

PRESS RELEASE

ITALIAN AIRSPACE ADOPTS DATA-LINK *Ground to Air Digital Communications*

Rome, 26 April 2018 – ENAV, the Italian Air Navigation Service Provider, announces the adoption of the Data-Link Ground-Air-Ground communications system across the entire Italian airspace above 8,700 metres.

From today, the Area Control Centres from which ENAV manages en-route traffic flying over Italian airspace, or departing from and/or arriving at a domestic airport, can ensure the exchange of key data (such as, for example, route, altitude, speed, heading) using a digital communication system that automatically sends the information on the console of the air traffic controller to a display in the aircraft cockpit and vice-versa.

This solution represents an important innovation for air traffic control, which has always been based on Ground-Air-Ground communications: every year pilots flying in Italian airspace and Italian air traffic controllers exchange approximately 30 million verbal communications, a significant proportion of which will, from now on, be delivered electronically (via CPDLC - Controller Pilot Data-Link Communications). This new means of communication will ensure the full intelligibility of messages and a smoother and more efficient interaction between controller and pilot in order to guarantee high standards of safety and operating performance, notwithstanding the constant increase in traffic volumes.

Air traffic in Europe in 2017 increased by 4%, compared to 2016, with over 10 million flights. Forecasts for 2024 provided by Eurocontrol (the entity in charge of the European air network) indicate a steady annual increase in the number of flights that will reach 12.4 million movements. In 2017, ENAV handled 1,860,000 flights in Italy.

Data-Link represents the most revolutionary tool, in terms of aeronautical telecommunications, within the range of technical/operational instruments that the aviation world will develop to manage these traffic dynamics. It will change the current well-established “modus operandi” with the aim of contributing towards an increasingly efficient air transport system which will also be safer, which is the ultimate goal of any change in the sector.

The platform has been deployed gradually, following significant investments and approximately 10 years of testing and operational staff training. Nineteen ground-based, data communication stations have been built and new software has been installed on all work air traffic controllers stations.

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