

Review 2021: Moderate traffic recovery in Switzerland during ongoing pandemic

Geneva, 27 January 2022 – Last year, air traffic in Switzerland recovered moderately but above forecasts. Total movements in the airspace above Switzerland and in the delegated areas managed and monitored by Skyguide increased by 29.7%. Switzerland's national airports of Geneva and Zurich recorded 17.9% more landings and takeoffs than in the previous year. Delays caused by air traffic control remained identically low in 2021 as in 2020. 99.2% of all flights were handled without delay by air navigation services. However, skyguide controlled around 50% fewer flights than in 2019. Traffic volumes thus remained very weak overall. Skyguide further strengthened its successful civil-military partnership in 2021, supporting the Swiss Air Force in its 24/7 sovereignty mission.

Air traffic in Europe, while still suffering under the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, grew steadily in 2021 from the start of the summer season onwards, exceeding by 29.7% the traffic of 2020 by the end of the year. Skyguide handled an average of 1 891 flights per day. The peak day in 2021 was July 31 with 3 301 flights (2019: June 28 with 4 522 flights). Skyguide handled 690 275 IFR flights in 2021.

Moderate traffic recovery in Switzerland

In its May 2021 forecast, Eurocontrol had foreseen a growth rate of +7.6% in the baseline scenario, and +26.1% in the high-growth scenario, the latter being the one that ultimately materialized, with a +29.7% growth in 2021 over 2020. Geneva airspace recorded an increase of +31.1% and Zurich airspace +30.6%.

The number of arrivals and departures at the Swiss airports increased by 18% compared to 2020. The traffic volume of the Swiss national airports grew by 16.2% in Geneva and in Zurich by 19.3%.

Instrument flights¹ in 2021:

	2021	2020	Change
Instrument flights	690 275	532 031	+29.7%
of which transit	435 362	317 048	+37.3%

Air traffic movements 2021 by market segment (Skyguide charging zone)

	2021 vs 2020	2021 vs 2019
Cargo	+ 15.2%	+ 16.4%
Business Aviation	+ 39.9%	+ 5.2%
Charter Flights	+ 73.8%	- 3.3%
Traditional Airlines	+ 23.9%	- 57.8%
Low-Cost Airlines	+ 37.2%	- 56.2%

¹ Flights under instrument flight rules (IFR) take place in controlled airspace and require air traffic control services.

High overall punctuality of air traffic control

Skyguide received ambitious performance targets from the European Commission in the area of punctuality. Skyguide was able to report a slight improvement in punctuality in 2021. 99.2% (previous year: 99%) of all flights were handled without delay by air navigation services. Skyguide thus met the requirements of the European Performance Plan.

Strong civil-military partnership

The partnership with the Swiss Air Force in 2021 proved again to be a very successful one. Skyguide achieved 100.4% of the service level defined in its service agreement with the Swiss Air Force (average of all air force bases). Occasional additional short-term services explain this value, which is slightly above 100%. The Air Defence and Direction Center (ADDC) in Dübendorf also achieved a service performance of 94.2%.

Skyguide's military air traffic controllers accompanied last year 219 "live and hot missions" (air police missions and serious interventions) and 1 958 tactical operations. In 2021, Skyguide handled last year a total of 89 491 (previous year: 94 519) military aircraft movements.

Skyguide also again provided the full range of air navigation services expected at the civil regional airports.

Skyguide
Swiss Air Navigation Services Ltd
Route de Pré-Bois 17
CH-1215 Geneva 15

+41 22 417 40 08
presse@skyguide.ch
skyguide.ch

Skyguide is committed to providing safe, efficient and sustainable air traffic management in Switzerland and adjacent parts of neighbouring countries. With its 1,500 professionals at 14 locations, the company guides civil and military flights through Europe's busiest airspace. Through innovation and trustworthy partnerships Skyguide enhances Switzerland's appeal as a place to live, work and do business. The company is majority-owned by the Swiss Confederation and headquartered in Geneva.