

7th April 2005

Mr William Prasifka
Commissioner
Commission for Aviation Regulation
3rd Floor
Alexandra House,
Earlsfort Terrace,
Dublin 2

Dear Mr Prasifka,

I am writing on behalf of the Dublin Airport Runway Capacity Group (RCG), which comprises of Airlines, Airport personnel and both the Air Navigation Service Provider and the Regulatory function of the Irish Aviation Authority (please see attachment for a full listing of the members).

By way of background, since 2001, National Air Traffic Services UK (NATS) has been contracted to assess runway capacity at Dublin Airport and set out recommendations to enhance capacity. NATS are the recognised leaders in this field and carry out studies at UK airports and around the world. In 2002, Dublin Airport set up the RCG, with a scope to review the work undertaken by NATS to date and to endorse the current declared capacity limits that it supports. The group has also based a programme of current and future capacity enhancement measures on the results of these studies. Measures to enhance runway capacity at Dublin Airport are currently being implemented by Air Traffic Control, Dublin Airport and Aircraft Operators, based primarily around this work.

An example of the approach adopted by NATS is summarised within the programme used to assess the runway capacity at Dublin Airport for Summer 2004. This was as follows:

- Presentation and consultation by NATS to Dublin Airport and the IAA on the approach and methodology to be used prior to the study.
- Over 60 hours of visual observations of runway activity at Dublin Airport were taken by NATS over 10 days during the busiest month (July), on the busiest days (Thursday to Monday) and during the busiest times of those days (times varied) to build up a good sample size.

- Extensive use of data collected by visual observation, supplemented by data from Dublin Airport and IAA systems and other data sources available to NATS.
- The study followed the NATS benchmarked approach to runway capacity assessment, as applied in annual runway capacity studies at Gatwick, Heathrow, Manchester, Stansted and Birmingham airports. This approach makes use of a set of comprehensive and sophisticated software tools, developed over time by NATS specifically for this purpose.
- Presentations of the study results were made to the Dublin Airport Runway Capacity Group on the 24th September 2003 and the Dublin Airport Coordination Committee on the 1st October 2003. There was agreement from these groups on the study findings and Dublin Airport used of results of the study to declare runway capacity for summer 2004.
- Recommendations arising from the results and conclusions of the study formed the basis of the work programme of the Dublin Airport Runway Capacity Group and a five year strategy to maximise runway capacity was set out by the RCG resulting in an extra 29 runway 'slots' being declared for the summer 2005 season.

The approach to enhancing runway capacity at Dublin Airport is consultative, incremental and adopts industry recognised best practice. The Runway Capacity Group therefore wishes to endorse the NATS methodology used to date as an appropriate, sound and robust method of assessing, declaring and planning runway capacity at Dublin Airport.

The Commission is invited to consider whether it would be useful for it to attend meetings of the RCG, even as an Observer, in order to experience at first hand the work of the Group in extracting the maximum possible capacity from the existing runway infrastructure.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Hilliard
Chairman - Runway Capacity Group
Dublin Airport

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