danubefab functional airspace block

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This document is the DANUBE FAB Annual Report for 2024, and describes the progress made against the activities and tasks specified in the DANUBE FAB Strategic Programme 2024 – 2028 and the DANUBE FAB Annual Plan 2024.								
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Authors								
DANUBE FAB SAPSC wi	ith input from DANUB	E FAB	stakeholders					
Contact Persons								
			Tel	Organisation				
Mr. Vladimir GRIGOROV			+359 2 937 1380	BULATSA				
Mr. Mihai DUMITRACHE			+40 21 2083 136	ROMATSA				

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INTRODUCTION

This section provides the purpose, audience, and layout of this document as well as the way this document should be used.

Purpose and Scope

Article 10.5 (c) of the DANUBE FAB State Agreement specifies that the Governing Council shall adopt the Annual Report and propose it for endorsement by the State authorities on transport.

The Annual Report provides the means to monitor the implementation progress of the Strategic Programme and the Annual Plan. The scope of this report is limited to activities which were expected to be carried out in 2024, based on the timescales identified in the Strategic Programme 2024 – 2028 and Annual Plan 2024.

This report may be used as a basis for modifying the Strategic Programme, and the subsequent Annual Plan.

Objectives

The objectives of this report are to:

- Explain the work undertaken in relation to the Strategic Programme / Annual Plan activities planned in 2024;
- Detail the status of high priority tasks;
- Identify, and propose corrective measures where appropriate, for late activities;
- Identify strategic studies that may be necessary for the further development of the FAB.

Publication and Confidentiality

The approved DANUBE FAB Annual Report 2024 is a public document that is made available on the DANUBE FAB website (www.danubefab.eu).

Aspects of the Annual Report which are considered confidential and restricted for internal stakeholder use only and inappropriate for general publications will be developed and distributed separately.

Drafting of the Document

The Annual Report has been developed by the DANUBE FAB SAPSC with due consideration of the "DANUBE FAB Strategic Programme 2024-2028", and "DANUBE FAB Annual Plan 2024". Input has been sought from the NSAs, the Military and the ANSPs of both States.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE IN 2024

Summary of Progress in 2024

In 2024, DANUBE FAB planned for 104 Tasks over 68 Activities. Each task has been classified as Completed / On Track, **Behind**, or Removed or put on hold. A graphical overview of progress across the FAB is provided below.

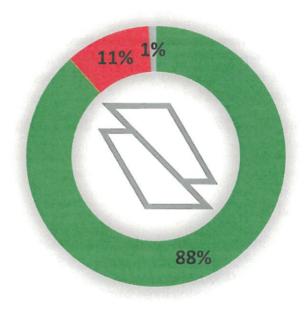


Figure 1: DANUBE FAB 2024 Progress - All Tasks

Task Status		Number of Tasks	7 -
Complete / On Track	Completed / On Track	92	88%
Behind	In Progress - Late	11	11%
Removed or put on hold	Put on hold	1	1%
	Total:	104	

Table 1: DANUBE FAB Progress - All Tasks

Key Activities in 2024

This section provides a brief overview and status update of the key DANUBE FAB activities that were undertaken in 2024.

Free Route Airspace

There are still planned some airspace re-structuring projects in the Eastern Europe, which involve DANUBE FAB, but, due to the current geopolitical context and its impact on the traffic levels and flows, their status is as follows:

- Poland / Ukraine / Romania / Moldova Interface improvement the studies on next SEE FRA expansion will not start earlier than Spring 2025. However, in the current context this project might be further delayed;
- Cross border FRA operations SECSI FRA and SEE FRA is still under analysis, proposed implementation timeframe being 2029/2030 (as per ERNIP). Due to the legal implications (EU/non-EU states participation) versus operational benefits, further analysis are required at DANUBE FAB level.

These proposals have been set out in the EUROCONTROL Route Network Improvement Plan (ERNIP).

InterFAB Cooperation

DANUBE FAB is a key participant in the InterFAB Coordination Platform and is committed to remain a proactive member. DANUBE FAB has both participated in and hosted InterFAB workshops in the streams for research, operations, performance and communication. DANUBE FAB has played an active role for the whole period, being one of the core FABs involved in the IFCP.

