisive role as well. Furthermore, each aircraft type has different descent capabilities. When controllers tell pilots to descend at their own discretion, adequate separation between arrivals and departures is no longer ensured.

To offer CDO more often, DFS Munich has been testing a new idea. Along the approach routes, altitude “windows” were established so that pilots of approaching aircraft can choose their own altitude within these limits. Thus, pilots have flexibility in the horizontal as well as vertical plane. If pilots want an early descent because of wind conditions, load or the aircraft type, they can fly at the lower limit. If pilots want to start the descent as late as possible, they can remain at the upper limit.

This makes CDO more predictable for air traffic controllers. The trial operations showed that, used in this manner, CDO can also be offered at medium traffic volumes not just at low ones. After the success at Munich Airport, the idea was taken on by Frankfurt Airport, too. “Windows” have also been developed for selected approach routes to Frankfurt Airport that are now being tested in simulations.

The trial operations are not only meant to increase the percentage of CDO approaches. DFS and the airlines want to examine what financial advantages can be gained by implementing late and continuous descents. In cooperation with the Technical University of Dresden, they are calculating the consumption levels of aircraft flying CDOs as compared to conventional approaches, distinguishing between the factors of flight profiles, wind, aircraft type and configuration. A report with the results is expected in summer 2014.

Initial estimates are already available, however. Together with Lufthansa, a simulation was conducted that used various aircraft types at Munich Airport. The flight simulator showed that an A320 uses approximately 40 kilograms less fuel when flying CDO instead of a conventional descent profile. An Embraer 190/195 saves around 50 kilograms; and for long-hauls about 95 kilograms. That may not seem like much at first – but when multiplied by the large amount of traffic, a hefty sum results. Lufthansa calculates that they could save EUR 400,000 annually if their fleet flew this increased number of CDOs to Munich Airport.

Christopher Belz

Optimised Flying working group

How can the German ANSP help airlines to optimise their operational procedures and lower costs? To answer this question, DFS founded the working group Optimised Flying in 2013. Together with the airlines Air Berlin, Condor, Lufthansa, TUI fly and Germania and the German Aviation Association (BDL), DFS has developed a comprehensive set of measures.

These include many operational measures that are already in use – for example, increased civil use of military airspace to the west of Frankfurt. In addition, long-term suggestions for improvements to the political/regulatory framework conditions in European airspace have been made – for example, that satellite-based navigation be used as the primary means of navigation throughout Europe in the future while ground navigation aids be reduced to a minimum.

Finally, the participants agreed to concentrate on the one operational measure that holds the most promise: the optimisation of vertical approach profiles. The starting point was a trial operation at Munich Airport as earlier agreed by DFS and Lufthansa. The Optimised Flying working group decided to expand trial operations to include Hannover and Frankfurt airports as well.
Cooperation between ground and cockpit

Collaboration

Pilots and air traffic controllers must be able to rely on each other. But, how well does the collaboration between pilots and controllers actually work? *transmission* interviewed Roman Glöckner, a DFS air traffic controller, and Bernd Wendt, a Lufthansa pilot.

Mr Glöckner, when did you last get annoyed with a pilot?

ROMAN GLÖCKNER: I guess it was about a week ago. In any case, you have to remain professional even when you get annoyed. Some pilots react quicker than others. Some pilots need to be told twice. If a pilot doesn’t react quickly enough, the controller’s plan might not work out as planned. For example, someone doesn’t vacate the runway fast enough. That can be exasperating, but fortunately there are always alternate courses of action.

Mr Wendt, how satisfied are German pilots with air traffic controllers in Germany?

BERND WENDT: Very satisfied. And we are in a position to compare because we fly to a lot of different countries. In Germany, there is the huge advantage that air traffic controllers consistently speak English. In some countries like Spain or France, for example, radiotelephony is conducted in English and the local language. If you don’t speak the local language, you can’t get an overview of the traffic situation.

And this can be problematic from the safety point of view?

WENDT: Yes. Even the French authority for aircraft accident investigations admits that it is risky to use bilingual radiotelephony. A case in point: In 2000, there was a runway collision at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris caused by this mix of English and French. This incident even resulted in a fatality.

Does excellent collaboration between the cockpit and air traffic control result in more safety?

