

# National Airspace Policy

## Foreword

In April 2012, the Finnish Government submitted a transport policy report to Finnish Parliament. In the report, transport policy is examined in the wider context of public policy. A key objective of transport policy is to ensure and support Finland's competitiveness and sustainable economic growth, citizens' well-being and the smooth functioning of everyday life by ensuring good transport connections. The report emphasises the principles of customer orientation, accessibility, well-functioning systems, efficiency and all operators' shared responsibility for safety, security and environment.

Air transport supports Finland's economic growth and development opportunities as well as competitiveness. Therefore, public authorities and the aviation industry develop the sector in close collaboration by making long-term plans and improving the operating environment in a sustainable and growth-oriented manner. The needs of passengers and other customers are key considerations in this work.

In airspace and air traffic management, the needs of civil and military aviation and national defence are taken into account. When implementing this policy, the necessary conditions for military and state aviation operators to perform their statutory duties must be insured.

The general principles for the design and use of Finland's airspace are defined in this Airspace Policy, the ASM Operations Manual and the Finnish strategy for air navigation and surveillance 2020–2030 (NAV-SUR strategy). This document sets out the objectives for airspace management and other closely related activities in Finland.

This Airspace Policy will be regularly updated to ensure its relevance. Safety and performance are primary values guiding airspace design and use.

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# 1 Background

In the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the Contracting States recognise that every State has complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territory. It is within the framework of such sovereignty that the Member States of the European Union, subject to applicable international conventions, exercise the powers of a public authority when controlling air traffic.

Finnish airspace policy is based on the Single European Sky (SES) Regulations, implementing acts adopted by the European Commission, and the standards of EASA, ICAO and Eurocontrol.

According to Regulation (EC) No 551/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council (the Airspace Regulation), Member States, taking into account the organisation of military aspects under their responsibility, shall ensure the uniform application within the single European sky of the concept of the flexible use of airspace as described by the ICAO and as developed by Eurocontrol, in order to facilitate airspace management and air traffic management in the context of the common transport policy.

The Airspace Regulation also states that common principles and criteria for route and sector design shall be established to ensure the safe, economically efficient and environmentally friendly use of airspace. Sector design shall be coherent inter alia with route design. The implementing rules in the fields covered by this paragraph shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure under Article 8 of the framework Regulation (EC) No 594/2004.

According to the Finnish Aviation Act (864/2014), the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom shall, as necessary to ensure flight safety and an expeditious flow of air traffic, issue more detailed regulations on airspace management, air traffic management and air navigation services, as well as provisions required by EU legislation. Finnish Transport and Communications Agency shall consult the Defence Forces and/or the Ministry of the Interior about regulations that affect to the operating conditions of military or state aviation.

In the coordination between civil and military aviation operations in the airspace, the principles laid down in the FUA Regulation (EC) No 2150/2005 shall be followed. When implementing these principles, the necessary conditions for military and state aviation operators to perform their statutory duties shall be ensured.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Defence shall agree on how the needs of civil and military aviation will be accounted for in airspace and air traffic management, in the provision of air navigation services and in the procedures related to the flexible use of airspace. Procedures for the flexible use of airspace are included in the ASM Operations Manual that provides guidance on airspace management.

Finland, Norway, Estonia and Latvia have established a North European Functional Airspace Block (NEFAB).

In the framework of NEFAB cooperation, Finland has agreed to ensure the design and management of a seamless airspace, as well as the coordinated air traffic flow and capacity management, taking due account of collaborative processes at international level. The Contracting States have also agreed to develop a common airspace policy, in close cooperation between civil and military authorities. The aim is to ensure the optimum use of airspace within NEFAB. However, the NEFAB Agreement does not affect the rights of each Contracting State to reserve, restrict or otherwise organise defined volumes of its own airspace, for exclusive or specific use by military users and/or aircraft operated as operational air traffic.

The above legislation, standards and agreements have been taken into account in this National Airspace Policy and the related procedures and practices.

## 2 Objective

The objective of this Airspace Policy is to explain to stakeholders how airspace management and design are organised in Finland. It also supports stakeholders in planning their own investments and projects and helps to ensure public trust in the performance and safety of the system.

The Airspace Policy, the ASM Operations Manual and the NAV-SUR Strategy form a foundation that improves the transparency of operations, giving stakeholders more certainty about future procedures and technological developments.

The Airspace Policy creates a framework under which the civil aviation authority develops and organises the Finnish airspace and ensures its efficient and flexible use. The organisation and development of airspace are guided by the principles of safety, cybersecurity, compatibility and the protection of national interests. The civil aviation authority also aims to make the airspace as accessible as possible and take environmental impacts into account. The Airspace Policy also supports the needs of national defence and the development of its organisation in the international environment.

## 3 Principles governing airspace management and design

The civil aviation authority organises and develops Finland's airspace. It follows the principles of safety, cybersecurity, compatibility and protection of national interests. The authority also aims to make the system as accessible as possible and take environmental impacts into account.