An InterFAB Research Workshop "Predictability and Flexibility in ATM" was organised on 18-19 April 2024 in Zagreb, Croatia. FAB CE and FABEC have continued the series of successful annual InterFAB research workshops with a forum dedicated to predictability and flexibility. DANUBE FAB representatives contributed by presenting the topic "Flexibility of regulations and difficulties of prediction" in Panel two: Shaping a framework. All documents are available at https://www.fabec.eu/thought-leadership/predictability#pres

In 2024 meetings continued to take place at the level Points of Contact, focused on coordinating common positions on the amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the Single European Sky (recast).

Maintaining an active role within the InterFAB platform throughout 2025 and beyond remains a priority for DANUBE FAB.

PROGRESS OF STRATEGIC PROGRAMME TASKS & OBJECTIVES

The DANUBE FAB Strategic Programme 2024 – 2028 and the Annual Plan 2024 established a number of strategic objectives. This section provides an overview of work undertaken in 2024 towards the achievement of these strategic objectives. It should be noted that this provides an illustrative description of the steps taken by DANUBE FAB in 2024 rather than a comprehensive overview of all contributing tasks to each strategic area.

Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): SAFETY

Maintain, and wherever possible improve, the current level of safety so that the number of accidents or serious incidents induced by air navigation services at least remains at, or decreases from, its current level, notwithstanding increased traffic.

Activities included ongoing processes of maintaining and updating the Safety Management Manual in order to ensure the compliance with all applicable regulations. A new procedure for mutual notification for implementing concerning changes is drafted in addition to the good cooperation already established in the field of common discussion of safety occurrences occurred in adjacent AOI. Preliminary discussion on mutual NOSS activities has started to further improve the coordination between Sofia ACC and Bucharest ACC. Plans for next mutual SMS surveys and reviews are arranged including the mutual Safety culture survey.

Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): ENVIRONMENT

Improve the efficiency of flight operations and minimize the environmental impact of ATS.

SEE FRA (South East Europe Free Route Airspace) which comprises of Budapest, București, Sofia, Bratislava, Chisinau and Czech Republic CTAs, gives the Users the ability to plan their flights freely across the airspace of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Republic of Moldova and Czech Republic 24/7 without the limitations of geographical boundaries. Cross-border operations between SEE FRA and Baltic FRA are also available to airspace operators from 2022.

According to simulations, SEE FRA contributes to a significant reduction of emissions and of millions of miles (NM) daily from the total mileage.

DANUBE FAB also continues to attend CANSO Environmental Working Group meetings and will look for further projects which can reduce the environmental impact of ATM within DANUBE FAB boundaries. This work includes studying the impact and requirements stemming from the new EU Green Deal, released in 2021. This is to ensure DANUBE FAB States not only meet the requirements, but also that the ATM related effects on the environment are minimised as far as possible.

Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): CAPACITY

Provide capacity to accommodate increasing traffic and airspace user demands, whilst reducing flight delays.

Capacity is, and remains, a high priority for DANUBE FAB. ROMATSA continuously maintained its new ATM system up-to-date through software improvements, while BULATSA continued the procurement process for a new ATM system, which, depending on the system implemented, should increase airspace capacity in future.

Measures previously implemented have also put DANUBE FAB above the targets noted in the Performance Plan, with the combined positive effects of implementing new ATM Systems, FRA H24, sector optimisation and continuing to select, train and license new ATCOs estimated to have provided the additional capacity needed to accommodate the traffic growth. Restrictions and the re-routings caused by the conflict in Ukraine through Romanian and Bulgarian airspace have led to a traffic growth above forecasts, both ROMATSA and BULATSA have managed this within the targets.

Strategic Objective 4 (SO4): COST-EFFICIENCY

Deliver high quality air navigation services at a competitive rate in line with European-wide targets.

In 2024, implementation of RP3 Performance Plans continued. Romania and Bulgaria have also submitted their RP4 Performance Plans to the European Commission.

Strategic Objective 5 (SO5): TRANSVERSAL

Drive benefits through technological changes and interoperability of systems and procedures.

Efforts have been ongoing throughout 2024 to deliver joint, FAB-level projects such as the implementation of extended OLDI messages. For the latter, steps have been made in 2024 for its progress, which implementation is expected to bring positive results for the summer 2025.

