

ICAO issues reminder on procedures in the Nicosia and Ankara FIRs

Against the background of the continuing conflict in Lebanon, combined with the expectation that there will be an increase in the traffic in the region as humanitarian and relief flights increase, ICAO has issued reminders on the procedures to be followed in the Nicosia and Ankara FIRs. ICAO reminds operators “as a matter of urgency” to strictly adhere to the specific procedural requirements at the interface between the two FIRs.

Specifically: While in the Ankara FIR radio contact with Nicosia ACC shall be established at least 10 minutes before the FIR boundary and likewise when in the Nicosia FIR contact with Ankara ACC shall also be established not less than 10 minutes before crossing the FIR boundary.

In addition, all flights not operating to or from airports in the area are requested to avoid changing Flight Level to the maximum extent possible.

In its communiqué, ICAO included a copy of IATA’s Nicosia FIR/UIR Information Bulletin which is attached to this Safety Bulletin.



FRA 99-A

NICOSIA FIR/UIR
IATA COMMUNICATIONS / CONTROL PROCEDURES
 (extract from IATA Information Bulletin)

This Bulletin is compiled from information contained in various official documents and from observations of practical operations. Contents **MUST** be regarded as provisional pending improvement of the airspace organization and of the ATS and COM services by the authorities concerned.

A. General

Authority for Air Traffic Control within Nicosia FIR/UIR, rests solely with Nicosia ACC. Boundary between Ankara - Nicosia FIRs/UIRs, runs from N3605 E09000 to N3558 E03230 to N3555 E03333 to N3555 E03540. ATC instructions must **ONLY** be accepted from Nicosia ACC, including allocation of SSR codes.

Most of the northern part of Nicosia FIR/UIR, inclusive of a wide area of the high seas, has been identified by Ercan Control, a station based in northern Cyprus, falling under Turkish Cypriot administration, as a zone under its control. The authority of Ercan Control over this zone for Air Traffic Control purposes is **NOT** recognized by ICAO.

Contrary to ICAO requirements, no contact is effected between Ankara and Nicosia ACCs. Nicosia ACC requires that aircraft approaching Nicosia FIR/UIR from Ankara FIR make pre-entry contact at least 10 minutes before the FIR boundary. It is essential that crews comply with this requirement: only then will Nicosia ACC be in a position to assume control and provide appropriate traffic separation.

B. Southbound Procedures

While in Ankara FIR comply with control instructions issued by Ankara ACC (either directly or by relay through any other station designated by Ankara, e.g. Ercan Control on 126.70 MHz) up to point VESAR (B545) or point TOMBI (VA16).

Establish contact with Nicosia ACC at least 10 minutes before FIR BDY. Once contact established and flight details including Flight Level (FL) information passed, avoid making requests to Ankara ACC for FL changes for the rest of the flight through Ankara FIR, unless climbing from or descending to aerodromes in the immediate vicinity of the FIR boundary. If for any reason, it becomes absolutely necessary to make such level changes after initial contact with Nicosia while still in Ankara FIR, it is important for safety reasons that Nicosia ACC be advised at once of the change.

At VESAR or TOMBI, flights will come under the sole control of Nicosia, change automatically to Nicosia ACC. Although no formal transfer of control procedures is affected between Ankara and Nicosia ACCs and no changeover instructions are issued on crossing the FIR boundary, flights should thereafter **ONLY** accept control instructions issued by Nicosia ACC until hand over to the next ATC Unit or FIR/UIR. Any invitation to change to another station (e.g. Ercan control) should be politely acknowledged but disregarded. In case of insistence a check should be made with Nicosia ACC.

For aircraft planning to continue the flight into Damascus FIR, additional communications requirements exist. Refer to para. D.) below, under "Eastbound/Westbound Procedures". On completion of ATC formalities with Nicosia ACC after entry into the FIR and of position reporting requirements for Damascus FIR, establish communications with Ercan Control and pass on relevant flight details. This should be regarded as a purely courtesy call - under **NO** circumstances should any ATC instruction be accepted from Ercan.

C. Northbound Procedures

Due to lack of contact between the two centers, advance flight information can **ONLY** be provided to Ankara by relay. Provide flight information at least 10 minutes prior to entering Ankara FIR, along UL619, W/UW10, B/UB15, A/UA16 OR A/UA28 to Ercan Control on 126.70 for relay to Ankara.

Control authority of Nicosia ACC remains absolute up to the point of entry into Ankara FIR.
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NICOSIA FIR/UIR
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D. Eastbound / Westbound Procedures

Eastbound aircraft entering Damascus FIR via routes UL619, W/UW10, R/UR78 or W/UW17 are required to establish contact with Damascus ACC 10 minutes before ETA position NIKAS. If for any reason this is not possible, aircraft must provide, a position report to Latakia Radio, a relay station for Damascus ACC, at position VESAR, ALSUS or BALMA for relay to Damascus.

Even if a position report and flight details have been communicated to Latakia Radio, two-way communications with Damascus ACC must be completed as early as possible before passing Banias NDB.

Nicosia ACC remains primary station for listening watch until NIKAS, where change to Damascus shall be effected.

Westbound aircraft from Damascus FIR establish communications with Nicosia ACC at the FIR BDY (NIKAS), unless requested by Damascus ACC to call Nicosia earlier.

A courtesy call may be made to Ercan Control. If flight continues into Ankara FIR, provide advance flight information to Ankara ACC via Ercan Control at least 10 minutes before passing the Nicosia/Ankara FIR boundary.

Control authority rests firmly with Nicosia ACC until the FIR BDY (VESAR); thereafter it changes to Ankara. Further calls to Ercan may be made as requested to the extent other commitments permit.

**Special Communications and Control Procedures applying to aircraft Enroute
 Mut - VESAR - NIKAS - Banias or vice versa**

A. SOUTHBOUND, continuing eastward into Damascus FIR**1. 10 minutes before ETA VESAR:**

- a. Primary station is Ankara ACC.
- b. Call Nicosia ACC and communicate essential flight details (FL, ETA FIR (VESAR), ROUTE, etc.).

Note: Avoid Flight Level changes from this point until FIR boundary and control transferred to Nicosia ACC. If change absolutely necessary, obtain clearance from Ankara ACC and keep Nicosia ACC informed.

2. At VESAR:

- a. Transfer control to Nicosia ACC. Do **NOT** accept ATC clearances from any other station. From now on until next FIR BDY, primary listening watch must remain with Nicosia ACC, which is also the authority for SSR codes.
- b. Establish contact with Damascus ACC. If no contact, call Latakia Radio, transmit essential flight details for relay to Damascus ACC.
- c. Call Ercan, pass essential flight details (ATO VESAR, FL, ETA NIKAS).

3. Before Banias:

Continue to contact Damascus ACC if communications have not been established yet, because it is a requirement to establish contact well before passing Banias.

4. At NIKAS:

Transfer control to Damascus ACC.

B. WESTBOUND, continuing northwards into Ankara FIR**1. In Damascus FIR, before passing NIKAS:**

Primary station is Damascus ACC. No need for advance call to Nicosia FIR unless request to that effect received from Damascus ACC.

2. At NIKAS:

- a. Transfer control to Nicosia ACC. Control authority remains with Nicosia ACC until point VESAR.
- b. Call Ercan on 126.70, pass essential flight details for relay to Ankara ACC.
Note: Any Flight Level changes made thereafter under instructions from Nicosia ACC must be communicated at once to Ercan Control for relay to Ankara ACC.

3. At VESAR:

Transfer to Ankara ACC.

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