WENDT: Yes. And this only became really clear to me when I started working on aircraft accident investigations. I first became involved in these investigations after an accident happened in 1993 involving a Lufthansa Airbus in Warsaw. The pilot who died in the incident was a friend of mine. During the accident investigation I realised that the air traffic controllers and the pilots knew very little about each other’s job.

Is this the reason you founded the German Flight Safety Forum twelve years ago with the director of the German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation (BFU)?
WENDT: Yes. I thought it was really important for DFS staff and pilots to find out more about each other. And there was a great need on both sides for meaningful dialogue. But it took ten years until we could convince everyone that this type of forum was really necessary. The Flight Safety Forum brings together safety managers from DFS and the airlines as well as representatives from the Federal Armed Forces of Germany (Bundeswehr), the German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation (BFU), the German Federal Police (BPOL) and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR). This forum has increased understanding on both sides.

GLÖCKNER: In Berlin, we have an especially close relationship with German military pilots. The German Air Force has an Airbus A310 flight simulator at Schönefeld Airport in Berlin and they regularly invite tower controllers to come and watch.

How important is it for air traffic controllers to know what it is like for pilots in emergency or unusual situations?

GLÖCKNER: Air traffic controllers who have never experienced an emergency in a flight simulator may have the completely wrong idea of how they can best help a pilot. In training sessions like this, air traffic controllers learn that they should avoid bombarding the pilot with information and questions in an emergency. In such a case, less is more. The pilots are so concentrated on solving their problem that a lot of chatter on the frequency would be more of a hindrance than a help.

In Frankfurt, there is a project that gives air traffic controllers and pilots the opportunity to practice emergency situations together.

WENDT: Yes. However, this project between DFS and Lufthansa has kind of petered out over the past few years. There isn’t enough will or money. The airlines are concentrating on reducing costs at the moment. In this type of climate, this kind of training isn’t given top priority. The first question is how much is it going to cost?

Would you say that this means cost savings at the expense of safety?

WENDT: No, I wouldn’t go quite that far. Safety has not been compromised. But we have to be careful that it never is in the future.

Who do you mean, when you say “we”?

GLÖCKNER: Modern safety management calls for you to approach the topic proactively not reactively. That means that you don’t just investigate accidents and incidents but you look for safety-related trends before anything negative has happened. To do this, you have to collect and evaluate as many safety-related data as possible.

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The interview was conducted by Christopher Belz and Sandra Ciupka.
Mr Siegloch, you worked for over three decades as a reporter, presenter and foreign correspondent with ZDF and ARD, the two largest public-service television broadcasters in Germany. Now you are the president of the German Aviation Association (BDL). How did this transition from journalist to lobbyist come about?

KLAUS-PETER SIEGLOCH: I was about to reach the compulsory retirement age at my former employer. Shortly before I said goodbye to my last assignment in New York, I got a call from a head-hunter. I couldn’t imagine myself just playing golf or cycling around the lakes in my native city of Hamburg all day. In fact, I don’t even play golf. I could, however, well imagine myself working in the world of aviation. As a foreign correspondent, I enjoyed all the flying I had to do.

How did your old colleagues in the world of journalism react to the news?

SIEGLOCH: The reaction varied. Personally, I believe that my new duties have many things in common with journalism. Both revolve around communication, particularly interactive communication. As an association, we want to communicate air transport issues to the public. At the same time, we want to communicate issues that impact the public to the air transport industry.

Why does Germany need an association to represent the air transport industry?

SIEGLOCH: I think such an association should have been called into exist-
ence earlier. Previously, each section of the industry – airports, airlines and air navigation services – took care of their own communication with the public. In many cases, their positions differed. The external perception was that the air transport industry wasn’t in agreement on many important issues.

But to some extent, the members of the association do have opposing interests on some issues. How do you manage this as the association’s president?

SIEGLOCH: Naturally, our members have differing interests on some issues. But no one is helped by arguing about such issues in public. Where we have found agreement, we want to communicate those issues externally. And there are a host of issues where we are in agreement. However, for those issues where we are in disagreement we discuss these together behind closed doors to see if we can come to some kind of agreement.

The objective of the association is to come up with a uniform air transport concept for Germany. Can you explain why such a concept has not yet been drawn up?

SIEGLOCH: That’s a question I asked myself when I joined. In Germany, the Federal Government together with the individual Länder (States) have transport plans for road and rail transport. When it comes to air transport, however, there is no central plan. Nor is there a plan for the link with the road and rail networks. Our proposal is that the Federal Government and the Länder jointly draw up a concept for air transport that also serves as a link to the road and rail networks.