Activity Progress Monitoring

The following tables summarize the progress of tasks associated with DANUBE FABs seven Implementation Projects. The tasks and activities for each project were laid out in the Annual Plan 2024.

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
A – Strategy, Planning, External Relations	s and Communications	■ Complete / On track ■ E	Behind Removed
Project to maintain the established governance structure of DANUBE FAB, including regular meetings of the Governing Council, the ANSP and NSA Boards. Additionally, to formulate robust implementation projects and activities that clearly articulate how new policies, programmes, plans, and actions will be delivered on time, on budget, and to expectations; so as to maintain effective strategic and planning processes within DANUBE FAB.	Strategy and Planning [Activities A01 – A09] • 9 Activities • 17 Tasks	12%	The delayed tasks in this area of activity are linked to the development and adoption of the Strategic Programme 2025 – 2029 and the Annual Plan 2025 which are in progress and shall be completed early 2025. Another delayed task regards the FAB Enlargement project. As no concrete commitments have been received from the two States Observers, after more than five years, DANUBE FAB is investigating at the level of Governing Council the options regarding the future collaboration with the Observers.
	External Relations and Communications [Activities A10 – A17] 8 Activities 13 Tasks	92%	Only one meeting of the Social Consultation Forum have been organised in 2024 (October).

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
B – NSA Coordination		■ Complete / On track	■ Behind ■ Removed
Review rules and procedures, implement consultation mechanism and processes for harmonisation, mutually recognise Supervisory Tasks, cooperation in areas with NM and stakeholder consultation, set up common task force to monitor performance, formal coordination between NSAs and coordination of security issues at FAB level. C – Performance Planning, Monitoring are	NSA Coordination [Activities B01 – B05] • 5 Activities • 6 Tasks	17% 83% Complete / On track	Activities B01, B02, B03, B04 have been carried out, whereas activity B05, task 5.1 has become unnecessary, given that the COVID 19 pandemic has ended. As for activity B05, task 5.2 was postponed and it will be maintained in the DF NSA Board Annual Plan 2025 and NSAs will try to carry out this activity through face-to-face meetings, depending also on the evolution of the legislative framework at European and national level.
Exchange of information on implementation and reporting of national Performance Plans, as well as for achieving common position on performance regulation proposed for RP4.	Performance Planning [Activities C01 – C03] 3 Activities 3 Tasks	100%	N/A

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
D - Human Resources and Training		■ Complete / On track	■ Behind ■ Removed
Maintain appropriate personnel and competences for FAB operation, maintain common training board and maintain the FAB training policy, establish Common approach for training system, common training approach and activities for ATCOs and other staff.	General [Activities D01] 1 Activity 2 Tasks	50%	No Training Board meetings were held in 2024. Processes for sharing resources and developing and providing joint training courses are ongoing and shall continue into 2025 to ensure they are completed in the near future.
	ATCO Training [Activity D02] 1 Activity 1 Task	100%	Investigations into providing joint ATCO training courses is an ongoing process.

g 3 – D04]	Identifying common training opportunities for MET personnel is an ongoing process.
3 – D04]	for MET personner is all origonity process.
es	
100%	
ning	Identifying common training opportunities for ATSEP personnel is an ongoing
	process.
	Jointly development of a common material to be used in ATSEP training processes for Basic Training and Qualification Training postponed for 2025.
	100%

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
E – Technical Rationalisation and Infrastr	ructure	Complete / On track	■ Behind ■ Removed
DANUBE FAB jointly analyse its CNS infrastructure development and where possible conducts common procurement. The objective of this project is to further develop the cooperation in the technical domain by identifying opportunities to coordinate, rationalise and/or share technical infrastructure, thereby generating cost savings and better efficiency.	Technical Rationalisation and Infrastructure [Activities E01 – E06] • 6 Activities • 8 Tasks	75%	The review of existing DANUBE FAB Technical rationalisation and Infrastructure documentation is behind the schedule. Investigation of some potential common projects was delayed for Q4 2025.