New types of aviation actors and innovations, such as unmanned aircrafts, should be taken into account in the design of airspace structures and operation of technical systems related to their management so that they can be safely integrated and operated in traditional manned aviation infrastructure.

Finnish airspace policy is based on the Single European Sky (SES) Regulations, implementing acts adopted by the European Commission, and the standards of EASA, ICAO and Eurocontrol, as well as national regulations and decisions to ensure that the needs of national defence are met. The aim is to ensure that Finland's airspace is safe and has a high level of performance, environmental impacts are taken into account and the airspace is compatible with the airspaces of our neighbouring countries and other functional airspace blocks (FAB).

The following principles are given priority in airspace management and design:

- **Safety**

In the design and management of airspace use, safety is comprehensively taken into account in all functions. All operators have to take safety management actions to ensure that safety is maintained at a high level and improved whenever possible.

- **Cybersecurity**

The design and operation of airspace management systems must ensure that cybersecurity is duly taken into account.

- **Compatibility**

In the design of airspace and its use, it must be ensured that structures and procedures comply with international requirements and standards, taking into account any special requirements set at national level.

- **Protection of national interests**

Airspace use can be restricted for reasons of public order and safety or national defence, and to secure the operating conditions of military aviation. When planning restrictions, their impacts on other airspace users must be assessed. The objective is to minimise disturbance to other air traffic.

- **Accessibility**

Apart from situations where airspace use is restricted because of safety, operational or other special reasons, the airspace is available to all users.

- **Environmental impacts**

When changes in airspace and its use are introduced, it must be ensured that environmental impacts are duly taken into account in the design of structures and procedures and that their negative effects are minimized.

## 4 Responsibilities

In Finland, the body responsible for airspace management policy is the National Committee for Airspace Management, which also functions as Finland's national High-Level Airspace Policy Body. The Committee is appointed by the Government, and its members include the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Defence, the Finnish Military Aviation Authority, the Defence Command, Air Force Command, Finnish Meteorological Institute, Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd, Finavia Oyj and Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom. Traficom is responsible for publishing the policy.

The following lists key Finnish operators in airspace management and their responsibilities:

- **Government**

The Government appoints the National Committee for Airspace Management for a period of three years at a time. The Committee consists of representatives for civil and military aviation operators. Its duties are described below.

According to section 108 of the Aviation Act, the Government shall designate an air traffic service provider for the airspace under Finland's responsibility or for a certain part of it, acting with an exclusive right within that airspace. Before designating the air traffic service provider, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence shall be consulted. The designation shall take account of the special features of air traffic service to be provided in the airspace or part of airspace in question, the need to maintain a high level of safety, the efficient use of airspace, as well as the ability to perform duties related to search and rescue, territorial surveillance and emergency conditions as referred to in section 3, subsections 1 and 2 of the Emergency Powers Act (1552/2011). Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd was designated as an air traffic service provider in the Finnish flight information region, except for the flight information zones at Seinäjoki and Mikkeli aerodromes during the opening hours of the air traffic service units of these aerodromes from 1 April 2017 until further notice.

The Government may designate a meteorological service provider for the airspace under Finland's responsibility or for a certain part of it, acting with an exclusive right within that airspace. Before designating the meteorological service provider, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence and the air traffic service provider shall be consulted. The designation of the meteorological service provider shall take account of the need to maintain a high level of safety as well as the ability to perform duties related to search and rescue, territorial surveillance and crisis management. The Government has designated the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) as the provider of weather service products exclusively in the Finnish flight information region as of 1 February 2020 for an unlimited period.

Under the Aviation Act, aviation may be restricted or prohibited by government decree above facilities and areas essential for state governance, national defence, border control, rescue services or preparedness or above areas of national importance for the protection of the environment. Permanent prohibited areas (P areas), permanent restricted areas (R areas) and Temporary Segregated Areas (TSAs) are established by government decree.

- **Ministry of Transport and Communications**

The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Defence shall agree on how the needs of civil and military aviation will be accounted for in airspace and air traffic management, in the provision of air navigation services and in the procedures related to the flexible use of airspace.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications may decide that in the airspace under Finland's responsibility or in a certain part of it, air navigation services are only provided in the English language, where it is necessary to ensure flight safety and an expeditious flow of air traffic, as well as to achieve the single European sky objectives.

- **Ministry of Defence**

The Ministry of Defence is represented in the National Committee for Airspace Management. The Committee discusses airspace management procedures at the strategic level and coordinates the needs of civil and military aviation.

In Finland, air traffic services are integrated. This means that Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd, the designated air traffic service provider, provides the service for both civil and military aviation. Finland does not have separate bodies for military air traffic control.

The Defence Forces may issue military aviation regulations concerning their own military aviation operations and international military aviation in Finland for the purpose of organising national defence and executing the duties assigned to the Defence Forces.