What should be the focus of this concept?

SIEGLOCH: First and foremost, you need to look at how the air transport industry is going to develop in the next ten years. Any company that wants to launch a product first analyses the market. However, there is no such market analysis for air transport in Germany. There is also no such analysis for the future competitive landscape.

So the air transport concept is to include an analysis of both the market and the competitive landscape?

SIEGLOCH: Yes, this is the kind of thing the government can do without too much difficulty. It’s not our role to actually draw up the concept. We merely provide recommendations about how we think the government should approach this issue. The concept is to be drawn up jointly by the Federal Government and the Länder, as stated in the coalition agreement between the two reigning parties in the Federal Government.

When will this concept be ready?

SIEGLOCH: It’s meant to be ready by the middle of the parliamentary term. We need the market and competitive analysis to decide what the airport landscape should look like in the future. The competitive environment has changed enormously and the conditions for German and European carriers have become more difficult. As long as everyone is playing by the same rules, everything is fine.

Is this not the case?

SIEGLOCH: Not anymore. Government intervention has placed the German air transport sector at a competitive disadvantage.

Do you mean the air transport tax, which you have strongly criticised? But that tax is a ticket levy. In reality, it is paid by the passengers.

SIEGLOCH: In the past, you might have been right. But nowadays the air transport sector is open to competition. Any airline that has a licence for Europe is allowed to fly any route in Europe it wants. So, for instance, the Irish low-cost carrier Ryanair can also fly domestic routes in Germany. This demonstrates how fierce competition is now. For passengers, price is the decisive factor when booking a flight. Most German airlines depart from Germany and the air transport tax has to be paid for each passenger. The passenger doesn’t pay the tax, the airline does. The market decides if the levy can be passed on in the ticket price.

But Ryanair has to pay this levy in Germany too …

SIEGLOCH: That’s true, but the tax plays a much smaller role for its overall business than it does for a German airline. Ryanair does only about 10 percent of its business in Germany, the remainder is in countries that don’t have this tax.

Are there any indications that German airports have lost passengers because of the air transport tax?

SIEGLOCH: Yes, indeed. Since the introduction of the tax, this trend has been observed especially for airports near the borders to neighbouring countries. From 2010 to 2013, these airports in Germany have seen a decline in passenger numbers of 0.4 percent, whereas the airports in the neighbouring countries have seen a growth in traffic of 35.9 percent. This tax acts as a stimulus package for airports in neighbouring countries.

What is the situation at the large hubs?

SIEGLOCH: Even there we can see a shift in traffic. Someone in Germany who wants to book a transatlantic flight to, say, New York doesn’t have
to fly via Munich or Frankfurt airports, they can fly via Amsterdam or Paris instead. If you fly via Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, you can split the ticket. Then you only pay the tax from say Berlin to Paris, €7.50 instead of the €42.18 which you would have to pay per person from Frankfurt to New York.

It’s hard to imagine that the German State would revoke a tax once it has put it in place …

SIEGLOCH: During the negotiations on forming the present coalition government in Germany, the position papers of both parties called for the abolition of the tax. The German Bundestag (the upper house of parliament) passed its abolition with a majority and the transport and economic ministers of the Länder demand the same. So there is the political will at many levels to abolish the tax.

**Governmental restrictions shouldn’t place an undue burden on airlines.**

A serious competitor to the European air transport sector is emerging from the Middle East, where the Gulf States are erecting huge airports in the middle of the desert. Both environmental protection and workers’ rights play a minor role there. What can Germany do about such an unlevel playing field?

SIEGLOCH: We don’t want the social standards in Europe to be dismantled. On the other hand, we won’t be able to persuade these countries to allow strikes and provide proper health insurance to their employees. What we can do is to make politicians aware of the different conditions that prevail and make sure that we are not placing restrictions on ourselves while others receive every form of aid available.

**What do you see as the role of government?**

SIEGLOCH: Any policy should include the abolition of the air transport tax. Any policy should not make Europeans bear the burden of emissions trading. Any policy should include a fair balancing of the rights of passengers and the duties of airlines. It should include setting the operating hours of German airports in such a way that some airports could also operate at night if need be. I would include all this under the duties of a government.