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
F – Operational Activities		■ Complete / On track	Behind Removed
Airspace Design	Airspace Design		N/A
This implementation project aimed at implementing new routes within DANUBE FAB, by applying the necessary process for airspace changes and safety cases of the route changes.	[Activities F01 – F09] • 8 Activities • 10 Tasks	100%	
Operational Procedures Management Operational procedures need to be continuously updated and revised as the airspace is developed and improved in order to remain safe and efficient. The Operational Procedures project is tasked with fulfilling that role.	Operational Procedures Management [Activities F10 – F15] • 6 Activities • 10 Tasks	90%	Updating the DANUBE FAB ConOps is in progress.

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
Aeronautical Information Services (AIS) Maintain AIS services and AIS aspects of the DANUBE FAB CONOPS.	Aeronautical Information Services [Activities F16 – F17] 2 Activities 2 Tasks	100%	N/A
Meteorological Services	Meteorological Services		N/A
Maintain compliance with international standards, harmonisation of MET KPIs and SWIM services coordination for the MET domain.	[Activities F18 – F20] • 3 Activities • 4 Tasks	100%	

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
G - Safety, Quality, Environment and Sec	urity Activities	■ Complete / On track	■ Behind ■ Removed
Safety Management Updates of safety case and safety policy and common generic safety management manual, safety culture measurement and improvement, develop FAB wide safety targets, implement safety performance monitoring, coordinate best practice, Conduct operational safety surveys and SMS audits.	Safety Management [Activities G01 – G06] • 6 Activities • 13 Tasks	92%	Define the processes and conduct, where possible, mutual safety surveys and focussed SMS audits was postponed for 2025-2027.
Quality & Environmental Management Systems	Quality & Environmental Management Systems		N/A
Monitoring of environmental KPIs, Harmonise management systems.	[Activities G07 – G09] • 3 Activities • 5 Tasks	100%	

Overview	Sub Category	Progress	Delayed tasks and notes
ATM Security Management Systems Harmonisation of Information Security Management Systems of both ATM/ANS providers, establish a coordination and information exchange mechanism between DANUBE FAB ANSPs, in the cybersecurity domain, ATM/ANS Cybersecurity Roadmap update.	3 Activities	50%	Establish a coordination and information exchange mechanism between DANUBE FAB ANSPs, in the cybersecurity domain, as well as ATM/ANS Cybersecurity Roadmap update, were both postponed for 2025.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

One of the Annual Report's objectives is to identify any corrective measures that may be necessary for the further development of the FAB and review the progress of previous corrective actions identified.

The table below charts the corrective actions suggested. Corrective actions are marked either as 'New', 'Ongoing' or 'Complete', and a short justification and summary of their impact (if appropriate) is provided.

Due Date	Status	Comments
Dec 2025	Ongoing	Monitoring processes are ongoing, but further informal coordination between experts should be undertaken to increase the number of tasks and activities completed in all areas. Further to this, all standing committee and working group meetings must take place every six months in 2025. Target: Increased participation and completion of standing committee and working group meetings in 2025.
		The procurement process was agreed to take place in 2025.
Dec 2025	Ongoing	Target: ☐ Website maintenance services to be procured in 2025.
	Dec 2025	Dec 2025 Ongoing

Justification	Due Date	Status	Comments
3 – Strategic Alignment towards Joint Training Provision		a ir nie tak	
A number of DANUBE FAB activities regarding training (Section D) are being delayed as a lack of alignment exists between ROMATSA and BULATSA. It is imperative that these differences are resolved, and a joint strategic approach agreed between both parties, or that alternative arrangements to deliver DANUBE FAB joint training provision are identified.	Dec 2025	Ongoing	Target: ☑ Approach for DANUBE FAB joint training should continue in 2025.
4 – Review of Resource Availability	AND THE PARTY OF	and a second	
A number of tasks across the DANUBE FAB project have seen delays during the last years due to a lack of available resource. This is due to the fact that key experts from BULATSA and ROMATSA are already tasked simultaneously with the implementation of internal projects and the DANUBE FAB activities are often perceived as an additional work burden. This is particularly relevant in the summer months for the Operational Functions, where the continued traffic growth requires capacity to be maintained in the ACCs, diverting efforts away from DANUBE FAB project work.	Dec 2025	Ongoing	 Target: ☑ This task should be monitored by the SAPSC and working groups throughout 2025 to ensure key tasks and activities can still be progressed. ☑ Prioritisation of required resources during each of the working group and standing committees.
5 - Recommencement of Standing Committee and Board meetings for key activit	ties and proje	cts	
Linked to the previous, the number of DANUBE FAB information sharing and coordination meetings dropped. To improve the pace at which activities are completed, all DANUBE FAB bodies should recommence their meetings in 2025.	Dec 2025	Ongoing	Target: ☐ Each of the following groups should held meetings in 2025: ☐ Training Board ☐ SQSESC ☐ Technical Working Group

CONCLUSIONS

Situation

2024 was another extremely challenging year for the entire aviation community due to the effects of the conflict in Ukraine and Middle East, leading to high traffic levels, especially in the DANUBE FAB airspace.