- **National Committee for Airspace Management**

The National Committee for Airspace Management is appointed by the Government and works under the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Its members are the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Defence, the Finnish Military Aviation Authority, the Defence Command, Air Force Command, the Finnish Meteorological Institute, Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd, Finavia Oyj and Transport and Communications Agency Traficom. The Committee may consult specialists and representatives from air navigation service providers, air carriers, military aviation operators and other entities in the field of aviation.

The Committee's task is to identify the needs of various airspace users at the strategic level, mediate any possible disputes and provide statements for

decisions made by competent authorities. The Committee is also responsible for supporting the preparation of national positions with a particular focus on the European Union and Community law provisions that affect airspace management at national level. The Committee aims to promote the safe and efficient use of Finland's national airspace. The efficient use of airspace is promoted by establishing and adopting national operating principles and monitoring mechanisms for airspace use. These activities must take into account the needs of all airspace users, legal and environmental requirements, neighbouring countries, and the demands of national security and defence.

Based on the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency's annual review of the use and structure of Finland's airspace, capacity management, route network and the promotion of the principle of flexible use the Committee assesses the achievement of airspace management objectives. Where necessary, the Committee makes recommendations to competent authorities and the Airspace Management Cell (AMC) to improve the efficiency and smooth running of operations.

- **Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom**

According to section 109 of the Aviation Act, Traficom shall decide on the establishment of and changes to airspace blocks in the part of airspace under Finland's responsibility. When making such decisions, Trafi takes into account the following:

- expeditious flow of air traffic
- national defence aspects
- coordination between civil and military aviation
- appropriate operating conditions for state aviation
- scope of action for recreational aviation.

Modifications to permanent airspace structures are usually implemented upon the air traffic service provider's proposal, but airspace users may also propose structural modifications to Transport and Communications Agency.

Areas where activities dangerous to the flight of aircraft may be variously conducted at specified times can be temporarily designated as danger areas by a regulation or decision issued by Transport and Communications Agency. For compelling reasons of flight safety, national defence, territorial surveillance, police operations, rescue services or safety investigation, or to maintain public order and safety as well as safety at national borders, Trafi may also restrict or prohibit aviation within a specified area for a maximum period of four weeks.

Transport and Communications Agency shall establish the principles for airspace use and airspace organisation, and issue more detailed regulations on the safe, efficient and flexible use of airspace. More specific guidelines, which govern the airspace management are issued in the ASM Operations Manual prepared by Transport and Communications Agency and the Air Force Command Finland. The manual defines:

- general principles for airspace management
- areas of airspace for the exclusive use of different user groups
- prioritisation of areas of airspace
- structure and classification of ATS routes and Free Route Airspace (FRA)
- principles governing the establishment and use of permanent and temporary areas of airspace and related communication
- monitoring mechanisms for the use of airspace.

The manual defines the Airspace Management Cell's (AMC) working procedures at the pre-tactical, tactical and to the extent necessary at the strategic level.



Transport and Communications Agency submits to the National Committee for Airspace Management a review of the use and structure of Finland's airspace, capacity management, route network and the promotion of the principle of flexible use of airspace annually.

- **Military aviation authority, military authority and Defence Command**

The military aviation authority, Air Force Command and Defence Command are represented in the National Committee for Airspace Management. The military authority is also a competent authority in the field of military aviation.

- **Air Traffic Service provider, Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd**

Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd (formerly Air Navigation Services Finland Ltd) is a public limited company fully owned by the state. The Ministry of Transport and Communications has designated Air Navigation Services Finland as the air traffic service provider in the Finnish flight information region except for the flight information zones of the Seinäjoki and Mikkeli aerodromes during the opening hours of the air traffic service units of these aerodromes from 1 April 2017 until further notice.

In accordance with the Aviation Act, the air traffic service provider, is responsible for aerodrome departure and arrival routes, as well as for flight procedures in the control zone, terminal control area and in the airspace where aerodrome flight information service (AFIS) is provided.

In Finland the air navigation services are fully integrated so that civil service provider provides service also to military aviation. For this reason, the needs of military aviation must be specifically considered in the service provision.

- **Airspace Management Cell (AMC)**

The Airspace Management Cell is a joint civil and military body operating in connection with the air traffic service provider (Fintraffic Air Navigation Services Ltd). AMC's tasks, activities and responsibilities are defined in the ASM Operations Manual.

Pursuant to section 11 of the Civil Aviation Act, the Airspace Management Cell may, on the proposal of the public authority, restrict or prohibit aviation, as it deems appropriate in a certain area for a maximum of seven days if it is necessary for flight safety, safety investigation, national defense, border security, policing, rescue or public order and safety. In addition, the airspace management cell may, on its own initiative, restrict or prohibit aviation for a period not exceeding one day for exceptional and particularly serious reason related to aviation safety or national defense.

In addition to the above, the airspace management cell may, for a specific reason, define and designate a temporary danger area for a maximum of two weeks, provided that instructions for designation are included in the airspace management manual.

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