Other sectors of the economy often accuse the air transport industry of living from subsidies, as shown by the fact that Germany demands no VAT on international flights …

SIEGLOCH: Governments recognised early on that the financing of air transport by means of taxes leads to harmful competition, where individual countries use lower tax rates to attract traffic and promote their local airlines. That explains why nations came together in 1944 to sign the Chicago Convention and agreed that international air transport would be excluded from any taxes on fuel and other forms of tax.

Under EU rules, financial aid can be provided to regional airports for ten years. Given the growing competition from the Middle East, wouldn’t it make more sense to strengthen the hubs?

SIEGLOCH: We want strong hubs that can compete globally. Nevertheless, these regional airports are of great importance for the domestic economy. Many sectors of the German economy are strongly export-oriented and need access to global markets. Such access is provided by regional airports acting as feeders to the large hubs. However, some of the regional airports have used such aid to reduce the fees charged to the airlines. The EU has now put a cap on these practices. It’s only in the start-up period during the first ten years that aid is permitted for operational purposes. That’s a reasonable approach in my eyes.

**Let’s turn to the Single European Sky initiative:** The EU is demanding that air navigation service providers provide more capacity and develop better systems while at the same time costing less money. What is the position of your association on this issue?

SIEGLOCH: The ideal solution would be to have uniform air navigation services for the whole of Europe. We believe that the European air navigation service providers need to consolidate. This would be sensible. The countries with smaller air navigation service providers are resisting consolidation, which is why the ANSPs are to be compensated when they lose duties to others. But that is not only an economic decision, it is also a political one.

**What can DFS expect as a member of the BDL?**

SIEGLOCH: Just as with the other members, the BDL represents the joint interests of the German air transport sector and offers a platform for internal discussions when differing interests are at stake, whether it concerns the implementation of the Single European Sky initiative or the fundamentals of how airlines are charged for air navigation services.

___Holger Matthies conducted the interview___
In 2013, the number of aircraft movements returned to the level reached in 2006. Particularly the number of domestic flights was significantly lower than in the past. Future prospects look modest as well. The stagnating traffic figures stand in sharp contrast to the positive trends in the services provided by DFS. Aircraft in German airspace enjoyed the highest levels of safety and punctuality.

Recent figures presented by the German Federal Statistical Office Destatis showed favourable figures for the tourist industry. There was a record number of passengers in 2013. A total of 180.7 million passengers departed from or arrived at airports in Germany. The significant factor in achieving this record number was that two million more passengers travelled to Germany than the year before: 79.3 million – an all-time high. They more than made up for the decline in the number of domestic passengers. Not only is Germany more popular than ever as a destination, the Germans’ own wanderlust remains undiminished. But, just having more passengers does not mean there is more traffic. This fact became clear to DFS in its review of the past year.

At year’s end, DFS recorded 2,952,624 controlled IFR flights. This is a decrease of 1.4 percent over the previous year – and six percent less than in 2008. Back then, air traffic controllers handled 3.15 million flights, more than they ever had in the past and a peak that they have yet to achieve again. In 2013, the number of aircraft movements returned to the level reached in 2006 and the vigour was gone. The major factor for the modest average annual growth of 0.9 percent since 2004 is the dramatic decline that happened in 2009. In the previous decade, growth rates were stronger at 2.8 percent.

The negative trend of 2013 is the result of a decline in traffic originating at German airports. This holds true for international flights (minus 2.1 percent) as well as domestic flights (minus 7.0 percent compared to the previous year). There was also a sharp drop in the number of military flights. With just about 45,000 aircraft movements, their share of the total traffic decreased to 1.5 percent. DFS is also responsible for air traffic control of regional military traffic in Germany.

In 2013, the number of aircraft movements returned to the level reached in 2006.

The only segment that expanded was overflights.
Airplanes that begin their journey in Germany head for 180 different countries.

The safety indicators reflect an excellent level of safety in German airspace.

97.8 percent of all flights handled by DFS in 2013 were on time.

DFS took on a leading role worldwide because of its successful implementation of civil-military integration. The only segment that expanded was overflights, the flights that do not originate or end in Germany but just fly through German airspace. These flights increased by about 16,000 to 1.1 million (2012: 1.08 million). At the turn of the century, they totalled 30 percent and now 37.2 percent of the total volume of air traffic in Germany.