A key milestone was the publication of Regulation (EU) 2024/2803 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the Single European Sky on 11th November 2024, This marked a significant step toward adopting measures aimed at improving the management, efficiency, and sustainability of European ATM. At its 23th meeting on 7th November 2024 the DANUBE FAB Governing Council reiterated their shared vision to ensure the continued stability and progress of DANUBE FAB, aligned with the evolving requirements of the Single European Sky initiative. Through effective coordination and adherence to regulatory frameworks, DANUBE FAB will remain a cornerstone of operational excellence and innovation in European airspace management.

Tasks & Activities

For 2024, DANUBE FAB planned for 104 Tasks over 68 Activities. Of these 104 tasks:

- 88% (92 tasks) have been completed or are considered in progress or on time;
- 11% (11 tasks) were behind with no progress or significantly behind schedule;
- 1% (1 task) is removed due to their redundancy.

Further to this, DANUBE FAB is implementing an extended set of OLDI messages across the FAB. Investigations into additional OLDI messages that can be implemented are ongoing, for potential roll out into 2025.

To improve the effectiveness of the FAB, the recommendations identified in the Strategic Impact Study (internally developed and issued in January 2022) should be further assessed and implemented where considered necessary. Further to this, the FAB should ensure all standing committee and working group meetings recommence in 2025, with other informal meetings taking place to discuss technical details or share information on best practices. Doing so shall ensure all tasks and activities are tracked and completed in a timely manner.

Finally, a key task to be completed in 2025 is the finalization of the DANUBE FAB ConOps update. Given the progress the FAB has made in completing FRA extensions, implementing technical projects and possible inclusion of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) need to be represented in a new version of the document.

Recommendations

The DANUBE FAB project identified 5 corrective actions as part of its 2024 Annual Report, all of them being ongoing. Actions to address them have been identified and are being actioned by experts across the FAB.

DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

For the purpose of this document the definitions in the harmonised regulatory framework for the creation of the Single European Sky shall apply. The following definitions and acronyms are used in this document:

AIS - Aeronautical Information Service

AMP - Aeronautical Meteorological Personnel

ANSP - Air Navigation Service Provider

AP - Annual Plan

AR - Annual Report

ARN - ATM Route Network

ATM-MP - ATM Master Plan

ATSEP - Air Traffic Safety Engineering Professional

CDM - Collaborative Decision Making

CNS - Communications, Navigation and Surveillance

(E)/(L)SSIP - European/Local Single Sky ImPlementation (mechanism/documents)

EATM - European Air Traffic Management

EC - European Commission

EP - European Parliament

ERNIP - European Route Network Implementation Plan

EU - European Union

FAB - Functional Airspace Block

ICAO - International Civil Aviation Organisation

IDP - Interim Deployment Programme

IDSG - Interim Deployment Steering Group

IMS - Integrated Management System

ISMS - Information Security Management System

KPI - Key Performance Indicator

MET - Aeronautical Meteorological Services

MIL - Military

MWO - Meteorological Watch Office

NM - Network Manager

NMB - Network Management Board

NOP - Network Operations Plan

NSA - National Supervisory Authority

NSP - Network Strategic Plan

OI - Operational Improvement

OSC - Operational Standing Committee

PRB - Performance Review Body

SAPSC - Strategies and Planning Standing Committee

SBP - Strategic Business Plan

SES - Single European Sky

SESAR - SES ATM Research

SIGMET - SIGnificant METerological information

SP - Strategic Programme

SQSESC - Safety, Quality, Security and Environment Standing Committee

SSC - Single Sky Committee

TWG - Technical Working Group

WAM - Wide Area Multilateration