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AIC 007/2021 A

Effective Date: 30-DEC-2021

End Date: 31-DEC-2023

Publication Date: 30-DEC-2021

CNL AIC 002/2020 A

Postponement of amended ICAO procedures concerning clearances to aircraft on SIDs and STARs

Amendment 7A to ICAO's Procedures for Air Navigation Services - Air Traffic Management (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444) came into effect on 10 November 2016.

However, due to the need to mitigate the impact on Geneva and Zurich capacity, those parts of Amendment 7A concerning clearances to aircraft on SIDs and STARs are postponed in Switzerland.

Note: This is principally due to Geneva and Zurich ATC working practices which involve routinely taking ACFT away from, then back onto, their SID/STAR. In such an environment where leaving ACFT on a SID/STAR is not the norm, the new phraseology set brings concerns about increased RTF and ATC cognitive workload and the consequent impact on capacity.

The postponed ICAO Amendment 7A items intend to provide a specific phraseology set for clearances to join, climb/descend on, leave or rejoin SIDs or STARs.

The main philosophy behind these phraseologies is:

- use of the words "VIA SID" / "VIA STAR" to reinforce respect of the published level/speed restrictions;
- removal of "VIA" from other phraseologies where superfluous;
- explicit phraseologies for cancellation of SID/STAR level/speed restrictions; and
- when flights are taken off a SID/STAR, reiteration of the cleared level and warning of any intent to have the flight subsequently rejoin the SID/STAR.

This ICAO phraseology set is not yet used in Switzerland. The European equivalent is not yet available.

The amended PANS-ATM paragraphs concerned by this postponement are:

- § 4.5.7.2 (Description of air traffic control clearances - Route of flight);
- § 4.6.4 (Horizontal speed control instructions - SID and STAR);
- § 6.3.2.3 (Standard clearances for departing aircraft - Contents);
- § 6.3.2.4 (Clearances on a SID);
- § 6.3.2.5 (Standard clearances for departing aircraft - Communication failure);
- § 6.5.2.3 (Standard clearances for arriving aircraft - Contents);
- § 6.5.2.4 (Clearances on a STAR);
- § 12.3.1.2 (Phraseology - Level changes, reports and rates);

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- § 12.3.2.2 (Phraseology - Indication of route and clearance limit);
 - § 12.3.3.1 (Phraseology - Departure instructions);
 - § 12.3.3.2 (Phraseology - Approach instructions); and
 - § 12.4.1.6 (Phraseology - Speed control)

This postponement is expected to last until December 2023. Further information will be communicated in due time.

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