By contrast, there are fewer and fewer domestic flights in Germany. In 2000, they made up 19 percent of all flights – and in 2013, they totalled just eleven percent. Some of these flights have lost out to the competition, for example, the high speed railway which continues to be expanded throughout Germany. Just two of the 16 international airports in Germany showed an increase in the number of flights they handled compared to 2012. The decline was especially noticeable in Dresden and Münster/Osnabrück. Dresden tower controllers handled 13.3 percent fewer aircraft and controllers in Münster/Osnabrück 17.1 percent fewer. In total there were more than 6,000 fewer total movements. By contrast, the tower controllers at Berlin-Tegel Airport handled 4,000 additional aircraft movements. As it is still not clear when the new Berlin Brandenburg Airport will be finished, this other airport close to downtown Berlin is benefiting from the strong demand in the low-cost segment. There was a record 173,979 take-offs and landings at Tegel in 2013. The airport is working at the limit of its capacity.

Tegel is one of the five most important airports in Germany for domestic flights. The others are Munich, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Hamburg. They are the most popular domestic destinations in Germany. There are more than 1,000 flights a month between Düsseldorf and Munich, Berlin-Tegel and Frankfurt, Berlin-Tegel and Munich, and Hamburg and Munich. Domestic flights to Frankfurt and Munich also act as feeders to these hubs where millions of passengers transfer to flights with international destinations. Official statistics show that 47 percent of all flights originating in Germany with an international destination (764,730 in total) departed from one of these two airports. Lufthansa uses both of these airports as hubs.

Airplanes that begin their journey in Germany head for 180 different countries. However, there are 20 countries that are the most frequent destinations. Sixty-two percent of all international flights leaving Germany have either Spain, the UK, Italy, France, Turkey, Austria, Switzerland, the USA, Poland or the Netherlands as their destination. The Mediterranean has become even more popular as can be seen by the fact that flights to Spain (including the Balearic and Canary Islands) increased by four percent, those to Portugal by 6.1 and to Greece by 3.7 percent, as compared to 2012.

Wherever the destination, all aircraft were guided safely by the air navigation services both on the ground and in the air. Once again, the figures reflect the high level of safety that pilots and passengers can rely on. To maintain this level, DFS records every deviation from the high standard and assesses it. A runway incursion is a type of incident that can happen on the ground. It involves the incorrect presence of an aircraft, ground vehicle or person on a protected area of an airport surface designated for departing or arriving aircraft. In 2013, there were 84 runway incursions at German airports. DFS was only involved in two of them. To further increase safety on the taxiways and runways, DFS heads runway safety teams at all 16 of its tower locations. The goal of these teams is to recognise safety risks ahead of time and optimise the safety net with appropriate measures. The teams are made up of representatives from the airport, airlines, local flight schools as well as DFS.

In the air, safety is naturally also the top priority of DFS. It is ensured by separation. These separation minima ensure that airborne aircraft are always at least 300 metres away from other aircraft vertically and 5.6 to 9.3 kilometres horizontally. When these minima are not maintained, we speak of an infringement of separation. The number of these infringements dropped to 179 in 2013. A later analysis categorised 112 of these as “not significant”. Five incidents received the rating “very significant” and 26 “significant”. Infringements of separation can be caused by pilots as well as air traffic controllers. DFS controllers were a contributing factor in 143 cases.
Moreover, in German airspace, there were five cases of aircraft proximities of Categories A and B. The causes of these are being investigated by the Aircraft Proximity Evaluation Group (APEG) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure. This independent committee comes together four times a year to investigate safety-related cases that were reported by pilots or air traffic controllers. The committee is made up of members from the airlines, the German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation (BFU), the German Airline Pilots’ Association (VC) and DFS. In 2013, two proximities were classified as category A (risk of collision) and three as category B (safety not assured). DFS was only involved as a contributing factor in one of the B cases. Each runway incursion, each infringement of separation and each aircraft proximity is documented and analysed so that as much as possible can be learned from it in order to keep the standard of safety at DFS. Especially if you consider that DFS controlled 2.95 million flights in 2013, the safety indicators reflect an excellent level of safety in German airspace.

Punctuality is also at a very high level. At times, poor weather conditions, a lot of traffic or limited airport capacity make it necessary for the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) to regulate the flow of traffic. This only applied to 2.2 percent of flights in German airspace. In other words, 97.8 percent of all flights handled by DFS in 2013 were on time and not subject to air traffic flow management measures. Compared to the previous year, the delay rate was reduced by half. The total ATFM delay was reduced to 23.4 seconds per flight. As a comparison, in France this number was 42.6 seconds. Delay was higher in other countries with high traffic volumes such as the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland, the UK, and Spain. Direct routings continue to be an efficient measure. As long as the traffic situation and weather conditions permit, air traffic controllers direct pilots along the most direct route possible. The average distance flown in excess of the great-circle distance was 3.6 percent. This improves punctuality and fuel savings and reduces the amount of harmful emissions.

Passengers can safely assume that their flights will depart and arrive on time in Germany. This is also true for the rest of Europe as shown by a EUROCONTROL analysis. Two thirds of all flights take off on time and every fifth one is ahead of time. This also applies to arrivals. Two out of five flights actually land ahead of time and only one in six is more than 15 minutes late. If a flight is delayed, there are many causes. Sometimes delays are caused by the previous flight or feeder flights and often are linked directly to the airline. Across Europe, about half of all delays are due to the airlines (51 percent) and at London-Heathrow this number is as high as 67 percent. For international flights departing from Germany, this number is only 43 percent. Other reasons for delays are adverse weather conditions or security measures or delays with ground handling.

In addition to being on time and safe, aircraft in German airspace also put their capacity to the best use. The Federal Statistical Office calculated that the load factor of aircraft departing and arriving in Germany was 75.6 percent in 2013. There were hardly any more seats available on long-haul flights to North America and low-cost or charter flights to Spanish holiday islands, where the load factor exceeded 90 percent.

All in all, DFS can look back at 2013 as a year that reiterated the positive trends from earlier years in the key performance indicators of safety, punctuality and cost-efficiency. On the other hand, a look at traffic development shows that there is a financial challenge facing DFS as traffic levels have been stagnating for seven years now. The low-growth forecast by EUROCONTROL is not any brighter. Germany must expect a “development” of minus 1.4 percent for the year 2014. In no way does this contradict the increasing passenger numbers mentioned at the beginning of this report. It is possible because the airlines are using larger aircraft such as the A380 or the B747 for their long-haul flights to increase their capacity. In addition, part of their cost-saving plans is to cancel connections that are not in high demand. Modern booking systems enable an increasingly efficient use of aircraft capacity.

___ Rüdiger Mandry ___
Summertime is vacation time and that means travel time. Both the day and the month recording the most traffic were in summer. 9,906 take-offs, landings and overflights were logged on 28 June in German airspace. July proved to be the busiest month above Germany when DFS air traffic controllers handled 284,406 flights.

In Germany, the number of flights under instrument flight rules (IFR) recorded in 2013 declined to a total of 2,952,624 – the same amount as recorded in 2006. This is a decline of 1.4 percent compared to 2012 (2,993,866). The number of aircraft movements has been hovering around the three million mark in Germany for the past seven years. The vigorous growth of previous years remains elusive. Air traffic in Germany has experienced an average annual growth rate of 2.0 percent over the past 20 years.
Since 1993, there has been civil-military integration in Germany, meaning that DFS took over the responsibility for regional military air traffic. With just under 45,000 flight movements, military traffic only accounted for 1.5 percent of total traffic in 2013. This number has decreased by more than 50 percent over the past 10 years.

From year to year, the percentage of domestic flights continues to drop. Only one flight in every nine is a domestic flight. The percentage of flights just crossing German airspace totalled 1,098,000. This number is up to 37.2 percent from 31 percent ten years ago.
Compared to 2012, the ranking of the most popular destinations for flights originating in Germany has not changed significantly. Eighty percent of all flights leaving German airspace land in one of these twenty countries. Spain (including the Balearic and Canary Islands) was the destination for more than 79,000 of these flights. The airlines increased the number of flights on offer to the Mediterranean again and the number of flights to Spain, Greece as well as Portugal experienced above-average growth.

**Main domestic connections**

The airports in Frankfurt and Munich do not only play a central role for international flights, they also function as hubs for Lufthansa. Because of this, these airports are fed with domestic flights as are the airports of Berlin-Tegel, Düsseldorf and Hamburg. More than 1,000 flights serve the four main connections each month.
There was a decline of more than three percent for IFR departures and arrivals at Germany’s international airports. Only Erfurt and Berlin Tegel recorded increases. Tower controllers at the airports of Dresden and Münster/Osnabrück had more than 3,000 fewer flight movements. At the regional airports, there was a decline of more than five percent. In the town of Lahr, the airport operator of the Black Forest Airport filed for bankruptcy at the beginning of the year. Ever since Ryanair stopped operating at the airport in Altenburg-Nobitz in 2011, it has no longer offered scheduled passenger flights. (The values in the tables are based on all departures and arrivals under instrument flight rules. Point-to-point connections within Germany count as two movements – one departure and one arrival.)
The European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) always forecasts a range of possible scenarios. The high-growth scenario is the most optimistic of the three forecasts. It is based on ideal conditions under which air traffic could develop in the next seven years. The baseline scenario is seen as the most likely scenario. The low-growth forecast shown in the above diagram uses the most unfavourable conditions as its basis – as of 2015, it will be taken as the basis for the regulation of air navigation charges in Europe.

Worldwide, the development of freight tonne kilometres was significantly more positive than in the previous year. In 2013, this figure increased on average by 1.4 percent – in the year before, it had decreased by 1.5 percent. There are large regional differences, however. The global development of passenger kilometres, on the other hand, remained more stable. As was the case in 2012, it grew by a good five percent.

The European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) always forecasts a range of possible scenarios. The high-growth scenario is the most optimistic of the three forecasts. It is based on ideal conditions under which air traffic could develop in the next seven years. The baseline scenario is seen as the most likely scenario. The low-growth forecast shown in the above diagram uses the most unfavourable conditions as its basis – as of 2015, it will be taken as the basis for the regulation of air navigation charges in Europe.
Separation infringements make up just a tiny portion of the enormous number of total aircraft movements. Despite this low number, every incident is analysed, categorised and thoroughly assessed so that the air traffic system remains as safe as possible. DFS also continuously improves its technical systems to support this. Infringements of separation can be caused by pilots or air traffic controllers. With only 31 “very significant” or “significant” infringements, the positive level of the previous year was maintained.
There are many different causes of runway incursions. In four out of five cases, the flight crew make the most significant contribution to an incursion, for example, by crossing an active runway without a clearance. DFS records every incursion so as to ensure the highest level of safety on the ground. In twelve percent of the cases, ground handling vehicles or staff are a contributing factor while air traffic control contributes only two percent of the time. Four percent of all incidents do not have one clear cause as there are many contributing factors.
The independent Aircraft Proximity Evaluation Group (APEG) investigates causes of aircraft proximities on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure. The number of aircraft proximities is used as an indicator of the level of safety in German airspace. In 2013, APEG classified five cases as Category A ("risk of collision") or Category B ("safety not assured"). DFS was a contributing factor in one of the B cases. APEG includes representatives of airlines, the German Airline Pilots Association (Vereinigung Cockpit), the Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation (BFU) and DFS.

### Aircraft proximities and aircraft movements

APEG classified five cases as Categories A and B. Two of them were categorised as risk Category A ("risk of collision"); DFS was not involved in either of the cases. DFS was a contributing factor in one of the B cases ("safety not assured"). These figures have remained in the single digits since 2003 and reflect the high level of safety in German airspace. APEG investigated a total of 39 aircraft proximities from 2013.
Compared to delay figures in the rest of Europe, German delay figures hold their ground. In the previous year, the total ATFM delay (en-route and airport delay) for Germany was the highest across Europe (i.e., amongst the 20 countries with more than 500,000 flights per year). In 2013, this number was reduced by half: only 23.6 seconds per flight. The air navigation services were only responsible for 10.2 seconds of this delay — another record. The analysis is based on flights regulated by EUROCONTROL.
Arrivals were as punctual as departures. Two out of five flights actually arrived ahead of time. However, this depends on the airport in question. Forty-three percent of arrivals at the airports of Lisbon and London Heathrow arrived late with an average delay of 14 minutes. There are many reasons for this (see next page). There are no German airports in the top twenty European airports with the most delay.
Causes of departure delays

Europe

- Airlines: 51%
- Airports: 14%
- Weather: 17%
- Air navigation service providers: 7%
- Security: 6%
- Other: 5%

Germany (international departures)

- Airlines: 43%
- Airports: 19%
- Weather: 17%
- Air navigation service providers: 6%
- Security: 4%
- Other: 8%

Germany (domestic departures)

- Airlines: 41%
- Airports: 21%
- Weather: 16%
- Air navigation service providers: 5%
- Security: 6%
- Other: 11%

Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport

- Airlines: 61%
- Airports: 13%
- Weather: 11%
- Air navigation service providers: 4%
- Security: 7%
- Other: 4%

Madrid Barajas Airport

- Airlines: 50%
- Airports: 15%
- Weather: 5%
- Air navigation service providers: 9%
- Security: 9%
- Other: 13%

London Heathrow Airport

- Airlines: 67%
- Airports: 17%
- Weather: 6%
- Air navigation service providers: 2%
- Security: 4%
- Other: 4%

Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

- Airlines: 50%
- Airports: 23%
- Weather: 8%
- Air navigation service providers: 7%
- Security: 6%
- Other: 7%

Frankfurt/Main Airport

- Airlines: 36%
- Airports: 29%
- Weather: 16%
- Air navigation service providers: 3%
- Security: 9%
- Other: 7%

Munich Airport

- Airlines: 40%
- Airports: 17%
- Weather: 21%
- Air navigation service providers: 3%
- Security: 10%
- Other: 9%
As a percentage, there were fewer seats available on international flights than on domestic flights. The load factor was 77.1 percent for international flights and 70.8 percent for domestic connections. Almost all seats were filled on flights to Spanish holiday destinations such as Fuerteventura, Las Palmas, Lanzarote or Tenerife – only one in ten seats was not occupied. Along with the destinations serviced mostly by charter and low-cost carriers, long-haul connections to North America also have a high load factor of about 90 percent. These statistics are based on destinations with more than 1,000 connections from German airports.
Star Alliance comprises more than 26 airlines and 4,700 aircraft, making it the world’s largest airline alliance. In German airspace, Lufthansa and its partners account for one of three planes in the sky. SkyTeam and oneworld follow behind in the ranking, but all three alliances increased their share of the market in the past decade. The category “Other” includes low-cost carriers and makes up 31 percent of the market at the moment. It is, however, more and more difficult to make a clear distinction between different types of business models. Air Berlin, for example, operates both in the low-cost sector as well as the scheduled-flight and charter segment.

After safety and punctuality, cost-efficiency is also of utmost importance to DFS, but never at the expense of safety. Direct routings are both in the interest of airspace users and the air navigation service providers. But, they are not always possible due to high traffic volume in a sector or poor weather conditions. As in 2012, deviations from the direct routings were kept to a minimum. Regardless of seasonal fluctuations, the actual distance flown averaged only 3.6 percent longer than the shortest possible routing. The statistics do not take the area around airports into account as noise reduction measures are given a higher priority than the routing.
2013 was a good year

At the annual press briefing in April, the Chairman and CEO of DFS, Klaus-Dieter Scheurle, stressed that safety, punctuality and cost-effectiveness are a must for the company. The CEO sees a chance to position DFS as a leader in technology on the national and international scene.

In 2013, DFS reduced its costs by 4.6 percent. Together with a solid financial result, this enabled a positive net income of EUR 56.8 million (2012: EUR 6.4 million) under the German Commercial Code (HGB).

Klaus-Dieter Scheurle presented the figures for traffic, safety and punctuality for the year 2013. DFS controlled 2.953 million flight movements in that year, which represents a 1.4 percent decline over the prior year. The decline shows that the stagnation in traffic volume begun five years previously has not abated. At only 0.6 percent, growth for the first 13 weeks of 2014 was very slight compared with the same period in the previous year, despite the very mild winter.

As regards the company’s main function, namely ensuring safety in air traffic, DFS is pleased to report that the same high level achieved in previous years has been maintained. The independent Aircraft Proximity Evaluation Group (APEG) reported only two incidents of risk category A (immediate risk); in both cases DFS was not involved. It also reported three incidents of risk category B (safety not assured), one of which involved air navigation services.

Klaus-Dieter Scheurle expressly praised the excellent work of DFS staff, which was reflected in the improved punctuality figures. Almost 98 percent of all the flights controlled by DFS in German airspace in 2013 had no ATC-related delays. This represents a two percent improvement over the previous year. This is primarily attributable to management initiatives such as the improvement in the staff situation in those areas prone to delays in the past. Overall, staff numbers at DFS decreased slightly (end of 2012: 6,103 employees; end of 2013: 6,046; April 2014: 5,990).